



ST. IVES TOWN COUNCIL

Seagull Advice



Guidance on how to tackle nuisance caused by seagulls for householders - how to deter gulls from nesting.

Also, a warning to those eating outside - seagulls will swoop for food - some tips to help avoid this.

The Seagull Problem

Seagulls are a common feature of many seaside towns and are becoming more common in urban settings due in large part to the easy availability of food and nesting sites. Seagull colonies can present problems including noise nuisance, fouling washing and cars and even swooping at people, usually to protect the gull's chicks or to snatch food. There can also be damage to roofs and gutters, and blockage of gas flues by nesting materials can have serious consequences if gas fumes are prevented from venting properly.

About Seagulls

Herring gulls are common in this area. They are large, with grey upper feathers and black ends to their wings which have white tips. They have a yellow beak with a red spot and their legs and feet are a pink flesh colour.

Seagulls usually build their nests in May and lay 2 or 3 eggs which take 3 or 4 weeks to hatch. The chicks stay in the nest for 5 or 6 weeks and will fly in late July or early August.

Sometimes a chick will fall from their nest. Smaller chicks will die but larger ones will be protected and fed by their parents.

Steps to reduce a gull problem:

- Stop easy access to human food
- Deny nesting sites

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Advice for householders - steps you can take to deter gulls from nesting on your property.

All owners / occupiers of buildings which have or may attract nesting gulls are strongly advised to install gull deterrent measures suitable to the building. These measures include:

- Chimney guards – to prevent nesting
- Roof spikes – to prevent nesting
- Roof wires and nets – to prevent landing
- Disturbance of nesting sites – to discourage gulls that have nested

It is recommended that advice and guidance on appropriate measures in each individual circumstance should be sought by the owner / occupier from a specialist contractor.



If you are a tenant, it is recommended that you discuss the measures to be taken with your landlord.

If gulls start nesting on one roof, it is likely that more gulls will be attracted to nest on nearby properties. Where more and more properties have gull-proofing measures in an area, there will be less chance for a gull colony to grow.

Specialist advice and services are available – look for ‘Pest Control’ in the Yellow Pages.

In the St Ives and Carbis Bay areas there are also builders and roofers experienced in seagull control measures – check for adverts in the local press.

Whilst deterrent measures should always be tried in the first instance, after all other methods have been tried but a seagull nuisance persists, it can be possible to seek the assistance of licensed pest control contractors with specialist skill and experience.

Some guidance on the law relating to seagulls.

(Please note that this is guidance only and not a definitive statement of the law.)

Generally it is illegal to capture, injure or destroy any wild bird or interfere with its nest or eggs. Penalties for disregarding the law can be severe.

The principle legislation dealing with the control of birds is the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Any action taken must be justified in terms of the General Licences made under this Act and can include culling, nest removal, egg removal, disturbance of birds and proofing. Action taken must be humane.

The Town Council has no statutory duty to take action against seagulls.

In limited circumstances, and usually after other methods of deterrent have been tried and have failed, an owner or occupier can take action against gulls nesting on their buildings, or give someone permission to do so.

It is recommended to seek expert advice before taking any action.



Food – warning when eating outside:

Do not feed seagulls

WARNING:

When eating outside, especially near beaches and harbour areas, be aware that gulls can swoop and snatch food. This can be alarming to adults and children and can sometimes result in a cut or scratch from a gull's beak or claw. Gulls can swoop from any direction.

Consider eating indoors or in sheltered places.

Litter and food waste must be disposed of properly in waste bins

Household and food waste must be placed out on the actual collection day, not the night before.

Do not feed seagulls

Some useful contacts:

Public health concerns:

Public Health and Protection
Cornwall Council
County Hall
TRURO
TR1 3AY
Tel: 0300 1234 212



Advice for steps to take to tackle aggressive gulls:

Natural England, tel: 0845 601 4523

Injured birds:

RSPCA, tel: 0300 1234 999

(if a chick is on the ground and not injured, the parent birds will look after it)

Cruelty to birds:

RSPCA National Cruelty and Advice Line, tel: 0300 1234 999

Gull-proofing a building:

For specialists to help and advise on gull-proofing a building,

- see 'Pest Control' in Yellow Pages
- check local press for specialist companies
- reputable builders or roofers.



For advice on specialist contractors:

British Pest Control Association
1 Ground Floor
Gleneagles House
Vernon gate
South Street
DERBY
DE1 1UP
Tel: 01332 294288
Fax: 01332 295904

National Pest Technicians Association
NPTA House
Hall Lane
Kinoulton
Nottingham
NG12 3EF
Tel: 01949 81133
Fax: 01949 823905
Email: officenpta@aol.com