Dialogue Matters Ltd, Registered in England and Wales 7221733

Cumbria and Lancashire Gull Forum
8th February 2024

Workshop Output Report

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About the workshop and this report

Purpose of the workshop

University of Salford are applying for a funding grant to do research about human and gull interactions in Cumbria and Lancashire. This workshop brought people with different backgrounds, perspectives, and expertise together to share knowledge, understanding, and suggest priorities. This in turn will shape the research grant application, whilst creating opportunities for participants to work more closely together regardless of application outcomes. All workshop participants were invited to join the Cumbria and Lancashire Gull Network which will work together collaboratively to share knowledge, ideas, and resources.

The workshop brought together 27 participants in Lancaster in February 2024. Participants were from a range of backgrounds including research, local industry, conservation NGOs, education, birdwatching, and ecological consultancy. They shared their knowledge and ideas about gulls, what more we need to know, and suggested priorities for the Cumbria & Lancashire Gull Network to focus on. There was an opportunity for people to sign up to the Gull Network, as well as a discussion about how the network could best work together moving forwards. Participants also made offers of resources towards future work and research around gulls and their impacts.

About this workshop report

This is a record of what was said during the workshop. During the workshop, the essence of every point said was either noted by facilitators, or participants wrote their own points down themselves. Following the event, we collated all the outputs into this record and then sorted it out so that similar ideas, from within each conversation, are grouped together.

We sort it like this because conversations don't progress in a linear way, but go off on tangents, circle back and change direction suddenly – all of which makes reading it in that order difficult to understand. By sorting similar points together, the main topics and themes of the conversation become clearer.

When we are sorting the outputs, we let the ideas and then themes emerge, rather than use pre-set topic headings. This avoids bias and missing unique or unexpected points.

The ideas could have been grouped differently or different titles chosen, so no weight should be attached to them.

This report serves as a record of what people said and an *aide memoir* for those who took part in the workshop. We recommend a summary is created and used to communicate more widely.

This report follows the same order as the event.

Acronyms and terminology used in this report	Meaning
AON	Apparently occupied nests
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (now National Landscape)
BH	Black-headed gull
BTO	British Trust for Ornithology
CBDC	Cumbria Biodiversity Data Centre
C&L	Cumbria and Lancashire
CWT	Cumbria Wildlife Trust
DEFRA	Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs
EFSA	European Food Safety Authority
FLL	Functionally Linked Land
GBBG	Greater Black-Backed Gulls
GE	Georgia
GPS	Global positioning service
H&S	Health and Safety
HG	Herring Gull
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
LB/ LBG/ LBBG	Lesser Black-Backed Gull
LWHG	Large White-Headed Gull
Meso-predators	Medium sized predators e.g. fox, dog. In the absence of larger predators, meso-predators can claim the hunting grounds and food resources once controlled by top carnivores.
NE	Natural England
NL	The Netherlands
POV	Point of view
RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
RUEL Act	Retained EU Law Act
SPAs	Special Protection Areas
SSSI	Sites of Scientific Interest
UU	United Utilities

Parking Place

–Ecology and evolution -> flu and microbiome research	–Added to Section 2.2
–LWHG / BHG	
– Europe (NL, GE, Sweden Kappa Horizon Funded and EFSA)	
–How learnt behaviour is transferred between colonies/individuals – area to learn	–Added to Section 4.3.2
–The way gulls nest in rural/protected environments is different to that in urban -> due to predator -> this will impact how can transmit diseases	–Added to Section 4.3.2
–Coastal Protected sites – numbers on years gone by/now at sites	–Added to section 4.4.1
–Sharing and publishing data – putting it in the public domain	–Added to offers table, Section 6.3

Short term Actions following the workshop

What	Who	When
Type up all outputs	Dialogue Matters	ASAP
Sort the outputs and finish the Workshop Output Report	Dialogue Matters	ASAP
Send Workshop Output Report to all participants	Alice Risely, University of Salford	w/c 4th March

1 Vision Question

1.1 Imagine it is 2034 and you are at an event celebrating the successes of the Cumbria and Lancashire gull network. The two things that please you most are…

Gulls living in a landscape without significant effects on other species

- –Gulls can live in a landscape without significantly effecting any other species in the area
- –Reduced need for licensable/control action at urban/industrial sites
- –All factors are taken into consideration around impacts of gulls on the wider environment
- –Better understanding and consensus on what negative ecosystem services from gulls are important (or if they are even important)
- –The role of gulls in one health ecosystems

Perception of gulls have improved, and humans and gulls are living in harmony

- –Perception of gulls as pests is much reduced and they are appreciated in their own right as part of our natural heritage
- –That humans and gulls can live in better harmony
- –A greater understanding and appreciation of gulls
- –Reduce human conflict with gulls, more harmony
- –Achieve 'image overhaul' of the large gulls
- –Gull conservation seen as success story and gulls as a character of the North West
- –That we can learn more about them and how to help them better and make communities less appealing with litter

Mutual understanding and respect between people with different perspectives

- –Mutual understanding and respect between people with different perspectives

Healthy and stable colonies across UK and the NW England

- –Stable colonies across the North West of England
- –A healthy UK and North West population of Gulls
- –A stable gull population in balance with other local species and habitat
- –Healthy gull population well monitored and low conflict with others

- The management of traditional coastal gull colonies has led to sustainable population on these sites supporting the overall population and reducing risk of all in a single site.
- Maintain numbers of gulls (and range of species within study area)
- Stable Herring Gull and Lesser Black-backed Gull population (with numbers in natural settings increasing)
- Both species on 'Green list' of species of conservation concern
- Widespread contentment with the status, population and management of gulls across stakeholders
- Stable gull population at the regional level

Gulls are thriving in their natural environment rather than cities

- Gulls are more prominent in their natural areas, rather than cities
- Gulls return to colonial nesting in response to reestablishment of the apex predator – the Sea Eagle
- A sustainable LBBG colony in Bowland which contributes to the favourable donation of the SSSI and is in harmony with other features
- Gull populations at natural sites are restored. Industrial safety around gull colonies can be effectively managed and integrated
- Thriving gull colonies at carrying capacity
- Increased populations in natural environments
- Gull populations in protected sites recovered and stable with low amounts of ongoing intervention required
- Healthy gull populations nesting where they do not cause conflict
- A healthy gull population in safe areas
- A healthy natural gull population

Gull network and management

- To be part of a pioneer successful group in better full management

No longer needed

- No longer any need for a Gull Network

Action plan

- An action plan that makes thing better/minimises actual or latent negative ecosystem services, (if these are important)

Trusted multidisciplinary network

- Trusted Collaborative and novel multidisciplinary partnerships to understand the changing ecology of gulls and its impact
- We have developed a cross-discipline network that works together on gull issues
- Transparent, fair, robust, evidence-based gull forums

Better understanding leading to better decisions

- We have a[really good] better! Understanding of the drivers of the HG and LBBG demography, ecology and health, which has helped us make better decisions of gull management that benefit different communities and gulls – win/win!

2 Session A: The wider context for discussion about gulls

2.1 Thinking of the bigger picture, what trends and changes are taking place or on the horizon that need to be considered when thinking about gulls?

