

Report
Seagulls in Hereford City
2010



Hereford City roof tops

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1 History

We are now into the fourth year of the control of seagulls in and around Hereford City. Since we started in 2008 our contractors have removed 1051 Nests and 1880 eggs.

This equates to a reduction of 56% in nests and 65% in eggs of those collected by the contractor in 2008 and those collected by the contractor in 2010.

It is to be seen what this impact this has on the colonies of seagulls nesting and breeding within the City area in 2011.

The gulls return from their migration overseas in early spring each year, usually to the place where they were reared themselves. However, recent warmer winters have led to a significant residual population of gulls remaining in Hereford. Although this year there appeared to be a reduction in the number of birds wintering in Hereford.

The growing colony of gulls in Hereford has resulted in a growing number of complaints received by the Council each year. The sheer numbers of Gulls resident in Hereford is "*leading to potential public health issues*" from the nests and droppings together with the growing aggression of some birds during the breeding season.

Although the original colony was based in the industrial area of the city, with the expanding population, the gulls have started to populate industrial units south of the River (Rotherwas Industrial Estate) and even into the city centre.

To acknowledge the growing concern of residents and commercial enterprises the Urban Gull Steering Group comprising of representatives from Bulmers', Sun Valley, Special Metals, Town Centre Manager, Residents Group and Council Officers had its inaugural meeting on the 8th February 2008. Further meetings were held on the 19th February 2009 and 18TH March 2010

Appendix 1: Minutes of Meeting 18TH March 2010

In recognition of the growing problem Herefordshire Council therefore appointed an approved specialist contractor to manage the seagull problem in Hereford City with a contract for three years 2009-2011 inclusive.

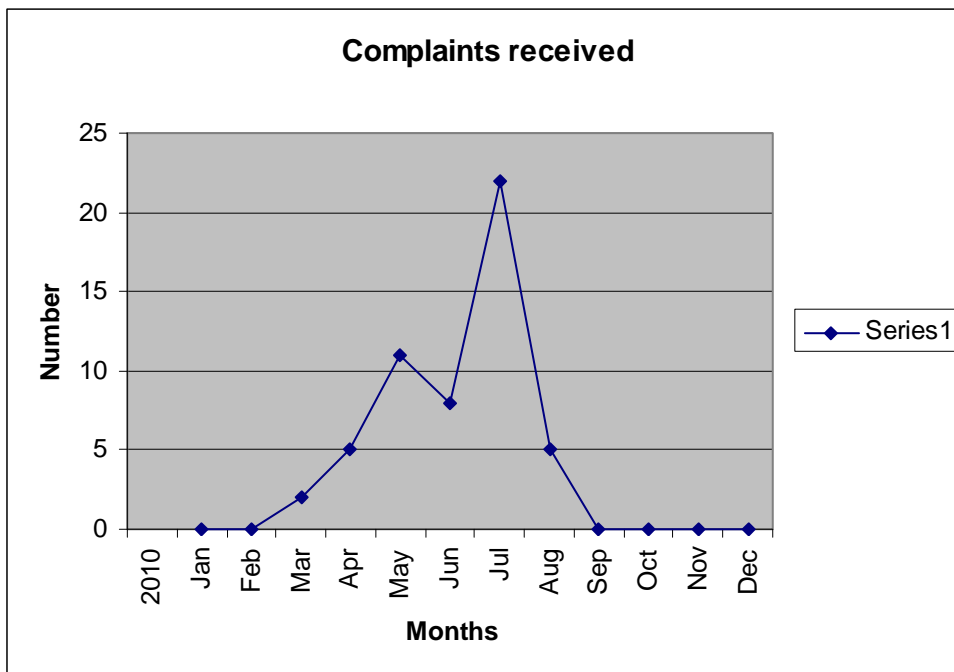
For 2010 the contractor started on the 22nd April 2009 and continued fortnightly until the 26th August 2009 during which period a total of 308 nests and 477 eggs were removed.

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For 2010 the contractor started on the 13th April 2010 and continued fortnightly until the 17th August 2010 during which period a total of 226 nests and 358 eggs were removed.

