



Magpie Trap

Many people enjoy the magpie's *quardle oodle ardle*, but in many places it's almost the only bird song left. That's because magpies are highly aggressive when defending their nesting territories and will drive away native birds, such as kereru, Tui and bellbirds.

Magpies are also highly intelligent, and anyone who has tried shooting them will know they quickly become gun-shy. Some people even claim that magpies can spot the rifle calibre – and sit just out of range...

Trapping is a much more effective control method. Entire flocks can be despatched and the magpies don't become trap-shy if trapping is done wisely.

Magpies may be smart, but their stomachs are bigger than their brains. Food is all that's required to lure magpies into the Magpie Trip-Trap. This does away with the traditional call-bird.

Occasionally a call-bird may be useful, but it's much easier to use food instead. A pair of glass mirrors is included as an optional lure for the more cautious older magpies. Daily catch rates will vary – juveniles are quickest to go in – but if you can clear the trap a couple of times each day you can catch dozens of magpies every week.

The trip-plate trigger mechanism is easy to set, and is sensitive enough to catch **mynah birds, doves, pigeons and rosella's**.

Use Instructions:

Set the trap on open ground where magpies congregate to feed on pasture insects. Lure magpies into the trap using small pieces of food laid around the trap, just inside the door and on the rear of the trip-plate.

Bait the trap with fresh food, such as crumbed cheese, butter, beef-dripping, mutton fat, bread, dog-roll, cat-food or mincemeat. Experiment with a variety of baits, making sure it is fresh and laid in small pieces.

Juvenile magpies will be first to enter the trap. Older birds, which may be more cautious, can be enticed inside using the glass mirrors which slide into the centre holders.

To avoid magpies becoming trap-shy, always kill them out of sight of the remaining birds. Either clear the trap in the evening, or if during the day, cover the trap with an old sheet to quiet the birds down and then kill them out of sight.

Magpies can be handled with bare hands, but wear a light pair of gloves initially. For a quick and certain kill, wring the neck with a sharp twist. Another method uses a blunt pair of gardening secateurs – which will sever the spinal cord without cutting through the neck feathers. No blood or mess.

If the magpies have no obvious feeding ground, you can use a call-bird to lure them to the trap. Bait the trap as usual and keep the captive magpie close by in a separate cage, equipped with a perch, water container and shelter from rain. Feed the magpie on dog-roll (Four Paws brand is one of the best to use).

