

Red billed gulls

Birds, eggs, and chicks are fully protected under the Wildlife Act.

They seem abundant but actually they're in decline nationally (numbers 50% down over the last 25 years). All seabirds are noisy, make a mess and exhibit aggressive behaviour to protect their young and territory.

Once they have laid eggs or have chicks there isn't much vessel owners can legally do without a wildlife permit, and even then only limited action can be taken, so make sure you consider the following deterrent methods to stop them nesting on your boat in the first place:

- ◆ Regular visits to your vessel especially in late evening when foraging mates return.
- ◆ Remove all items on the upper deck of your vessel.
- ◆ Use of micro netting or approved wires to form a matrix to prevent birds landing.
- ◆ Maintain your netting and make sure it is of a suitable size (around 50mm) to prevent unfortunate entanglement. Check regularly!
- ◆ Don't leave rubbish and food scraps around.
- ◆ Turn off lights at night - Seabirds are attracted to artificial light sources, so reduce this where you can.

Nesting can start as early as September and runs through to January. They return to the same place each year to nest, and the young will return to their place of origin so the situation will continue to grow if measures aren't put in place.

Measures need to be in place by July/August.

Deterring birds from one boat is likely to push them onto the neighbouring boat so all boat owners in the Marina need to be aware of the situation.

