

Fact Sheet

SILVER GULL DETERRENT SYSTEMS

Background

Silver Gulls, commonly known as “seagulls”, are Australian native birds that are part of our coastal environment, and as such they are protected under the *Victorian Wildlife Act 1975*. Under this legislation it is an offence to harm. Kill, destroy, take or injure protected wildlife by any means without a permit.

In recent years there has been increasing numbers of seagulls nesting on buildings in urban areas, such as the Frankston’s Central Activities Area. Seagulls can breed all year, but according to the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE), the peak breeding season occurs in Frankston from July to October each year.

Contributing factors

Available food supply:

Silver gulls are opportunistic feeders, meaning they will take whatever food is available, and their populations can increase when an abundant food supply is available.

Available roosting sites:

Available roosting sites in their natural habitat, beaches and headlands, are increasingly limited due to their current overabundance. This has caused Silver Gulls to find alternative flat open areas to roost such as roofs, car parks, boats and piers.

Lack of a natural predator:

The Peregrine Falcon is one of the Silver Gull’s natural predator of the Silver gulls and would have assisted in maintaining silver gull numbers. Due to overdevelopment and loss of suitable habitat the peregrine falcon is now rarely seen in Frankston.

Issues

The presence of seagulls in the Frankston CAA has a number of potential impacts, including:

- Blockage of gutters and flooding
- Contamination of stormwater off roofs
- Corrosion of metal roofs
- Amenity issues involving unsightly fouling of roofs, cars, work and recreation areas
- Creation of slip hazards
- Animal welfare

Preventative measures

There are a number of preventative measures available to help reduce the impacts of seagulls including:

- Restricting access to available food
- Roof exclusion structures
- Roof modifications to remove potential nesting sites
- Frightening seagulls by using recordings that imitate ‘birds of prey’;
- Removal of egg and nesting material from roofs but only with a DSE permit to do so and using a licensed wildlife handler.

Available food Supply:

Seagull numbers can be controlled by reducing their available food supply. This can be done through not feeding them and ensuring that food waste is not left at sporting events, the beach and unsecured in the street or in bins.

Any details regarding these activities should be reported to Council on 1300 322 322

Roof Exclusion Structures

The most effective long term solution is the use of appropriately fitted roof exclusion structures which prevents access to rooftops by Silver Gulls. When effective these structures will restrict Silver Gulls from roosting on roofs, causing the abovementioned issues, and eliminate the risk of birds becoming entangled.

An effective well designed system is:

- Made with UV stabilised material, to provide a long term solution
- Taut and checked regularly to maintain tension
- Installed by experience contractors who guarantee their structures
- Not harmful to Silver Gulls while excluding them
- Allows easy access for rooftop maintenance activities
- Eliminate access to the roof by Silver Gulls to roost

An ineffective design system is:

- Made with inferior material, for example fishing line, that only provides a short term solution
- Creates loose and broken lines that crossover
- Allows Silver Gulls to roost on the roof through access points
- Not allowing access for rooftop maintenance as inferior zip gate structures can corrode and fail

The ineffective and inhumane use of roof exclusion structures is in breach of State Government legislation and is a finable offence under the Wildlife Act 1975.

Further assistance

There are a number of companies that can provide assistance with the management of Silver gulls, including but not limited to:

Elite Bird Control	Contact:	Tel: 1300 675 502
ANC Bird Control	Contact: Michael Costello	Tel: 0417 113 397

Local Wildlife carers can provide advice to businesses and assist with care of injured birds, including

Animalia Wildlife Shelter (0435 822 699)
 AWARE Wildlife Rescue (0412 433 727).

Information regarding permits and regulations or issues relating to wildlife, contact the Department of Sustainability and Environment:

Wildlife Officer 136 186

Information regarding animal welfare, contact the following organisations:

RSPCA Mornington Peninsula Inspectorate	9224 2222
Department of Primary Industries Bureau of Animal Welfare	9217 4200