



Savage killer targets birds

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Environment

IT'S a murder of crows ... and magpies and seabirds.

The hunt continues for an elusive bird killer in greater Brisbane's bayside.

The killer has been stalking the streets of Cleveland in Redland City, poisoning prey with chemical-laced meat.

The entire local magpie population may now have been successfully wiped out.

The stealthy perpetrator is believed to be responsible for the poisoning death of 68 birds, including 50 magpies and 16 crows, in the central business district.

RSPCA spokesman Michael Beatty said he was shocked by the scale of the poisoning campaign, which was the worst he had seen.

"I've not seen anything on this scale," Mr Beatty said.

"There are lots of cases where a few birds have been poisoned but not an ongoing campaign like this and certainly not on this scale."

Scores of dead or paralysed birds have been found on green spaces within blocks of each other on Bloomfield, Doig and Waterloo streets and Taylor Cres.

Another two dead birds turned up last week.

Sample testing has shown the presence of an organophosphate chemical that is particularly toxic to birds.

However, almost five months of investi-



gations and a public information campaign has failed to uncover any tangible leads.

Polican Seabird Rescue vice-president Natalie Forrest, who is caring for five surviving magpies, said she was sickened by the parade of carcasses that also included a black faced cuckoo shrike, a flying fox and a mouse.

"It's totally unnecessary and very cruel," Ms Forrest said.

"It's an absolutely terrible sort of cruelty and I would like to see the offender found

and punished appropriately. I have never seen anything like it.

"Yes we have seen poisoning but it's usually a one-off event. This has been very deliberate now for six months."

The first poisoned birds began appearing in June, but the number of cases then dropped off again until last month when more dead birds began turning up.

If found, the killer could face a fine of up to \$100,000 or two years in jail, depending on the relevant law.

Hit list: Targets for the killer include crows, magpies, a shrike and a flying fox.

