

What can you do?

- Dispose of edible litter carefully – put it in gull-proof lidded bins if possible
- Plastic bin bags on the street are an open invitation for gulls – always put your household rubbish into lidded bins
- Do not feed seagulls - because people have been feeding them they have learned to snatch food
- Gulls make most noise between May and July when they are breeding. If you are disturbed by gulls on your roof or are worried they may block a gas flue, the only long term solution may be to install protective measures to prevent them nesting there in the first place, such as wires, netting or spikes. There are several companies who are able to offer advice and supply proofing products. For details of these companies look in the Yellow Pages under Pest Control.

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Herring Gull Information Guidelines



Herring Gull

Information Guidelines

Although more gulls are nesting on the roofs of seaside towns, overall the UK gull population has been going down. Like all other wild birds, gulls are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, making it an offence to intentionally injure or kill any gull, or to take, damage or destroy an active nest or its contents. However, General Licences issued by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) allow control measures to be taken where there are public health or public safety concerns.

The law does not permit control measures for gulls if they are causing noise nuisance or simply damaging property.

When gulls are fed regularly it creates an artificially high population and encourages further breeding pairs to take up residence in the area. You are strongly advised not to feed the seagulls as this will not only increase the seagull population but will also cause unnecessary annoyance to neighbours. The possibility of introducing a byelaw making it an offence to feed seagulls has been investigated. However, the Home Office has indicated that feeding seagulls does not merit criminal sanctions.

Nesting



Herring gulls especially like nesting on flat rooftops, chimneys and gullies in sloping roofs. Eggs are laid from early May onwards (usually two or three in each nest). The eggs take about three weeks to hatch so the first chicks are generally seen at the beginning of June. It is quite common for young gulls to fall down chimneys, or off roofs, into gardens or onto the road.

Gulls see humans as a threat and will dive towards humans who go near their young. Normally they swoop close but do not hit you.

Current Control Measures

- All new litter bins for use in seaside towns have flaps across the apertures to prevent scavenging by gulls.
- Posters requesting people not to feed the seagulls are displayed in seaside towns and have been distributed to local food businesses.
- Advice is given to property owners on methods of protecting their own buildings.
- East Devon's seaside towns have their refuse collected earlier during the summer in a successful effort to reduce littering caused by seagulls.

