



# ersatz eggs

HELPING PUT YOU BACK IN CONTROL

## Bristol City Council - Seagull Population Control, 10-year Project

In Bristol, the pest control team have embarked on a 10 year project to tackle a swelling gull population, now estimated at 2,500 breeding pairs.

The increasing gull population in Bristol has been attributed to its historic docks and the increase in the number of food outlets. These two factors combine to give the gulls their natural wetland habitat and access to large volumes of discarded food waste which has helped them to thrive in recent years. The growing population however is no longer confined to the docks, as problems have been reported around shops, trading estates and to the cities outer areas, creating a headache for the Council which they desperately need to overcome.

The eggs were chosen by the Pest Control Team on behalf of Bristol City Council as they believe there are no other acceptable methods of reducing noise, mess and potential attacks during the egg laying and chick hatching season.

Pest Control Services Manager Richard Bevan says the investment in 2000 eggs is paying off dividends. "The dummy eggs are the only viable option left to us, they are far cleaner and less time consuming than dipping live eggs into the approved oil."

The team have found that the dummy eggs only require 3 nest visits per season; one to place the eggs, another midway through the season to check everything is ok and a final visit to retrieve the eggs at the end of the season so they can be washed ready for use the following year. This saves a huge amount of time compared with egg oiling which requires multiple visits throughout the season to ensure the oil is still sealing the live eggs. This reduction in nest visits helps to improve the cost effectiveness of imitation eggs over other control methods such as egg oiling and falconry.

Since starting the campaign the Council have received positive comments from the public and local retailers regarding less noise, mess and attacks during the breeding season. A spokesman for the Council believes inroads are starting to be made in some areas, however drastic changes are not expected for another 5 or 6 years.

Bristol has just completed its fourth year of egg treatment and is looking forward to continuing the programme in 2011 and through the rest of the campaign.