

NESTING GULLS

Nesting gulls on your roof can lead to expensive repairs, clogged gutters and noisy neighbours for up to five months. If this sounds like a nuisance, acting fast (and early) means there are things you can do to discourage them from breeding on your building.

First though, it's only right to note red-billed gulls are a bit special. They seem abundant but actually they're in decline nationally (numbers are 50% down over the last 25 years). Like the kākāpo, takahē and kiwi, they are a protected species. The maximum penalties for disturbing wildlife are up to 2 years in prison or a \$100,000 fine, or both.

Ōamaru is a coastal area which means we're encroaching on their natural habitat. Gulls nest in urban areas all over the world and it's very common to have gulls nesting in coastal towns.

GET IN EARLY

Red-billed gulls start laying eggs from September through February so you need to put measures in place by July/August at the latest, when they will be looking for attractive real estate to develop and build nests on.

Decide/clarify who is responsible (usually landlord/building owner) and the potential issue and costs.

Regular roof checks and gutter cleans to remove materials *before* it becomes a nest is the best way to break the cycle and stop a colony forming. Gulls can bring in materials and start making nests very quickly when they get going. Remember, once they have eggs or chicks on the nest there isn't much you can do.



A GUIDE TO KEEPING YOUR ROOF FREE FROM NESTING GULLS



It is **ILLEGAL** to disturb gulls once they have active nests (eggs or chicks). Any measures to deter gull nesting should be in place by July/August. Red-billed gulls are creatures of habit and will return to a successful nesting ground, year after year, but any rooftop is a potential new site. If an old site is no longer available, they will move and not necessarily to the building next door.

Break the cycle...

- ▶ Work out who is responsible - tenants tell your landlord early if you see activity or have concerns.
- ▶ Before nests are formed, remove all material from the roof daily, or every two days, during early season. This will prevent egg laying and deter birds from the site.
- ▶ Be aware of who's using your roof. Schedule regular checks in late evening which is when foraging mates return.

The only truly effective deterrent is a physical barrier so...

- ▶ Bird spikes, wire, hawk kites and simple sprinkler systems are all effective if used correctly. Visit the Waitaki District Council website for more details on suppliers, costs and how best to use.

Don't encourage them...

- ▶ Don't feed them - they'll keep coming back for more.
- ▶ Don't leave rubbish around, keep lids on bins.
- ▶ Turn lights off at night. Seabirds are attracted to artificial light sources, so reduce this where you can.

More info on our website:
www.waitaki.govt.nz

