

Proof your Property

In order to sustain an urban population, gulls require nesting sites and these are predominately on roofs. To reduce the availability of nesting locations, owners can proof their property using a number of methods eg



- **Chimney Guards**

These can easily be fitted to chimney pots by a competent builder or roofer to prevent gulls perching on the top.

- **Spikes for Roof Edges, Sills etc**

These are essentially stainless steel spikes fitted in a plastic base that prevent birds from resting and building nests on roof edges and sills.



- **Wiring and Netting**

These methods are suitable for large flat roofs.

Due to the danger of trapping birds in or under nets, the Council considers this method should always be carried out by a competent specialist.

Other Options

Although other methods such a culling, nest and egg removal can be considered, these are all measures that must be carried out under the terms of a General Licence. Also, while this may have an impact in the short term it would require to be sustained to have any long term effect.

Where can I go for Help

In order to assist communities that are experiencing problems with gulls, Environmental Services have produced this leaflet to provide a brief overview of the problems and what needs to be done to reduce them.

Fife Council does not have a statutory duty to deal with gulls and Environmental Services do not provide a buildings gull-proofing service. For advice on gull-proofing please contact a private Pest Control Company.

If a seagull is in distress please contact the SSPCA on their Animal Helpline 03000 999 999. This number should also be used to report any chicks that have dropped from their nests.

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Gulls, The Law and You



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GULLS

Herring Gulls are the most common type of gull to nest on buildings in Fife.

Breeding pairs begin mating in April and commence nest building in early May.

Eggs are laid in clutches of two or three and take about three weeks to hatch so the first chicks are generally seen around the beginning of June.

The chicks leave their nest after 5-6 weeks and become fully independent once they can fly, usually in July/ August.

Problems caused by Gulls

The common complaints relating to urban gulls are:

- Noise,
- Diving and swooping,
- Aggressive behaviour.
- Mess caused by their droppings, fouling of washing, gardens and people.
- Damage to property,



Diving, swooping and aggressive behaviour are often associated with the hatching or presence of a chick in the nest as well as a chick which has fallen to the ground. It is the adults' natural way of defending their young.

THE LAW RELATING TO GULLS

Herring Gulls are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and it is generally illegal to capture, injure or destroy them or interfere with their nests or eggs.

General Licenses can however be issued on the grounds of public health or public safety, enabling the owner or occupier of a building to take action against gulls nesting on it, or to give someone else permission to act on their behalf.

The Council has no statutory duty to take action against Gulls.

What Can You Do

When dealing with Gulls, prevention is better than cure and there are steps people can take to reduce the problems associated with gulls.

Reduce access to food

Gulls are opportunistic feeders and will scavenge in towns for food dropped by pedestrians or thrown out of cars, as well as tear open waste bags left on streets. Some people deliberately feed gulls, and the large flocks of gulls this attracts can create a nuisance.

To prevent this you should:

- Ensure no waste food is dropped or left out in areas accessible by the gulls
- Ensure waste sacks are not left on streets any longer than necessary to reduce the risk of them being ripped open by gulls
- Ensure all bin lids are securely closed so waste food cannot be pulled out of them.
- Use proper bird feeders if you want to feed small garden birds such as robins.

