

Gulls are medium to large-sized birds, often in flocks associated with coastal areas, sometimes feeding inland on tips, particularly in winter when our native birds populations are swollen by immigrants from the continent and elsewhere.

During the 20th Century, gull numbers have increased rapidly. In inland localities, especially outside the breeding season, gulls often roost 'm many thousands on large bodies of water such as reservoirs or flooded gravel pits. All species, when inland, depend on domestic refuse for food, although Black-headed and common gulls also feed on agricultural land.

Over the past twenty years or so, Herring Gulls - and in some cases lesser Black-Backed Gulls - have taken to breeding on buildings in coastal towns and inland, including private houses, hotels and large warehouses. Complaints about gulls are increasing as damage is done to roof fabric by pecking and the corrosive action of droppings. Gulls also cause damage by fouling buildings and washing on lines. Their nests block gutters and downpipes and they also damage plants. Gulls may also attack people.

The calling of birds on rooftop territories squabbling over food in the early morning is also a particular source of disturbance - this behaviour is not confined to the breeding season.

Gulls feed at refuse tips and have been implicated in the transmission of Salmonella. Their roosting on and pollution of reservoirs also cause concern.