

Magpie

Pica pica

Bird · Resident · here all year



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Unmistakable: a long-tailed pied crow, boldly black and white, whose apparently black plumage flashes iridescent green, blue and purple in good light. Magpies are common across Dumfries in gardens, parks, hedgerow and scrub. They build a distinctive bulky domed nest with a roof of thorny sticks, usually well up in a hawthorn or tall shrub, which is easy to spot once the leaves are off.

BEHAVIOUR

Magpies are omnivorous and opportunistic, taking insects, carrion, scraps, grain and — in spring — the eggs and chicks of smaller birds, which is the source of their poor reputation. The evidence is that this predation does not drive songbird declines, but it is conspicuous and unpopular. Outside the breeding season they gather in loose flocks, and they cache surplus food to retrieve later.

WHEN TO SEE IT

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QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Crows (Corvidae)
SIZE	44–46 cm · about half of it tail
UK STATUS	Green-listed

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