

Seabirds Count: Urban Nesting Gull Surveys

Seabirds Count: Britain and Ireland's 4th Breeding Seabird Census

Since 1969 there have been periodic censuses of breeding seabirds in Britain and Ireland. The last census was completed in 2002; due to the time that has passed, it is important another survey takes place. Seabirds Count was developed by the Seabird Monitoring Programme (SMP) partnership and is being coordinated by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC). Its goal is to gather vital data on the breeding numbers of seabirds, with the aim of understanding how distributions and populations have changed. Survey work started in 2015 and aims to be completed by the end of the 2020 breeding season.

As part of the Seabirds Count census, volunteers across the whole of the UK will be participating in surveys of urban nesting gulls during late April to mid-May, in both 2019 and 2020. These urban surveys will play a vital role in understanding how the UK population of both Herring and Lesser Black-backed gulls are faring. Herring gull numbers in natural breeding sites such as cliffs, rocky coasts and moorland declined by a third between 1986 and 2015. By conducting surveys of urban nesting gulls, we can understand whether these declines at natural sites are a product of these birds moving into urban areas, or if the declines are more widespread.

Volunteers are needed to either make a repeat count of an urban area surveyed in the previous census, or survey a 1km square. The method simply involves visiting the site once and counting nests/gulls that can be seen from the ground.

If you would like to help with the urban nesting gull survey in Sussex, please contact Alison Giacomelli with your name and the area that you would be willing to survey. Many thanks.

Contact:

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