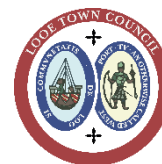


LOOE TOWN COUNCIL



POLICY STATEMENT - SEAGULLS

Looe Town Council recognises that seagulls are an integral part of our seaside location but also appreciates that the birds can cause problems both for residents and visitors to our town.

Herring gulls (the most common gull around Looe) are a protected species so no action can be taken by any individual or organisation to manage the population. Looe, along with St George's Island, has an established population of herring gulls but there is no evidence that the gull population is increasing. In fact, the latest figures from the Seabird Monitoring Programme suggest that UK breeding herring gull numbers fell by 72% between 1969 and 2014.

Looe Town Council will, therefore, seek to work with other local partners and groups to continue to raise awareness of gull behaviour and how to successfully live alongside our local wild birds:

FEEDING

Feeding gulls leads to them being more aggressive towards humans and swooping for food which is a common complaint about the birds. However, feeding them is also not good for the gulls as it fills them with the wrong type of food and stops them wanting, or being able, to hunt for their natural diet. Key messages promoted by the Council are:

- DO NOT feed the seagulls – it is not good for them or for us;
- BE AWARE of gulls when eating outside – consider sitting in a more sheltered place or inside, and be especially vigilant if small children are holding food;
- DISPOSE of waste properly – use litter bins, hand plates back in at cafes/pubs when finished, only put rubbish out on collection day.

NESTING

Seagulls usually nest in May, laying 2 or 3 eggs that take up to 4 weeks to hatch. Chicks stay in the nest for 5 or 6 weeks and then begin to fly in July or August. The parent birds will protect and feed their chicks which can include swooping at humans if they believe their babies are at risk.

The best way to avoid this behaviour at your property is to take steps to prevent nesting – once a nest is built, it is illegal to remove it or to tamper with the eggs as the gull is a protected wild bird.

Key messages promoted by the Council are:

- DO NOT approach or move baby birds that have fallen from nests;
- INSTALL deterrents to prevent nesting, e.g. chimney guards, roof spikes/wires/nets;
- REMOVE nesting materials before the birds have nested to discourage them from the site.

We recommend that you seek specialist advice about the best deterrent for your property.

USEFUL LINKS

[Wild birds and seagulls - Cornwall Council](#)

www.bto.org

[Wild birds: protection and licences - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Join us - RSPB Membership](#)