

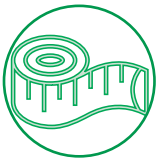
Magpie

Habitat Hero



Common Name: Magpie
Irish Name: Snag breac
Scientific Name: Pica pica

Seen in Ireland:
Year-round



The Magpie is a medium sized bird with a wingspan of between 52-60cm, and an overall length of between 44-46cm.



Magpies are widespread and common throughout Ireland. They are one of Ireland's top 20 most common garden birds. They are found in woodlands, scrubland, gardens, parks and urban areas. Their nests are often found at the top of tall trees.

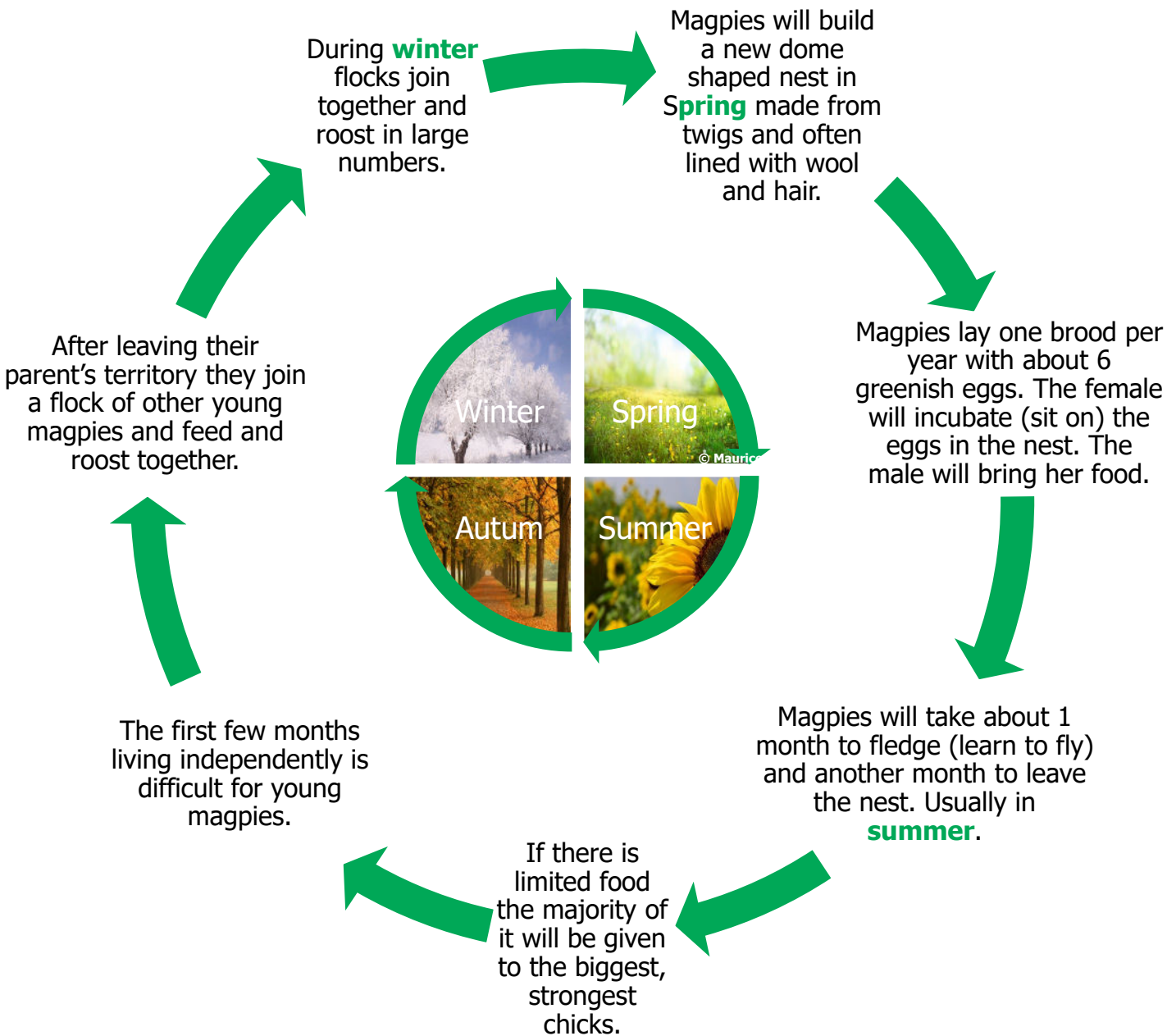


Magpies have an extremely varied diet. They are **omnivores** which means they eat meat and plants. They will prey on small mammals, young birds, other bird's eggs and lots of insects. They will also eat seeds and fruits. When food is abundant magpies will sometimes hide some for later. They will make a cache, this is a small hole in the ground, place the food in and cover it with a stone or other covering so they can find it later.



They often live to be 5 years old. The oldest recorded age is over 21 years for a ringed bird.

Magpie Life Cycle



Magpie

Some more Facts:

- Magpies are a member of the crow family.
- They are a large black and white bird with long distinctive tail which has bright greenish feathers. They have blue wing feathers.
- The long tail is very noticeable when a magpie is in flight.
- Crows are a very intelligent group of animals. They are one of the very few who can “use tools” (not chainsaws or drills!). Using tools means using something (apart from their body) to complete a task. For example, using a stick to reach a piece of food.
- Magpies are often accused of stealing shiny things. Some people think they put shiny objects in their nest so that the sun reflects off it and scares off other birds or keeps their eggs warm.
- However, there is no evidence that magpies really do collect shiny things. They along with other crows are curious and may pick unfamiliar things up but there may not be much reason to hide your jewellery if there is a magpie nearby!
- Magpies have a very harsh sounding call which sounds similar to a cackle. They may repeat it over and over if they are alarmed.
- Magpies are associated with lots of old superstitions in Ireland.
- It was common (and sometimes still is) to always “salute” a magpie when you see one for good luck!
- Magpies do not have many natural predators in Ireland due to their large size and their ability to defend themselves. Young magpies are more vulnerable to predators like foxes, larger birds and even cats

