

Mediterranean Gull

Larus melanocephalus

Sorthovedet Måge - Zwartkopmeeuw - Mouette mélanocéphale - Schwarzkopfmöwe

Increasingly common breeding resident, uncommon in winter.

Recorded throughout the year, but very scarce during the winter months. They feed mostly on invertebrates in sheep grazed pasture, but they will also hawk for insects in summer.

The highest numbers fall between March and June when both breeding birds and passage migrants are present, with peak counts as follows; 210 in 2009, 143 in 2008, 250+ in 2007, 147+ in 2006, 125+ in 2005, up to 79 in 2004 and 62 2003.

Breeding was first attempted in 1994 and since then has occurred in most years and the population has increased dramatically. Numbers have increased significantly since 2000, with a maximum of 185 pairs fledging at least 250 young in 2010. The majority nest on the islands at Ternery Pool, where they nest among the Black-headed Gull and Sandwich Tern colonies. Birds colour ringed as chicks, and seen during the breeding season at Rye Harbour, have come from Belgium, Holland, Hungary and France.

The juveniles (right) have much less brown on them, their faces are plain and legs black – when compared with Black-headed Gull juveniles.



Adult in breeding plumage



Juvenile

Breeding Mediterranean Gull at Rye Harbour