Political

Signing up to SDG and global biodiversity framework
- UK signing up to international agreement and obligations – sustainable development goals, global bio-diversity framework

More political buy in around gull issues and solutions
- For politics to invest more in gull control for happy people/gulls
- Political choices/shortage of money for councils to manage gulls using non-lethal methods
- More political 'buy-in' around gull issues
- Greater acceptance that lethal control is a viable option

Better education around gull issues
- Better education on gull 'problems', especially at the seaside sites

Are these transferable to other species?
- Are political issues relating to gulls translatable to other species/issues

Economic

Need to stop overfishing so enough food for gulls
- For the people to stop overfishing so there is food more available for gulls

Gulls impact on landscape and how that effects economy
- Impact on farming, water, land
- Quantify the economic impact – identify risk mitigation
- How gulls can Coexist in landscape without causing economic impacts to business in the surrounding area

Social

Change public attitudes through education
- For people to learn more about gulls to get along better with nature
- Education to value gulls rather than seem them as a problem

Mixed attitudes in the workplace
- Mixed attitudes within workplaces

Impacts of increased recreation in natural environment restricting gulls 'safe spaces'
- Changes in recreational use of natural environment – more people with less awareness of impact
- More restriction of 'safe spaces' to nest likely to push birds to spaces closer to people

Technology

Development of technology for improved research tools; tracking, molecular, monitoring
- Better research tools e.g. drones, sequencing, AI analysis. Better understanding of deterrent options for urban/industrial sites. Better understanding of LBBG impact on other species and habitat. – How to achieve a better balance tagging. Monitoring. Etc
- Increase availability of tracking technology
- More use of molecular methods to understand diet sources and pathogen spread

Basic methods still useful
- Consider some basic methods too – some data doesn't need high tech solutions

Legal

Post Brexit regulation review and new legislation for the environment
- Post Brexit regulation reviews i.e. RUEL Act, Habitat Regulations
- New legislation – biodiversity neg gain, extinction risk targets, environmental improvement plan etc

Changing legal framework – general licencing
- Changing legal framework e.g. SPA, Ramsar, general licencing

- Withdrawal of general licence and replacement with specific licence
- Retention of general licence
- More evidence based licencing (if needed) rather than licencing to appease vocal minority

Easier access to implement management solutions

- Easier access to implement management solutions to gull problems

Environmental

To better protect seas and nature

- To better protect seas and nature

Impacts of Environmental and behaviour changes on gulls

Changes to land use impacting gull behaviour

- Changes to anthropogenic and natural food sources (rubbish, tips, farming, marine resources)
- Changes to land-use (urbanisation, farming)
- Changes to gull behaviour and feeding habits e.g. closure of Salt Ayre tip
- ↑ pressure on natural colonies from recreational use of natural environment

Changes in predation (increase and decrease) impacting gull behaviour

- Changes to gull predation pressure (increasing or decreasing depending on site)
- Reduction in predator pressure by not flooding countryside with games birds and therefore increasing meso-predator numbers
- Increasing pressure on grown nesting seabirds from 'meso-predators' – fewer 'safe places' (dogs)

Gull interactions and implications for disease dynamics

- Changes in gull -> human interface and implications for disease dynamics
- Avian influenza/swine influenza
- Gulls as carriers of pathogens and parasites and antimicrobial resistance

Climate change effecting distribution and migration

- Changes in distributions and migration with climate changes
- Climate change especially sea level rise washing out saltmarsh nesting birds more frequently -> suitability of Saltmarsh for natural colonies

Better understanding of population dynamics

- Better understanding of gull population dynamics

Impacts of gulls on other species

- Impact of gulls on other species

Impacts of gulls on landscape; habitat, water quality and plastic pollution

- Impact of gulls on habitat
- Impacts on water quality
- Plastic – movement of plastic between sites e.g. dump -> hill-tops

2.2 Who is already doing what around gulls?

Who?	What?
Lancaster and district Birdwatching Society (200+ members, established 1959 Secretary President – Dan	Produce reports of all species annually. Collect data from all gull records received from members and other sources. Interested in FLL (Land Functionally – linked to the Morcombe Bay Spa for designation species (which includes gulls!). Half-was through a breeding bird atlas (published 2025/26) which will have all gull breeding to tetrad level. Our area is waaaay bigger than Lancaster and Morecambe - including North Lancashire and north from Fylde to North Yorkshire – also includes parts of SE Cumbria. Phew!
Natural England	Recent Survey of gull colonies Bowland
Local land managers	Survey of gull colonies in Bowland
Field Studies Council	Production of ID guides encourage a positive perception of gulls to the groups that we work with (mainly 10-18 year olds) Discuss issues surrounding gulls when appropriate

EDF Energy (Heysham Power Stations)	Annual survey of Herring Gulls and LBBG nesting population on site
RSPB	Encouraging positive management of gulls at natural sites
RM Seller	Annual Counts of selected urban gulls in Cumbria
Dumfries and Galloway Council	Recruited Environmental Safety Officer to oversee gull management – gull-proof bins, education, reduce of litter, prevention work, speaking to public about gulls
Grosvenor	Hosting Bowland gull colony on SPA
NE	Annual programme of colour ringing LBBG, HG and GBBG chicks at a selection of colonies
CWT	Two gull colonies on our reserves South Walney and Rockcliffe Marsh
NE	Working with RSPB and CWT to deliver LOTE (Life on the Edge) project supporting restoration of seabird colonies including large gulls
NE	Issuing licences for gull management where there is a genuine problem ie public health and safety
NE / DEFRA	SSSI/SPA consenting – ensuring eg Bowland LBBG/West Pennine Moors BH colonies not disturbed. Large gull productivity studies using citizen science/AI UK including Banks Marsh
Sellafield Site	Annual census / limited egg control 2000+ AON Significant safety issues. Working on effective mitigation / compensation to support risk reduction
RSPB – Forest of Bowland	Gull proof sheep-feeder trial Potential curlew chick radio-tagging study Helped NE colour ring and ground truth survey in Bowland
United Utilities	Host – ½ Bowland LBBG colonies Historically managed gulls Monitored water quality Historically surveyed bull colony
Europe (NL, GE, Sweden Kappa Horizon Funded and EFSA)	Ecology and evolution -> flu and microbiome research LWHG / BHG

2.3 If gulls could speak, what would they say?

References to popular culture

- Mine!
- Squawk!

We need a sustainable future

- We need a sustainable future
- More food. More habitat. Safe roost, nesting and feeding

What do you want us to do?

- What do you want us to do?

Safe home

- Where can we live happily again
- Where can I nest safely?
- We need a home
- Where will my chick be safe?

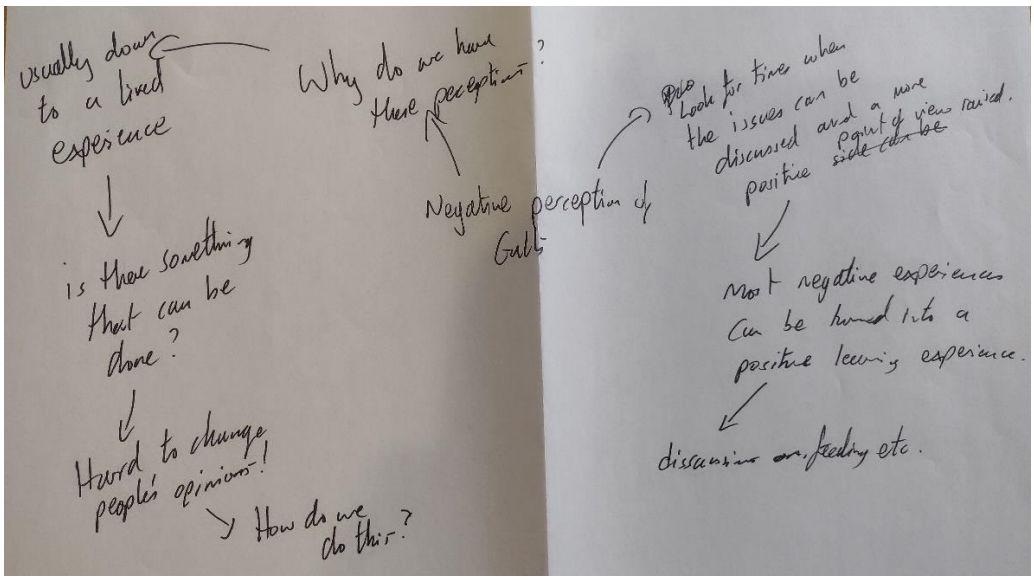
Where can we find food and more of it?

