

Herring Gulls breed colonially building large, substantial nests out of vegetation. They Lay 2 or 3 olive green eggs blotched with black. Eggs are laid from late April with incubation taking 25 - 33 days. The young are fed by both parents for about a month.

Herring Gulls learn quickly. When hand-fed, they are invariably in competition with other members of the flock and bolder birds will take food directly from the hand.

Once such confidence is established the next step will be to take food from the hand whether it is offered or not and the **Herring Gull**, rightly or wrongly, becomes a victim of its own learning ability.

In St Helier, the urban **Herring Gull** is more likely to be regarded as a 'general nuisance.' Intolerable early morning noise from loafing birds at all times of year and mess caused by nest material and excessive droppings during the breeding season are among the main causes for complaint.

Some Parishes have experienced success in containing the availability of food for gulls. An insistence on hard containers for refuse awaiting collection has prevented the birds from ripping open plastic bags and the early morning noise that invariably accompanies this activity has decreased too.

Sadly, food discarded by thoughtless members of the public late at night, especially in the vicinity of fast food outlets is, to some extent, countering this success.

Internationally, Herring Gull numbers are falling but by taking a few sensible precautions we can avoid adding to their decline and still enjoy their presence within the community

Gulls are not normally a problem but just occasionally an individual will appear to act aggressively when defending territory. If you have a problem with an aggressive gull on your roof do not attempt to resolve the problem yourself. Not only can this be extremely dangerous but, without a license, it is also illegal. Licensed operators are listed in the telephone directory Yellow Pages or, for further advice concerning gull research and control options you can contact the address below

Herring Gulls eat almost anything and are very opportunistic; natural diet includes fish and fish offal, crustaceans, molluscs and worms, small birds and mammals.

**The Environment
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Herring Gulls will take advantage of any new food sources supplied by human wastage. They are perfectly capable of finding natural food around Jersey's coastline so, do not provide them with an unnatural meal, intentionally or otherwise.

Herring Gulls

The **Herring Gull** is providing two major areas of concern and these must be treated as completely separate issues. The first is the nuisance caused by roof-nesting birds and the second is the apparent 'aggressiveness' of some birds in areas where food is regularly available.

Herring Gulls can weigh over a kilogram. They have a wing span of almost five feet and a formidable bill. When a bird snatches food from a child's hand or dives threateningly at a person in their garden, the results are often both frightening and distressing.

But the phrase 'gull attack' could just as easily be substituted with 'competitive' or 'protective action'. The **Herring Gull** that pre-empts other members of the flock by taking food before it is thrown is likely to be more successful but will inevitably be considered, perhaps unfairly, 'aggressive'.

When **Herring Gull** nests or young are approached, the protective reaction of the adult birds is to carry out a series of swooping dives over the intruder. Rarely, if ever, does the **Herring Gull** actually make physical contact. This is more likely to occur when ringing and research is carried out in the midst of cliff nesting colonies. Any impact is likely to cause serious damage to the bird and gulls appear to be aware of this danger. It is a disconcerting experience certainly, but even a raised arm will deter them. This protective action occurs during the breeding season and then only when intrusion occurs in close proximity to the nest or young.



There are certain basic rules that will help discourage loafing and roof nesting gulls.

- **Protect regular perching and roof nesting areas.**
- **Clean up thoroughly after barbecues and other out-door meals.**
- **Keep all household waste in hard, covered bins.**
- **Under no circumstances throw loose food out for birds.**
- **Try to take joint action - talk to your neighbours about the problem.**



If we don't feed Herring Gulls they will eventually turn to more natural sources of food. Not feeding them for a sustained period may even reduce the urban Herring Gull population to more acceptable numbers through a natural process

STAY WITHIN THE LAW

The **Herring Gull** is protected under the Conservation of Wildlife (Jersey) Law 2000 and the removal of eggs and or nests can only be undertaken by those licensed to do so.

There are licensed Pest Control companies operating in Jersey whose services include the removal of gull nests