



ID GUIDE

COMMON GULL SPECIES

Gulls are one of the most familiar types of seabird—partly because some can spend a lot of time inland. However, it can be a real challenge to tell the difference between our most common gull species. This simple guide to adult gull identification will help you take the first step to becoming a gull guru.



HERRING GULL

Larus argentatus

- Light-grey back
- Black wing tips
- Pink legs
- Yellow hooked beak with red spot
- Around 60cm in length



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LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL

Larus fuscus

- Dark-grey back
- Black wing tips
- Yellow legs
- Yellow hooked beak with red spot
- Around 55cm in length



Did you know that there is no species of gull called 'seagull'? The word seagull is an informal word used to refer generally to birds like the ones shown here.

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL

Larus marinus

- Dark grey-black back
- Pink legs
- Yellow hooked beak with red spot
- Up to 78cm in length
- The world's largest gull



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BLACK-HEADED GULL

Chroicocephalus ridibundus

- Dark brown head in summer
- White head with dark smudges in winter
- Fine red beak
- Red legs
- Light grey back
- Around 35 cm in length



KITTIWAKE

Rissa tridactyla

- Silvery-grey back
- Black wing tips
- White head with dark eyes
- Yellow beak
- Black legs
- Around 40cm in length



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COMMON GULL

Larus canus

- Similar to Herring gull, except...
- Yellow-green legs
- Yellow beak (but no red spot)
- Around 40cm in length
- A 'cuter' face
- Despite its name it's not the most common gull species



Juvenile gulls look very different to their parents. Chicks start out fluffy and many species retain a speckled appearance as they mature to older juveniles—like these Common gulls.