- More fish please
- Where is the nearest food supply? And how often do I go there?
- Where can I find food?

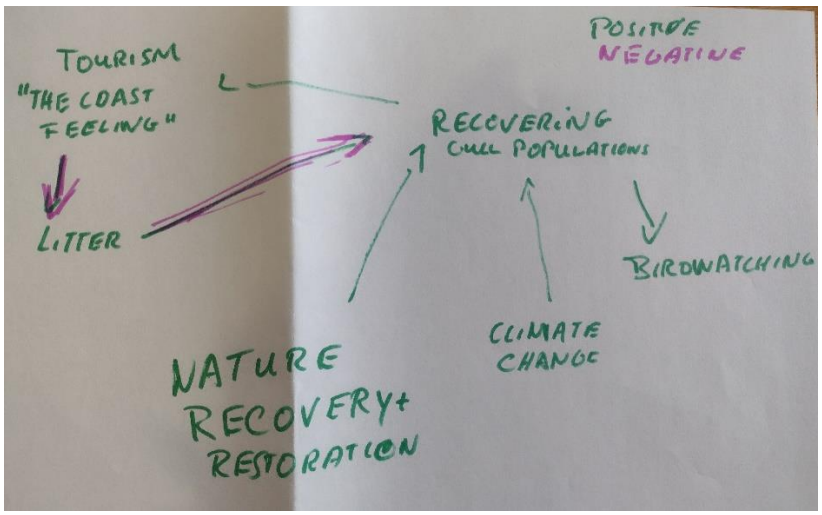
Where can I find a mate?

- Where can I find a mate?

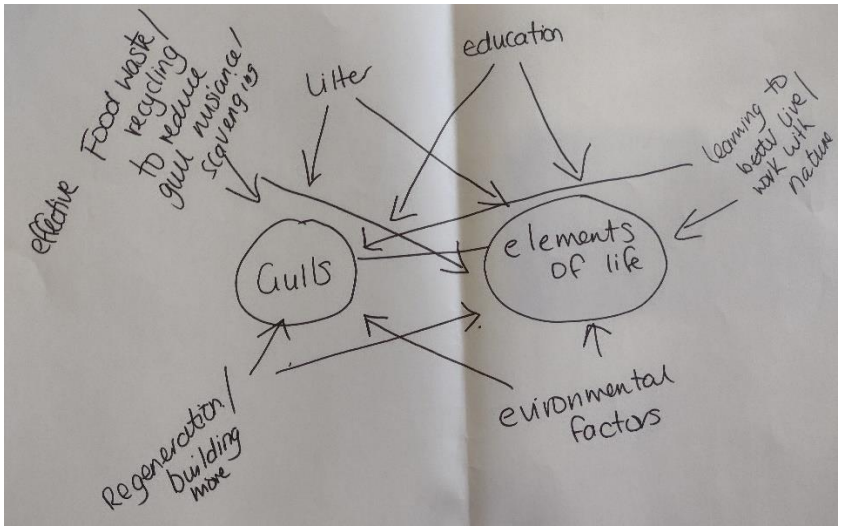
2.4 Identifying connections between gulls and other elements of life