It is envisaged that the contractor start again in 2011 on week commencing 21st April 2011

During 2010 a total of 53 complaints were recorded



2 Present

The problems associated with a growing gull population in the City are many: -

- Pollution from excreta, on buildings, windows, washing, footpaths vehicles.
- Noise pollution from calling.
- Dive bombing assaults on adults, children and pets in the breeding season.
- Roof damage from nests blocking gully's gutters and down-pipes, also leading to potential insect and mite infestations if not cleared.

Although a survey of Gulls nesting in High Town was not carried out in 2010 a further study of the Town is required in 2011 to establish if the gulls have moved to other parts of the town for roosting.

3 Conclusion

The joint working between Herefordshire Council and Commercial Enterprises has allowed for an overall collection of nest and eggs potentially reducing the number of viable young gulls by an estimated 350 for 2009 and by at least a further 260 for 2010.



Seagull Nest and Egg

4 Question/Answer

Q. Has the action taken by the Council been beneficial in reducing the number of Seagulls in Herefordshire?

A. *Number of egg and nests collected has reduced over the three years of operation, which is likely to maintain the population at 2007 levels, we would probably not see a population reduction for 5 years until some of the older birds die or the natural population declines.*

Q. Have the comments from the public been favourable?

A. *Generally members of the public asked has been in favour of the action taken by the Council, with only one or two negative comments recorded.*

Q. Could the oiling of eggs over the breeding season be an alternative option?

A. *This has been considered but it has been decided that for environmental purposes the removal of nest and eggs was a better solution.*

Q. Could the replacement of viable eggs with dummy eggs be another alternative option?

A. *This has been considered but it has been decided that for environmental purposes the removal of nest and eggs was a better solution.*

Q. Is there funding available to provide any financial assistance to the service?

A. *Requests for funding assistance have been sent to several companies for financial assistance.*

Q. Is there any publicity of the service envisaged?

A. *Radio and press release in May once contractors are working in the area*

APPENDIX 1

HEREFORD URBAN GULL MANAGEMENT

3rd STAKEHOLDER MEETING

at 10am.Thursday 18TH March 2010

AT

BATH STREET OFFICES

HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

Minutes

Present

Cllr Polly Andrews	Cllr PA	3 Elms Ward
Keith Stait	KS	Special Metals/Wiggins
Roy Powell	RP	Resident
Jim Baskerville	JB	Resident
Cynthia Palmer	CP	City Centre Manager,Hfd Partnership
Phil Hawkins	PH	Falconry Services
Bruce Chartres	BC	Herefordshire Council
Pete Holmes	PJH	Herefordshire Council

Apologies

Larry Butterworth	Sun Valley Foods Ltd.
Marc Willimont	Herefordshire Council
Janet Jennings	Resident
Carolanne Watkins	Bulmers

2. Report on actions taken in 2009

PJH : produced a report on "Seagulls in Hereford City 2009" to the group which highlighted the reduction in the number of nests and eggs collected over summer 2009 compared to summer 2008

Correction to report: Page 11- Removal of sentence "*Since the meeting Special Metals have withdrawn from their contract with Falconry Services.*"

This was incorrect as Special Metals had a contract in place to December 2009 (Apologies for any confusion)

Residents

General consensus from attendance that there has been a noticeable reduction in the presence of seagulls in the City over the summer period when compared to the previous year.

General comments from residents and Councillor were that fewer young birds were seen and fewer complaints were received from the general public, so far no apparent change in the activities of the seagulls.

PH asked if any consideration has been given to the council taking on the Bulmer building opposite to the Plough Lane building already occupied by the Council and checking for seagull activity. **PJH** to contact property services.

PH. To appreciate any real improvement will take at least three years, whereby it requires three years for any new born chicks to return to the site of their birth and start to breed. Therefore, due to a natural decline in the population of the mature population over the three year period this should also coincide with the improvement in the three years from initial treatment.

However, there is likely to be a slight increase in population next year due to three year old birds returning.

Total of 27 complaints from public and commercial for 2009

Gloucester and Cardiff have noticed early nesting already this year. Possible due to extra sunlight this year.

