

Seagull Nuisance

Advice provided by St Ives Town Council

Love them or hate them, herring gulls (large birds with grey upper feathers, white bellies and black ends to their wings with white tips) are very common in this area. There are over 240 nesting pairs and have been an established colony for 30 years.

Neither the Town Council nor Cornwall Council have any legal powers to manage the gull population directly because, as wild animals, most gulls are protected by law. Instead, we all need to become more aware of gull behaviour so we can learn how to live more successfully together.

The most difficult gull behaviour is probably their aggressive foraging and snatching of food. This has been made worse over the years by people deliberately feeding them. St Ives also has a large number of food outlets and cafes so the availability of food has increased. To prevent this the Town Council urges both visitors and residents to follow this advice:

SEAGULLS AND FOOD SNATCHING

- DO NOT feed seagulls
- When eating outside, always be aware that gulls will swoop and snatch food.
- Consider eating indoors or in sheltered places in which a gull would find it difficult to attack, such as in the lee of a building or in a corner. Gulls can swoop from any direction and a seagull swoop can be surprising and sometimes alarming. Be especially vigilant if you have small children sitting in buggies holding food and ice-creams.
- If you are eating outdoors in cafes or restaurants, try to hand any unfinished food and plates back to staff and not leave them on tables.
- Litter and food waste must be disposed of properly in waste bins. Do not put food waste and litter into bins if they are already full.
- Household and food waste must be placed out on the actual collection day, not the night before.

St Ives Business Improvement District is an organisation representing and funded by almost 200 local businesses. They invest in local projects and schemes. Because of the concern about seagulls, the BID are taking a lead role in raising awareness about and preventing gull incidents. They fund a town trail for families with a map which gives more information and advice on gulls. They also fund signage for businesses and warnings and promotion of social media platforms and bags and newspapers.

<https://stivesbid.co.uk/portfolio/spot-the-seagulls-in-st-ives-this-summer/>

NESTING AND CHICKS

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. Chicks will be protected and fed by their parents, although sometimes a chick will fall from their nest. Nesting and

the rearing of chicks can present a number of problems. If a chick is on the ground and not injured, please do not try to approach it - the parent birds will look after it:

- Gulls can swoop at people to protect their chicks
- Nest building can damage roofs and gutters and block gas flues (which can have serious consequences if gas fumes aren't vented properly).

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 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.

Detailed guidance for occupiers is available on the Cornwall Council website

<https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/environmental-protection/environmental-protection-pests/gulls/>

USEFUL CONTACTS

St Ives Business Improvement District (BID)

01736 792121

Info@stivesbid.co.uk

9 High Street St Ives

TR26 1RS

Gull-proofing a building:

Specialists to help and advise on gull-proofing a building – see 'Pest Control' in Yellow Pages and check local press for specialist companies.

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 or cruelty to birds:

RSPCA, tel: 0300 1234 999

The following professional organisations can also be contacted 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
Email: enquiry@bpca.org/uk
Web: www.bpca.org.uk

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

This information has been provided by St Ives Town Council.

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