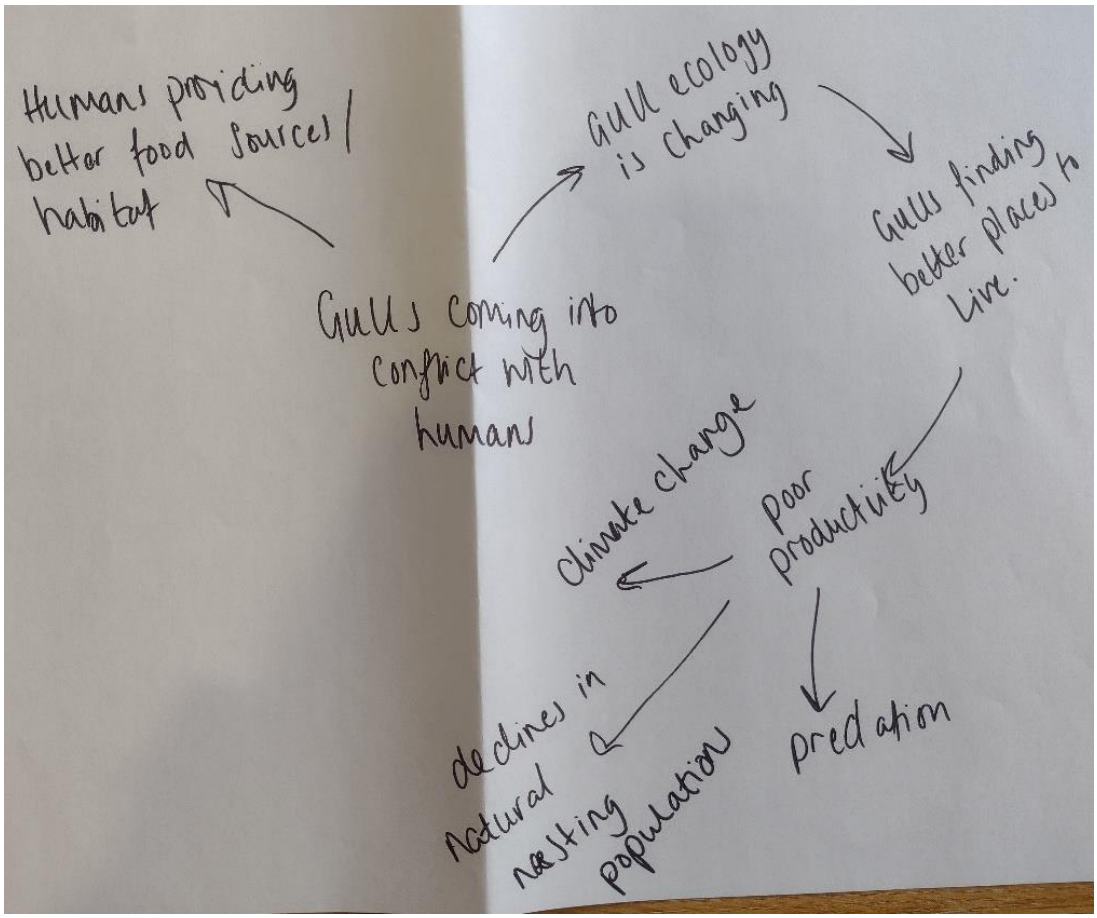
Negative perception of gulls



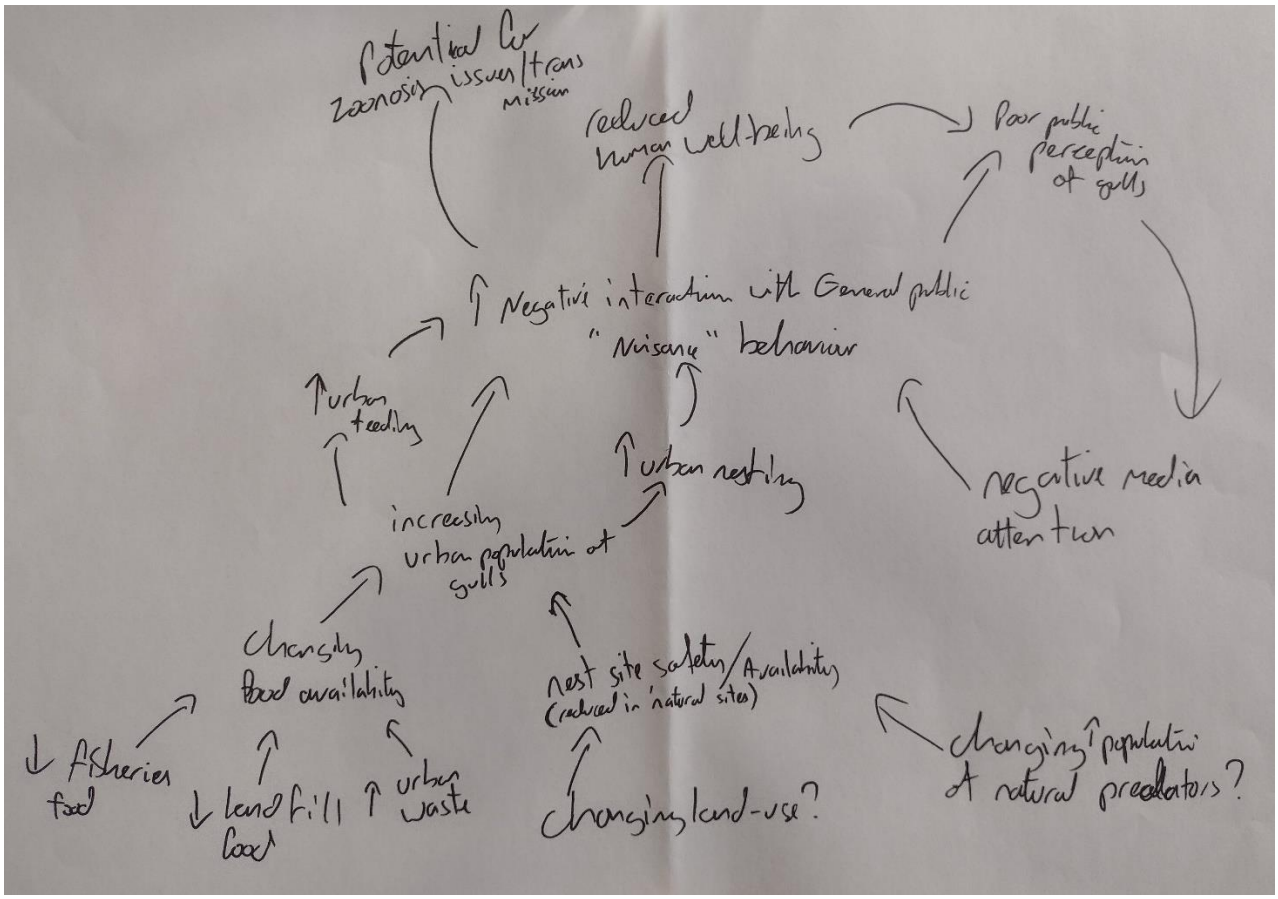
Positive and negative effects on recovering gull populations



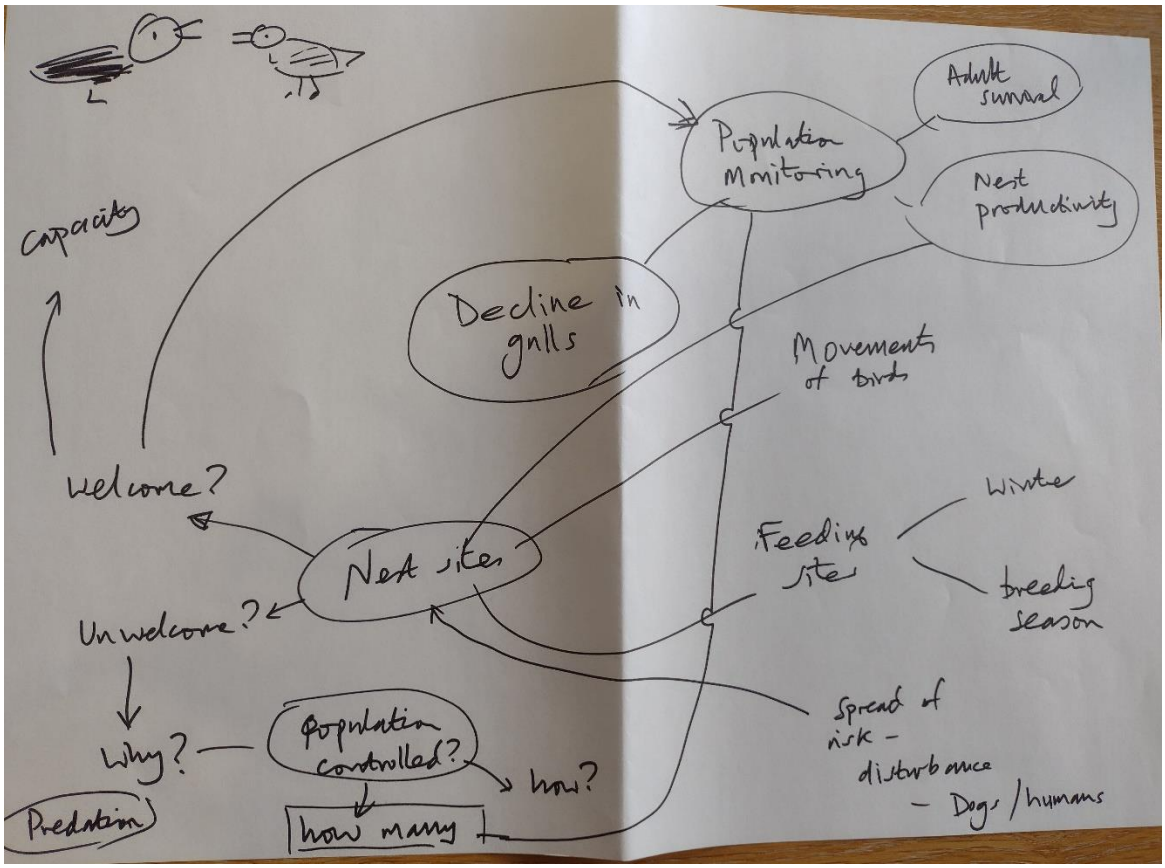
Connections between gulls and elements of life



