

Further advice

If you require additional help, please contact our Environmental Services team on:

01303 853660

or via

environmental.services@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk

Alternatively, information can also be found on the RSPB website at rspb.org.uk

If you experience a gull-related dispute, we recommend contacting Mediation South East who are professionally trained and experienced in dealing with a wide range of issues. For further details, please visit their website at mediationsoutheast.btck.co.uk

Large print or a different format?

翻譯的幫助

Překladačská Pomoc

अनुवाद सहायता

Pomoc w tłumaczeniach

Pomoc pre prekladani

Tercüme Yardımı

Telephone - 01303 853660

'Seagulls'

Information and advice



Folkestone & Hythe District Council

Civic Centre, Castle Hill Avenue

Folkestone, Kent CT20 2QY

T: 01303 853660

E: environmental.services@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk

folkestone-hythe.gov.uk

Did you know there's actually no 'seagull' species, it's just a term used to describe any bird that belongs to the 'Laridae'. Most of the gulls found along our coastline are Herring Gulls - those most likely to steal your chips at the beach!



Councils have no statutory duty to take action against gulls but can give advice on how to deter them.

Gulls are a common feature of many seaside towns and are increasingly common in more urban areas due to the availability of food and nesting sites. They can cause concerns such as noise nuisance, fouling on washing or cars, and swooping at people - usually to protect their chicks or to snatch food.

The law

All species of gulls are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. It's illegal to kill or destroy their nests and eggs.

Only authorised persons with a special licence can remove gulls and they can only do this in order to conserve other wild birds, to prevent serious damage to agriculture and to preserve public health or air safety.

How to reduce any issues

Gulls are scavengers and will gravitate to any food source. Larger sized foods left in the garden, such as bread which can be bad for them as it fills them up quickly yet provides very little nutrition, increase the chances of gulls visiting and making nest sites due to the regular source of food. But we can all help keep them under control.

The most effective measures involve reducing the availability of food, or by using seeds or nuts on a bird table, or hanging bird feeders in your garden to attract smaller domestic birds. However, these aren't instant solutions as gulls will continue to visit where food sources are available.

Proofing

Chimneys and flat roofs used for nesting can be gull-proofed if they're accessible. Netting, spikes and chicken wire can all be used to discourage or prevent birds from landing or building nests.

Don't attempt this work during the breeding season (March to August) because you'll face the difficulty of attacks by aggressive gulls.

It's best to carry out proofing work over the winter when nesting birds aren't strongly attracted to the nest site, or may even be away from the country. The destruction of old nests outside the breeding season is not an offence.

Discouraging gulls

One of the easiest ways of discouraging birds is by disturbing them as quickly and as often as possible when they show signs of nesting.

For example, a rope or chain attached to a tree or hung near the nest site, which can be shaken and rattled frequently, might work.

Alternatively, towels or cloths shaken out of windows may scare the gulls and deter them from settling.

These methods tend to work better around new nest sites rather than those that have been used before.

Don't feed them

Many people still feed gulls which just makes them more confident; and they can't be expected to tell the difference between foods that are offered to them and people simply walking around eating fish and chips or having a picnic.

So, when eating outside, take care. Gulls can swoop down and try to snatch food, which can cause distress to adults and children.

Be careful with your rubbish

Gulls continue to take advantage of 'easy pickings', especially food left-overs and rubbish bags left out instead of being properly disposed of.

Make sure your food waste, recycling and rubbish are put into your bins properly. If you do have to put bags out, try to do this on the day of collection and not the night before. Alternatively, you could consider using gull proof bags.