

Jasey's Bird House

Black-Billed Magpie



Hi Neighbors, as most of you know I was in Costa Rica for the summer with my family. Before we left I hardly noticed the magpies but when we got back I noticed they were everywhere and how beautiful they are. So I wanted to share this amazing bird with all of you. Jasey

BLACK-BILLED MAGPIE

Pica hudsonia

Size: 20" (50 cm)

Male: A large black-and-white bird with very long tail and white belly. Iridescent green wings and tail in direct sunlight. Large black bill and legs. White wing patches flash in flight.

Female: Same as male.

Juvenile: Same as adult but shorter tail.

Eggs: 5-8; green with brown markings.

Migration: non-migrator.

Food: insects, carrion, fruit, seeds.

Info from Birds of Colorado by Stan Tekiela



Watercolor by Jasey

Viewing Tips:

Look for them on fence posts or signs or more likely on the ground foraging. Also listen for their *rek rek rek rek*.



Photo credit: Audubon.org

1. Black-billed magpies were known to follow Native American hunting parties to feast on the leftover from bison kills.
2. Lewis and Clark reported magpies entering their tents to steal food.
3. Magpies are a nest predator but egg and nestlings make up a teeny part of their diet.
4. Black-billed magpie's nests take up to 40 days to construct.
5. Studies have found that making their nests only take

up 1% of their daily energy use but laying the eggs takes 23% of the females daily energy.

6. The oldest living magpie on record lived in Idaho and was 9 years and 4 months old.

7. Males establish their territory by raising their bills in the air and flashing their white eyelids.

8. When a Black-billed magpie finds a dead magpie it will call to gather other magpies then all the magpies (up to 40 birds) call for 10 to 15 minutes then fly away quietly.