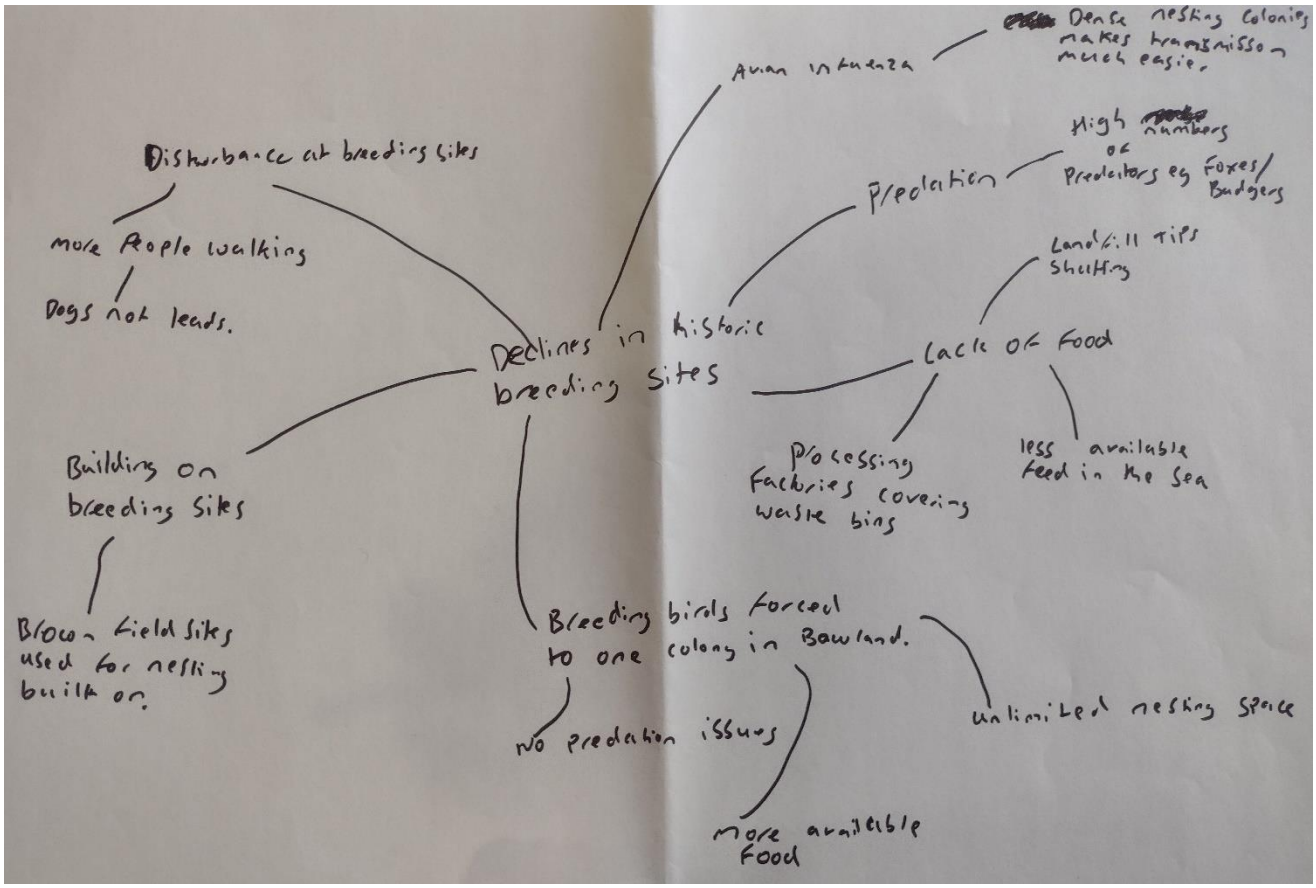
Gull/human conflict



Negative interactions with the general public



Decline in gulls



Decline in historic breeding sites

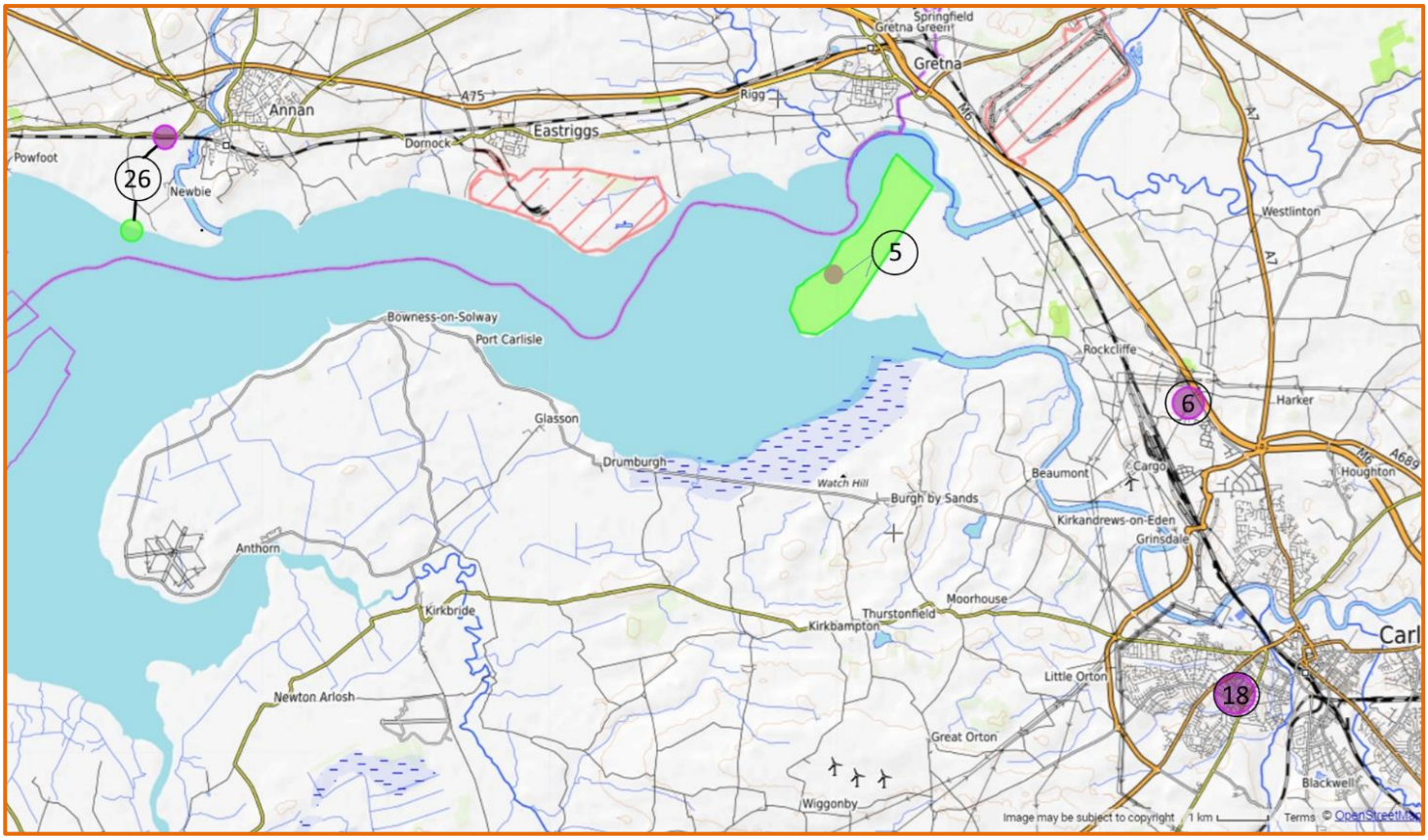
2.5 Where are gull populations now, and where would you like them to be in the future?

Participants marked paper maps to show where current population of gulls are (in pink) and where they would like gull populations to be in the future (in green). These marks have been converted into digital format and displayed in three maps below for ease of presenting. To see how these maps relate to each other see Annex 3: Maps in context. Any comments relating to a numbered map points can be found in the table below.

