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SWOOPING BIRDS THIS SPRING

For most of the year native birds are wonderful neighbours. Their carolling songs are enjoyed by many, and the ecosystem services they provide, such as seed dispersal and pollination, are invaluable.

Why are the birds swooping?

In several Australian native bird species, aggressive behaviour can be displayed during the breeding season throughout spring and early summer in order to protect their nesting sites from people, pets or other animals they perceive as a threat. The natural response of some birds is to attack by swooping. Swooping occurs for around 4-6 weeks, commencing when the adults are nesting and concluding when the young leave the nest.

Although this behaviour can be annoying and sometimes slightly dangerous, it is important to remember that it is only temporary and that the native birds are only trying to protect their young.

How to reduce your chances of being swooped

- Stay calm. Serious accidents can occur when people panic.
- Do not deliberately provoke, harass or attempt to move the birds as this may make them more aggressive.
- Avoid the birds' territory by taking an alternative route if possible.
- Protect your head by wearing a broad brimmed hat and sunglasses or hold an open umbrella or leafy branch above your head.
- If cycling, dismount and quickly walk through the birds' territory.
- Keep your eye on the bird; they are less likely to swoop if you are watching them.

Native Birds and the Law

Native birds are protected fauna under the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016, and it is illegal to harm them or their nests. To do so can result in severe penalties, including fines and imprisonment. Please avoid areas where birds are swooping until the chicks are able to fly(fledged). We will erect signage or cordon off the area if required.

Native birds that commonly employ swooping to protect their nesting site include the Magpie (*Gymnorhina tibicen*), Grey Butcher Bird (*Cracticus torquatus*) and the Noisy Miner (*Manorina melanocephala*).



Grey Butcher Bird

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Magpie

© Sutherland Shire Council



Noisy Miner

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Please contact Council for further information

T 02 9710 0333

ssc@ssc.nsw.gov.au

sutherlandshire.nsw.gov.au

