

# Protocol to a citizen science action for monitoring Yellow-legged Gulls in urban areas – Portugal Mainland, 2021

This action for monitoring the breeding population of Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis* in urban areas will contribute to the national census that is taking place across the Portuguese territory in 2021.

## 1. How to participate

Anyone interested in join us, even without experience, can submit their observations of nesting seagulls in urban areas. Volunteers just need to know what a seagull is and should, whenever possible, send evidence to prove nesting (ideally a photograph, see below).

### Contacts:

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## 2. Period of this monitoring

This action will take place during the months of **May, June and July**. Volunteers can send their observations during this period, avoiding reporting the same nests, unless it is to send additional information (photographs, additional observations of chicks) that is useful to prove the nesting.

## 3. Monitoring areas and how to do it

The areas to be monitored in this initiative are restricted to urban areas where the species occurs during the nesting period (April to July).

Citizens can send **casual nesting records** if they know or come across a suspicious location (a pair of seagulls on a roof) or confirmed nesting location (nest with birds to hatch and / or eggs, chicks). But if they prefer, they can also **actively search for nesting places in a street or neighbourhood**, if they know that the species occurs there. In urban areas, the species preferably nests on roofs or terraces. They can visit areas that typically have the greatest potential for nesting the species (historic centres, fishing ports, marinas and surrounding housing areas). In addition to the presence of gulls, attention should be paid to possible indirect signs of nesting (considering that in most situations the nests may not be visible), such as territorial calls, greater aggressiveness of some individuals, dispute and interactions between individuals. If there is only evidence of indirect signals, if possible, the volunteer can contact a resident / owner of the building to inquire about the possibility of nesting gulls. It may also be useful to make a second visit (during the last three weeks of June and July) to previously identified suspect sites, to confirm the presence of juveniles.

#### 4. What should I record?

Both in cases of casual registration or active search, volunteers are asked to register all **confirmed nests** (with birds incubating, or with the presence of eggs or chicks) or **suspicious nests** that are able to identify and the location of each one (or a group of nests, if they are close to each other and are numerous), with the help of GPS (the GPS available on mobile phones may be used). Additional information can also be recorded to allow its subsequent location (e.g., 2 confirmed nests on the roof of number 51 on Rua Pedro Alvares Cabral; 1 confirmed nest on the roof of the Mini-Preço building).

Volunteers should be on the lookout for signs that may indicate nesting and note those that led to the nesting record:

- Constant or regular presence of individuals isolated or in pairs on a roof.
- Territorial calls; agitated or anxious behavior of an adult seagull; aggressive behavior of an adult seagull towards people or other seagulls.
- Presence of birds to incubate eggs or chicks.

**Whenever possible, a photographic record must be made that proves the nesting (of the couple, nest with birds or eggs, or chicks). A sound recording of adults or chicks can also be made.**

#### 5. Recording and sending the data

The information should be sent as soon as possible to those responsible for the census, so that the nesting can be confirmed, thus avoiding repeated registrations. Before submitting the observation, confirm that you have the following information:

- The location of the nest (description of the location, locality and parish, or alternatively, the latitude and longitude);
- Number of confirmed or suspected nests;
- Evidence of reproduction - birds to incubate, eggs or chicks present, possible breeding pair, couple with territorial behavior, aggressive behavior;

The sending of data should preferably be done through the electronic form (<http://bit.ly/censo-gaivotas-2021>), or in case of any difficulty in filling out the form, it can be sent to [nuno.oliveira@spea.pt](mailto:nuno.oliveira@spea.pt).