

BIRD MYTHS & SUPERSTITIONS

#5 EUROPEAN MAGPIE



It used to be believed that European Magpies were the Devil in disguise, and that if you saw a lone magpie around your home it meant that the Devil was trying to stir up trouble for you. To ward off this trouble, you had to say 'Good Morning Mr Magpie, how is your wife today?' as this showed the Devil that you had recognised him, and then he was not able to cause any mischief. Or another way to banish the evil demon if you spot a solitary magpie is to doff your hat and cross your fingers. Seeing groups of magpies is said to divine the future and inspired the rhyme 'One for Sorrow, Two for Joy, Three for a Girl, Four for a Boy, Five for Silver, Six for Gold, Seven for a Secret that is Never to be Told'.

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BIRD KEEPING IN AUSTRALIA