

## Seagulls

Over the past five to ten years Herring Gulls have started to build their nests on chimney-stacks and various types of roofs throughout the Blackpool area.

This change in breeding habits seems set to continue and will only worsen as the years go by. These birds can live for as long as thirty years and their offspring will themselves start to breed in any suitable location as close as possible to where they were born, this is usually when they reach their third year.

Once Gulls have selected a site and have successfully bred in that location they will return year after year to that same spot. As stated earlier this is then compounded when their offspring reach maturity and select their own nearby nesting site.

Nesting birds are almost impossible to move. If you do manage to remove their nest they will quickly make another one, so you would have to repeatedly carry on removing their eggs/nests throughout the summer and possibly the following summer before the birds move on.

If gulls are nesting on your roof or chimney- stack then it is advisable to have these areas proofed during the Autumn/winter period when the gulls are absent. This will hopefully make them move on to select another site.

These birds make very good parents and, having no natural predators in this area, the survival rate of their chicks is very high. They usually sit on three eggs and in most cases all survive.

During the nesting period the birds become very territorial and will often swoop down on anyone or anything getting too close to their nest. This reaches a peak when young birds start to leave their nest. At this time it is not uncommon for young birds to fall off the roof and finish up in the garden where their parents will still feed them but will also swoop down on whoever ventures into that or any nearby garden.

Over the past few years there has been numerous cases where people have been fined in excess of five hundred pounds for taking the law into their own hands and shooting these aggressive birds which are often making their lives a misery and swooping down on their children etc. However, even though these birds are keeping people awake with their loud calls, fouling washing hung out on lines and swooping down whilst protecting their young it's still insufficient grounds to cull them.

Nationally the gull population seems to be on the decline and they have been put onto the Amber List as far as protection is concerned. If they get upgraded to the Red List then they will carry much greater protection making it very difficult to be authorised even to remove their nests.

Various types of proofing solutions are available to either stop or discourage gulls from nesting/sitting on roofs and chimneys. Please check the Yellow Pages for Pest Control Contractors willing to supply and fit these devices.

If you would like any further advice please contact us.