#	Map	Comment
2	C	Gulls in Bowland, concentrated in 2 dense colonies, impacting other species and ground damage. Increasing as other sites of Bowland decrease. I'd like to see a more widespread less dense distribution
3	C	Previous extent of colony on S. Walney
4	C	Heysham Power stations 2023 survey ~90 HG nesting pairs ~130 LBBG nesting pairs
5	A	Rockcliffe – current extent of colony
6	A	Rooftop nesting – displaced Rockcliffe colony?
7	C	Glasson Marsh – LBBG small colony 7 nests 2023
8	C	Barrow Urban gulls
9	B	St Bees RSPB SSSI – HG only
10	C	RSPB Hodbarrow
11	C	Colony on gas terminal – protected by security fence. Many formerly nesting at S. Walney
12	C	Haverigg Prison – displaced from SPA
13	C	Blea tarn reservoir – 1 pair HG
14	C	Banks marsh colony
15	C	Carnforth railway sidings – LBBG?
16	C	Lancaster university – roof nesting HG – 1-2 pairs
17	C	Glaxo Smith Kline buildings and nearby
18	A	Urban Carlisle colony
19	B	Lillyhall industrial estate roofs (HG, LBBG, GBBG)
20	B	Roof top nesting Workington Industrial park
21	B	Sellafield site. 2000 breeding pairs HG, LBBG, GBBG. Safety issues, limited egg control
22	C	New colony near Blackpool
23	C	Rooftop nesting in industrial building
24	C	New Preston colony
25	C	Current extent at South Walney. Used to be a very large colony at south Walney that collapsed. Now there is a predator fence there and colony is increasing
26	A	Gulls cause problems in Annan town upsetting locals
27	C	Foraging areas – (Mussel beds, boulder, and cobble icons in Morecambe Bay. Also used for loafing. Arrow indicates offshore foraging (BTO tracking data may illuminate)
		Note: References 28-35 were not used
36-59	B&C	Existing colonies Full details in CBDC 001 – issue 2 CBDC.org.uk

Maps in this report were taken from openstreetmap.org and marked up on scribblemaps.com

Map A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Gretna
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Rigg
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Bowness-on-Solway
Port Carlisle
Rockcliffe
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Glasson
Drumburgh
Watch Hill
Beaumont
Cargo
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Kirkandrews-on-Eden
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Anthorn
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Kirkbampton
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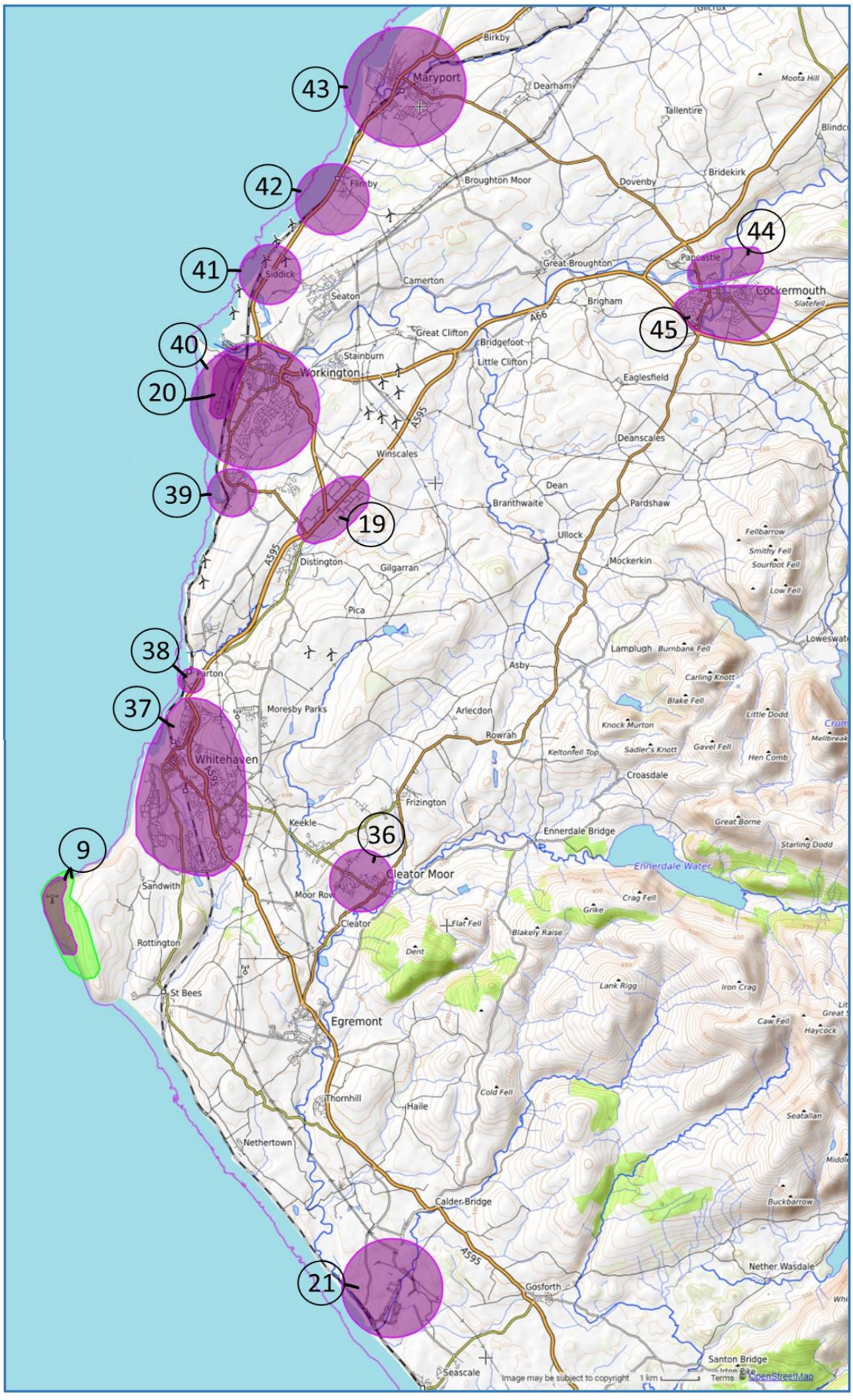
Map B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Dovenby
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Flimby
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Cockermouth
Slatefell
Siddick
Camerton
Seaton
Brigham
A66
Great Clifton
Bridgefoot
Little Clifton
Stainburn
Workington
Eaglesfield
A595
Deanscales
Winscales
Dean
Branthwaite
Pardshaw
Ullock
Feilbarrow
Smithy Fell
Sourfoot Fell
Low Fell
Distington
Gilgarran
Mockerkin
Pica
Lamplugh
Burnbank Fell
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Carling Knott
Blake Fell
Little Dodd
Moresby Parks
Arlecdon
Knock Murton
Rowrah
Keltonfell Top
Sadler's Knott
Gavel Fell
Hen Comb
Croasdale
Whitehaven
Frizington
Keekle
Ennerdale Bridge
Great Borne
Starling Dodd
Ennerdale Water
Cleator Moor
Sandwith
Moor Row
Crag Fell
Grike
Cleator
Flat Fell
Blakely Raise
Rottington
Dent
St Bees
Lank Rigg
Iron Crag
Caw Fell
Haycock
Egremont
Thornhill
Haile
Cold Fell
Seatallan
Nethertown
Calder Bridge
Buckbarrow
Nether Wasdale
Gosforth
Santon Bridge
Seascale
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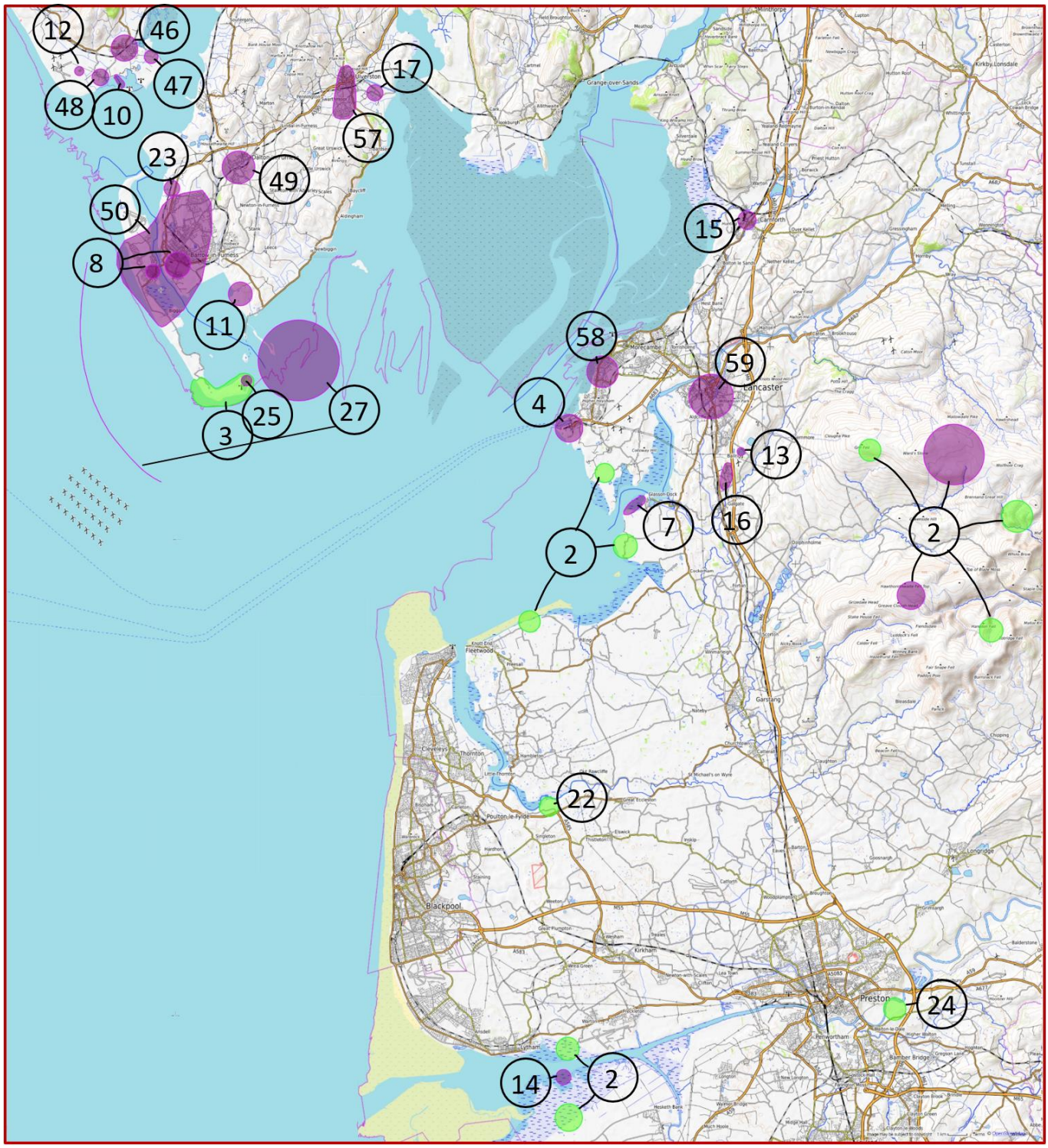
OpenStreetMap

