



The Mischievous, Charming, Gulping, Tittering Tribe

Black-billed magpies are large black and white songbirds with long tails and iridescent wings. They live year-round in Colorado. They usually live in open areas with large trees or poles for nesting. Magpies build huge nests that have a dome or canopy made of sticks.

Magpies are omnivores and will eat anything. Unlike most birds, they can use scent to locate food. They forage on the ground for insects, berries, nuts, and seeds. Magpies also eat carrion—dead animals—that they find. They will hold the food with their feet and peck at it.

Black-billed Magpies are intelligent and resourceful when it comes to getting a meal. They flip items over to look for food, follow predators, and sometimes steal food from other birds. They pick ticks from the backs of deer, elk, moose, and other mammals. If there are lots of ticks, the magpies will take them and bury them to eat later. Magpies also pick at open sores on animals' bodies. They may eat small amounts of flesh this way.

Magpies are well-adapted to humans. In the past, they followed Native Americans and lived off the leftovers of their bison hunts. Now, they flock near houses, looking for garbage, raiding gardens, or eating road kill.

Magpies often fly and feed in large groups. No one seems to agree on what to call a large flock of magpies. Groups are called everything from a "charm", "gulp", "mischief", or "tittering", to a "tribe" of magpies

