

Azure-winged Magpie

Cyanopica cyanus



Class: *Aves*

Order: *Passeriformes*

Family: *Corvidae*

Characteristics:

The head of the azure-winged magpie is capped with black plumage while the throat is white. In juveniles, the black cap looks as if it were dusty. The tail and flight feathers are azure (blue). The rest of the body is greyish brown similar to that of a turtle dove.

Behavior:

Both European and Asian magpie populations often live in groups. Their calls are reminiscent of the magpies here in Idaho, but with a couple of extra “beeps” at the end.

Reproduction:

These magpies tend to lay 5 to 7 eggs with a maximum of 9. The nests are built with twigs in tall trees which decreased the number of chicks lost to predators (Alonso et al 1991). Colony members are highly involved in the raising and rearing the young of other group members. Both adult and juvenile males seem to be the ones that are more inclined to help build the nest, feeding the nesting female, and the care of the chicks (Valencia et al 2003).

Diet:

Wild: Invertebrates, small mice, fruits, seeds, and things it can scavenge.
Zoo: Fruits, vegetables, insectivore diet, feline diet and hard boiled eggs (Avian Scientific Advisory Group).

Conservation:

Both European and Asian populations are large and are moderately increasing.

FYI:

- Some azure winged magpies prefer to build their nests near the nests of Japanese lesser sparrow hawk. The sparrow hawks often don't hunt the magpies or invade their nests, but indirectly defend the magpies' nests from predators (Ueta 1994).
- These birds often bury different types of seeds in the ground probably as a way to save them for later.
- Having two very distant ranges from one another would make one think that they are an invasive species to Europe; however, fossils dating back 400,000 years proves otherwise. It is thought that the two populations were separated during the ice age.
- Korean: Water magpie



Range & Habitat:

Wooded areas of eastern Asia



Lifespan: up to 20 years in captivity, 15 years in the wild.

Special Adaptations:

- Group rearing of young
- Relatively intelligent

IUCN Conservation Status:

Least Concern