Map C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Lancaster
Blackpool
Preston
Poulton-le-Fylde
Garstang

3 Session B: Thinking about gulls in different contexts

3.1 Protected Areas

3.1.1 How are gull populations changing in this context and why are they changing?

Changing populations

It's complicated
- It's complicated some increase some decrease

Decreasing populations, possibly due to higher predation
- Downward trends
- Higher predation in protected areas

Increasing population
- Roughly doubled/possibly tripled population

Change in historical feeding and nesting habits, moving away from the north and west
- Shifts in feeding/nesting
- Fair to say they have moved from North and West historical areas

Aerial surveys show LBBG colony with some HG

- Aerial survey LBBG colony/some Herring Gull

Levels of protection

- Are these legislations to protect gulls or…

Both species classified as least concern (IUCN)
- Both species have same level of protection
- LBBG species least concern (IUCN)

Bowland Fell needs protection from unregulated gull numbers
- Bowland fells need protection from unregulated numbers

Gulls will protect surrounding species
- Gulls will protect surrounding species

3.1.2 What important ecological, cultural, or other roles do gulls play in this context?

- Bowland colony LB

Gulls as protection and predation
- Impact part of seabird community
- Gulls act as protection to Eider in the colony
- In the fields they often don't do as well
- Contribute to predation and protection
- Individuals specialise in taking gull chicks (NL)
- Big predation problem at the moment
- What is the problem and how to address
- Does it encourage rodents

Ecosystem impacts
- Impact part of Ecosystem and sites
- Impacts vegetation composition
- Often negative impacts on vegetation composition
- Colony is very nutrient dense
- Impact of gulls on peat erosion
- Lots of ecosystem influences away from the colony

Intrinsic value
- Come with their own intrinsic value

3.1.3 What are the challenges with gulls in this context?

Long protected sites framework
- Protective sites framework is quite long

Understanding and balancing impacts for decision making
- NE want to understand and quantify the impact of gulls and balance in terms of decision making
- It isn't about protecting every colony, but understanding it's wider impacts on the population

Mobile nature of gull colonies
- Gull colonies appear and disappear before it gets any attention
- Colonies can be quite mobile, particularly if high predation

Gulls need a large ecosystem to support them
- Gulls need a large ecosystem to support them

Controlling predators on game sites
- Predation problem has affected:
    - Inflation in predation abundance
    - Because of more prey items
    - Because of gamebirds
    - Removal of foxes could be beneficial
- Impact of gamekeepers is positive
- Predators are well fed on game sites.

Who is responsible?
- Estates need help from NE
- Who's responsible?

3.1.4 What more needs to be done to maintain or enhance the important roles?

Lack of resources
- Funding, one of the largest barriers
- Some SPAs not functioning due to lack of resources

Criteria and prioritisation for funding
- Maybe a review needed to see where/why lack of funding
- Is it a case of what criteria is there for funding – is gulls one factor
- Peat part of these SPAs

Control structure involving NE
- Should Natural England be in control/who else?

