

Berwick Wildlife Group

Breeding Gull Survey 2021.

Following the surveys of 2011 and 2016, The BWG decided to record the spread or otherwise of the breeding Herring Gulls within the Berwick/Tweedmouth area.

In 2016 there was a 10% drop in birds choosing nest sites on domestic housing estates out to the large industrial sites. This year it would seem that trend has continued, now adding more sites with the increase in Supermarkets to the area.

Over the years there has been pressure put on the local and county council to do something to discourage these birds bringing all the hazards into places where people live. The response was an increase in keeping the streets clean and additional waste bins were added and in the town centre chimney stacks were wired over to prevent nesting birds. To balance that, the public were asked not to feed the Gulls at home or elsewhere and not to leave litter and food waste in the street.

The results this year show a slight increase in some sites, but as always a survey of this kind is difficult to quantify and some nest sites have been overlooked. This is true for Highfields Estate area and the industrial sites at Sandstell, Spittal which were overlooked last time. We are finding that numbers are just about holding their own each year, with the majority of nesting birds in and around the mills and industrial units of Tweedside Industrial estate. Here there are large roof space areas, some flat and others with several gutters running through the centre of the buildings. Others on the Mill site are just too high up to clarify from the narrow access roads.

I have divided the area into 10 sites from the original 8 of 2016, as any sub-division has been enlarged with building development. The figures recorded are occupied nest with eggs or young, with any nest building recorded on the first visit clarified the second time around.

Only one pair of Lesser black backed Gulls were recorded with a nest this time compared to three in 2016.

They are recorded here as a migratory bird and have not succeeded in 'pushing out' the Herring Gull in contrast to other regions of the country.

Further-a-field, Herring Gulls nesting on the sea cliffs at Needles Eye are showing a slow decrease in numbers, which is true countrywide, with the BTO placing it on the amber list with the recent drop on its population in Europe. .

Berwick (North)	2021	(2016)
2016 in brackets		
(Ramparts – Newfield – Highfield.)	60 nests	(12)
Berwick (outside the Walls)		
(Hospital – Station – Castlegate)	22 nests	(24)
Berwick (inside the walls)		
(Town Centre – Ravensdown)	21 nests	(18)
Union Bridge	18 nests	(46)
	+ 2 Fulmar nests	(+3)

Tweedmouth. (West End – Main Street – Dock)	9 nests	(36)
Spittal. (Billendean Rd; - Crescent)	26 nests	no count
Tweedmouth. Highcliffe – Station Ind. Site)	24 nests	(25)
Tweedmouth. (Proir Pk. – Retail site)	40 nests	(28)
Tweedmouth. (Tweedside Ind. Estate (Simpsons))	122 nests	(178)
East Ord. (Industrial Site – Hiveacres)	4 nests	(6)

Finally, I must thank those members who volunteered there time to count and check, on what in some cases, was a difficult task. Birds often hide there nest sites out of sight in the centre of buildings and chimney stacks drawing comment by people curious to know why you are starring at there chimney with binoculars!

Thank you then to Graham Cundall, Michael Gallico, Liz & Eric Hardman, Molly & Robert Hardy, and Enid Turnbull. It was challenging survey, but I hope you gained some knowledge from it.

MHu.