Commercial

Bulmer's. To continue as previous years.

Sun Valley. PH Has received complaint from Glen, who flies the birds for Falconry Services at Bulmers, has noticed an increase in the number of dead shot birds on Bulmers site possibly from the Sun Valley site. RP to investigate.

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Special Metals. They are to reduce the Contract with Falconry Services by 20% i.e. 4 days instead of 5 days but are to instigate better monitoring. They have improved roof spaces which have, together with Hawk flying, reduced damage by nest building.

B & Q Still a problem with gulls possibly nesting on roof but still no access by our contractor. But cause problems to Special Metals.

Police Building, Breinton Road –Contractors unable to gain regular access
Cllr. PA to contact the Police direct.

RP Planners and developers to be advised of need to build seagull proof roof's. for ESG development **BC** to follow up

3. Options for gull management

Agreement that we continue as previous years.

4. Starting Date for Egg/Nest Collection 2010

Agreed 13th April Tuesday start date and every 2 weeks till 17th August 2010

5. Funding

PJH To write to Commercial companies as last year.

6. Publicity

BC To organise a press release

7. Web Site <http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/environment/44605.aspp>

8. Law Change

Black Backed and Herring Gulls can no longer be shot possibly in future nest and egg removal may also be banned. (Natural England)

Most of the gulls in Hereford are Lesser Black Backed Gulls but may cause problems with identification between visiting gulls.

PJH to write to Sun Valley and Painter Brothers. who both currently shoot Gulls

Pete Holmes

APPENDIX 2

URBAN GULL MANAGEMENT PROPOSAL

FOR

HEREFORD CITY – 2009/11**CONTENTS****1. SCOPE**

APRIL-AUGUST 2009-2011 - Following the success of the collection of gull nest and eggs over the 2008 breeding season approval has been given to continue the programme over the next three years therefore the Council is to initiate a seagull management programme in Hereford City for the 2009-2011 breeding seasons.

2. Urban Gull Action Plan 2009/11 – Hereford

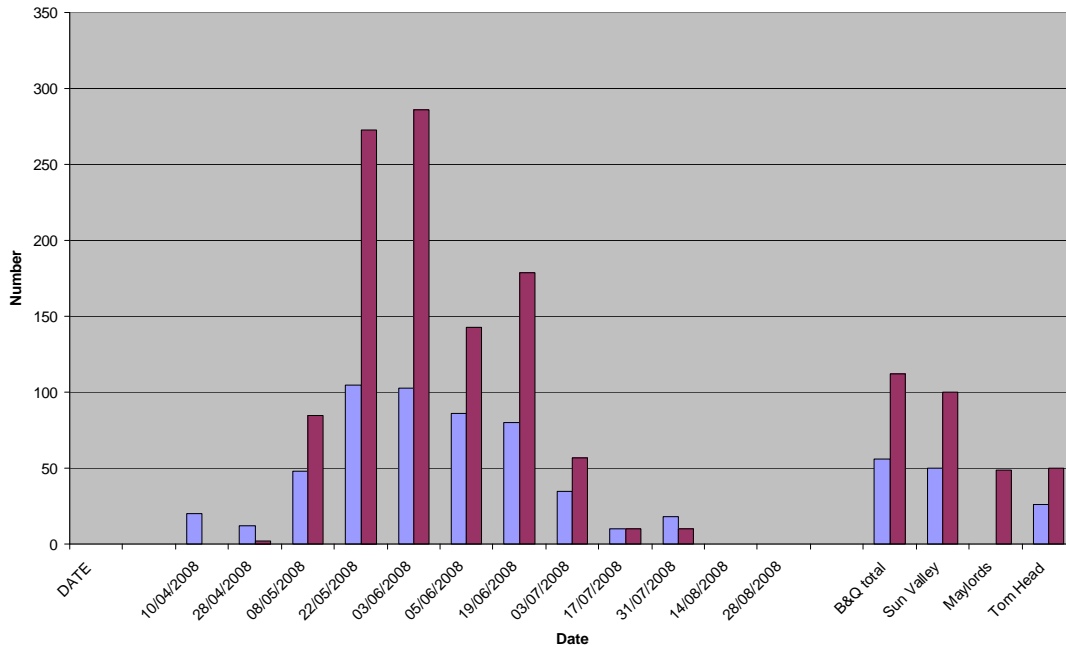
	Action	Lead Officer	Target Date	Achieved
1	Scope nature of contract	PJH	25 th Jan 2009	Yes
2	Put out at least 3 tenders for contract	PJH	29th Feb 2009	Yes – 5 tenders sent
3	Hold Urban Gull Steering Group, comprising Bulmers, Sun Valley Special metals, Cynthia Palmer, residents group activists	PJH	8 th March 2010 4 th March 2011	Yes – 19 th February 2009 Yes – 18 th March 2010
4	Appoint contractor to remove eggs / nests from April to Sept (11 occasions at 2 weekly intervals)	PJH/MAW	15 th March 2009	Yes – 19 th February 2009 Falconry Services Ltd.
5	Mail shot businesses to seek cooperation	PJH	17 th March - 14 th April 2009 Review 2011	29 th May 2009- & 15 th July 2009
6	Initiation of gull management control via contractor and shadow at least one day	PJH	May 2011	2 days Shadowing
7	Gull count in first week of May each year to review population and effectiveness. This to be collated with data from contractor.	PJH	5 th – 9 th May 2011	
8	Review waste disposal techniques in hot spot areas and liaise with Waste Mgt Section, Street Scene and private trade waste contractors re closed bins, night-time collection in city centre and Commercial Rd.	PJH	May 2009-2011	ongoing
9	Press releases and public awareness raising / education.	MAW/BAC	April – June 2011	
10	Review effectiveness of gull management control via contractor, at close of season	PJH	Sept 2011	Report then discussion with contractor

