

Media Release

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Be cautious of avian attacks this swooping bird season

Gladstone Regional Council advises the breeding season for most swooping birds has begun and urges residents to take precautions when outdoors.

The breeding season for most swooping birds – including magpies, plovers, crows and butcherbirds – is July to November, peaking between August to October.

Nesting birds are protective of their eggs and chicks, and some will swoop to scare away threats entering their nesting territory.

This behaviour usually occurs within 100 metres of the nest tree, but it can be more. Swooping will last until the chicks leave the nest, which is usually six to eight weeks.

All swooping birds found in the Gladstone Region are native animals, and it is an offence to harm, interfere or relocate them without state department authorisation.

Gladstone Region Councillor Michelle Wagner said Council manages swooping birds by providing information, implementing an appropriate response on Council controlled land such as installing warning signs, and where appropriate, undertake swooping bird assessments.

“The best thing concerned residents can do is visit Council’s website where they can find information about swooping birds, including an easy-to-understand animated video, tips to avoid being swooped, a magpie fact sheet and an interactive swooping bird hotspot map,” Councillor Wagner said.

“The interactive map allows residents to view hotspot areas and add their own hotspots so that alternative walking or cycling routes can be made.”

To report swooping birds, contact Council online or by phoning 4970 0700.

The best way to avoid being swooped is to:

- Avoid swooping hotspots by finding an alternative route
- If you are riding a bike or e-scooter, dismount and walk when passing through a swooping zone
- Protect yourself by wearing a broad-brimmed hat or using an umbrella, or holding your school bag above your head
- Keep your eyes on the bird, as they are less likely to swoop when being watched
- Wear glasses or sunglasses to protect your eyes
- Team up with others and walk in a group
- Avoid threatening or scaring nesting birds, as this will increase the intensity of swooping.

Visit www.gladstone.qld.gov.au/wildlife for more information about swooping birds.

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