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APPENDIX 3

SEAGULLS	TOTALS	2008
DATE	NESTS	EGGS
10/04/2008	20	0
28/04/2008	12	2
08/05/2008	48	85
22/05/2008	105	273
03/06/2008	103	286
05/06/2008	86	143
19/06/2008	80	179
03/07/2008	35	57
17/07/2008	10	10
31/07/2008	18	10
14/08/2008	0	0
28/08/2008	0	0
B&Q Total	25	50
Sun Valley	20	80
Maylords	14	148
Tom Head	20	35
TOTAL	596	1358

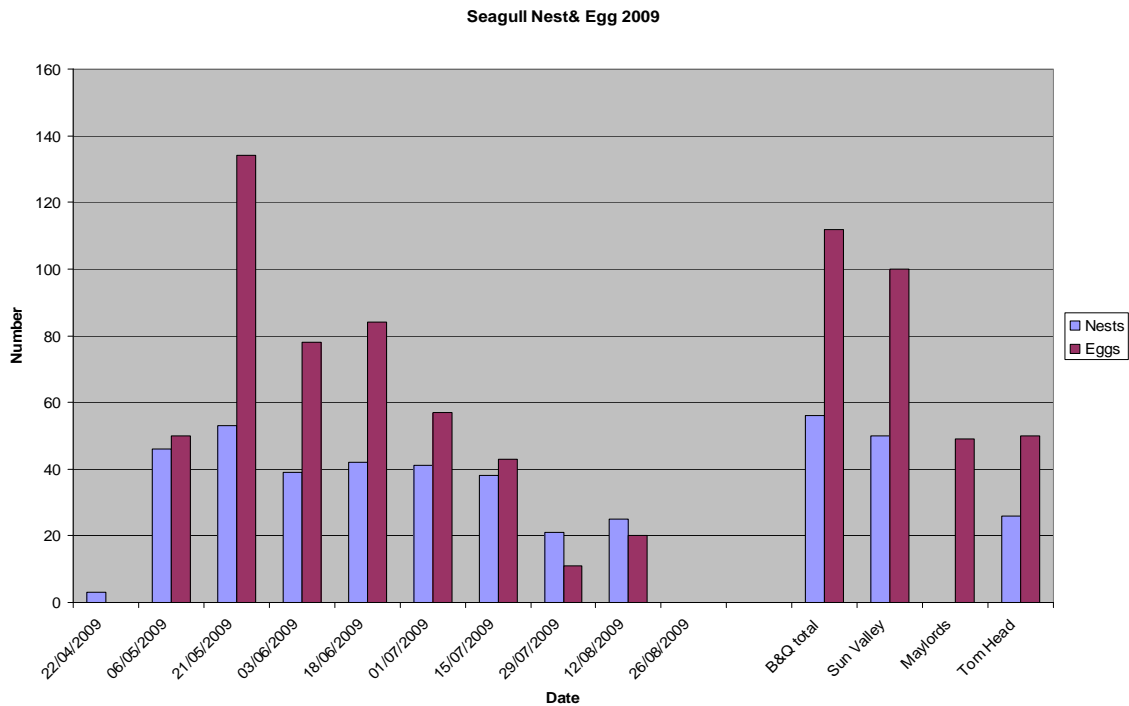
Seagull Nest & Egg 2008



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APPENDIX 4

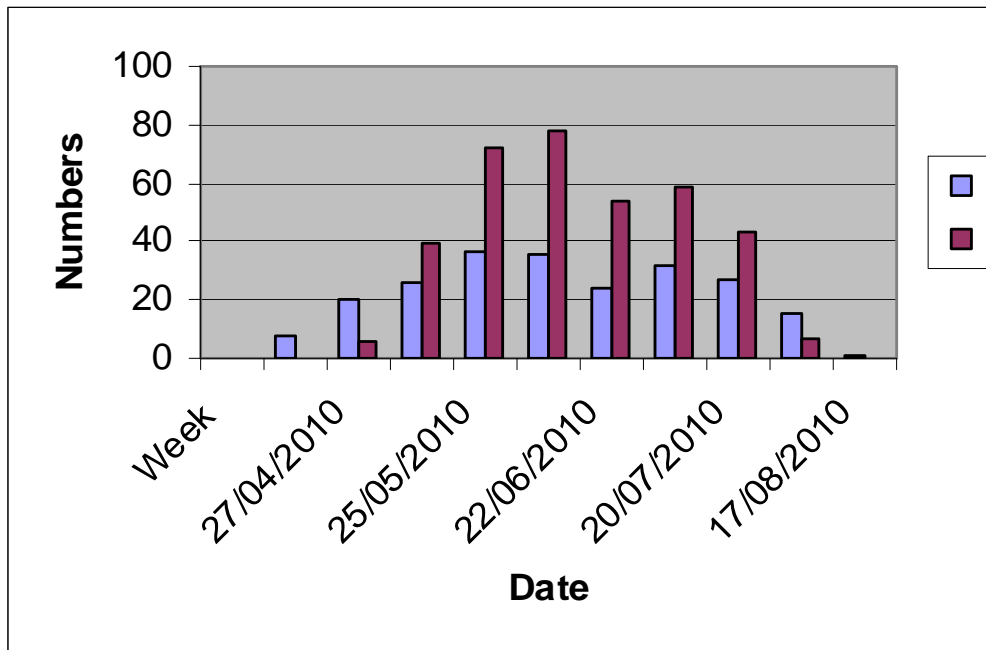
SEAGULLS	Nest and Egg	Collection
	2009	
Date	Nests	Eggs
22/04/2009	3	0
06/05/2009	46	50
21/05/2009	53	134
03/06/2009	39	78
18/06/2009	42	84
01/07/2009	41	57
15/07/2009	38	43
29/07/2009	21	11
12/08/2009	25	20
26/08/2009	0	0
TOTALS	308	477
B&Q total	56	112
Sun Valley	50	100
Maylords		49
Tom Head	26	50
TOTAL	440	788



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APPENDIX 5

Week	Nest	Eggs
13/04/2010	8	0
27/04/2010	20	6
11/05/2010	26	39
25/05/2010	37	72
08/06/2010	36	78
22/06/2010	24	54
06/07/2010	32	59
20/07/2010	27	43
03/08/2010	15	7
17/08/2010	1	0
Total	226	358



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