Understanding populations
- Decline in population in Ribble have to be viewed in context of overall HG population
- Ribble more LBBG
- Walley/Rock Cliff roughly 50/50

3.1.5 What actions need to be taken to address the challenges?

Designate and encourage to protected/ acceptable areas
- Coastal SPA designated – different issues have declined dramatically
- Encourage them to where they are wanted

Deter predation
- Fence to prevent predation at Walley has led to population increase
- Fences one option to deter predators, what other factors attracting predators
- Urban foxes increased dramatically in 45 years – populations are localised

Addressing anthropogenic issues
- Addressing issues – anthropogenic such as fishing practices eg by catch law

Food source
- What food source available/what are they using?
- They will find the carrying capacity due to food source etc

3.2 Economic Areas

3.2.1 How are gull populations changing in this context and why are they changing?

Populations increasing due to increased productivity
- Increasing in industrial areas
- Increased productivity
- Rooftops and buildings
- 220 pairs in 2020 present survey- increase Heysham Power Station <31>
- 2022 – 2,000 pairs – Sellafield <5>
- Unmanaged nests are producing offspring

Populations increasing despite controls
- Population increase despite controls

Population at Sellafield stable due to controls
- Control is egg removal at Sellafield <5>
- 2,000 pairs at Sellafield
- Would have increased if not for controls
- Culls in targeted way
- Stable over the last 20 years due to culling
- Control= nest and egg removal

Sellafield to be a natural feeding colony
- Sellafield thought to be a natural feeding colony
- Less instances of landfill feeding in these areas – particularly in LBBG
- Visually not evident in these areas that feeding isn't natural

Negative impacts on businesses
- Negative impacts on businesses

Changes in regulations and licences
- Licence quotas reduced – probably caused a general increase
- Changes in the regulations of Culling

HG and LBBG populations
- 50:50 between HG and LBBGs
- More LBBG than H but an increase seen

3.2.2 What important ecological, cultural, or other roles do gulls play in this context?

Ecological

Important role in ecosystem
- Important role in the ecosystem

Feeding as part of the ecosystem
- Feeding naturally/feeding into the ecosystem – more natural trophic role
- Challenges in cutting off food sources – Gulls feed naturally
- Feeding at different spots/rates – going where the food is
- Establishing where LBBGs are traveling to feed
- Tagging LBBGs and seeing where they are going to feed
- Food supply having little effect as gulls are going where the food supply is
- Birds feeding in rubbish dumps is thought to increase productivity
- Coastal sources don't seem to have a feeding effect – positive <11>

Predation and birth rate
- 3 Chicks per nest seen as a standard
- No natural predators apart from humans as control
- Even with predation, there will be chicks
- Usually only raise 1/3 chicks
- Predation isn't really a factor on Islands with sea birds
- Predation by LBBGs

Social

Part of the character – Have a cultural role
- Gulls have a cultural/traditional role – especially in coastal areas.
- Memories of the sound they make
- We'd miss them if they weren't there

- Part of the character of the seaside – people would miss the noise

Gulls in the popular opinion – need a re-brand

- Rebrand – Gulls very recognisable
- Distinction between gull species

Down on the list of population

- If you want to make them more popular – you'd need to make them rarer
- On the population scale they are down on the list

Mixed attitudes towards gulls in industry

- Mixed attitude towards gulls from and industry perspective
- Outdoor workers get 'dive-bombed'. Depends on people's interest and educational backgrounds
- Doing surveys can cause you to get 'suckered into their lives'
- Majority review them negatively – potential fatality due to birds on verge of accident and hold-ups (working at height)

Cost of controlling and adapting management

- Sellafield generally decommissioning. They have a range of intermediate waste stores as a temporary measure
- This carries costs
- Safety impacts delays
- Sellafield costing millions of pounds in controlling. Huge amount of asset management
- 6 figure asset management costs in fixing/cleaning roofs. Access costs turning into the millions per year
- Mostly costs in waste removal and management

3.2.3 What are the challenges with gulls in this context?

Health and safety concerns

- No accident on current site but has been on a previous site
- Aggressive when they have chicks – protect their young
- Fly away when you are a few meters away – they don't attack you

Financial pressures

- Tax payers money in site management

Tension between management and protection

- Bird watching and love of nature – finding a middle ground
- Better to go back to Walney don't want to harm colonies
- Tension in the workplace – divide between people not seeing the effect from those working to management "Why can't you do what you have always done?"
- Sending emails detailing legislation changes
- Some think conservation effects dramatic
- Some people treat them as 'vermin'

3.2.4 What more needs to be done to maintain or enhance the important roles?

Nothing is currently being done

- Nothing is being done to maintain the roles

Financing

- Not easily paid for by the image

Finding and financing a space for gulls

- Discussion needed on where they are beneficial for people and the ecosystem

Sellafield providing habitat and natural feeding opportunities

- Sellafield providing nesting habitat and feeding in a natural habitat
- Conservation wise, they (Sellafield) are playing an important role

More to a 'natural' site?

- Replace Sellafield with a protected area and it would need paying for
- People don't like too many gulls on protected sites as they impact other people
- No such thing a 'natural' anymore

Assist Sellafield to deliver this?

- You pay us to look after gulls on industrial site as they are a conservation site
- If there is space at Sellafield, why not give that to the gulls?
- Farmers get paid not to kill things – protected hedgerows – make a profit from this
- Service to society and conservation, protecting a natural habitat
- Feeding in natural areas can be seen as conservation

3.2.5 What actions need to be taken to address the challenges?

Effectively mitigate effects
- Mitigate the effects
- Finding mitigation compensation methods that work

HG and LBBG declining in snapshot surveys
- LBBG and HG are mirroring each other in decline – only seeing a snapshot due to infrequent surveys

Finding effecting management methods

Need an effective management process
- We need effectively managed risk
- Habitat Regulation Assessment process
- Very little wiggle room with a government process
- Multiple management systems haven't worked

Adaptability of gulls poses a challenge
- Gulls adaptability provides management challenges but attributes their success

Culling/ removing eggs
- Larger egg quota
- If natural population is doing well they could be removed where they are not wanted
- Gulls will move to different areas if they are being culled
- HG either very stupid or resilient
- Baited trapping on HG very successful
- Colony of LBBG – went and culled a few – saw a reduction the next year
- HG site faithful – they keep coming back even if eggs taken
- LBBG more migratory and more common at Sellafield
- HG potentially less adaptive
- LBBGs migrate

Find something that works that doesn't involve killing gulls or eggs
- Find something that works without killing gulls and eggs

Gull proofing roofs
- Prison in Barrow changing roofing
- Nesting material in roof not effective
- Gull proof roofing Sellafield
- Gulls don't discriminate with roof substrate – nest in equal quantities not matter what the materials
- Can we use temperature or microclimate on roofs?
- Enclose roof – flood – drain wash (engineering challenges)

Human scarecrow
- Human scarecrow effect would have added to that
- Having a human scarecrow effective but not feasible

Provide safe alternative sites
- Provide safer areas for them to move to
- Spirit Energy – gulls have moved there <28>

Enticing chicks with sheep food
- Farming POV – gulls like sheep troughs
- Feed chicks sheep food

3.3 Rural

3.3.1 How are gull populations changing in this context and why are they changing?

Highly site specific, complex mix of factors driving population changes
- Highly site specific as to increase or decrease
- LBBG – mix of factors driving population change
- Unknown and complex interactions between factors

Are inland increases and coastal decreases linked?
- Inland and coastal populations are they linked?
- Increasing rapidly inland
- While coastal are decreasing
- Expanding colonies

Shifting breeding and nesting patterns
- Climate change causing shifts in breeding patterns?
- Inland increases linked to lots of nesting spaces

Non-urban declines
- Declining and shifting across rural (non-urban) contexts

Food availability driving population changes
- Rich food sources in local landscapes
- Food sources more varied now
- Feeding habits impacting other species – waders
- Feeding habits impacting other species in upland and bye-land areas
- Increased feeding on farmland
- HG linked to discards, so causal

Changes in management practices
- Changes in management practices
- Because coastal areas more often protected?

Recreational disturbances
- Recreational disturbance may account for variation in inland and coastal – fewer dogs on moorland
- Fishing boats driving coastal shifts in population?

Predator controls benefit gulls
- Predator control benefits gulls

3.3.2 What important ecological, cultural, or other roles do gulls play in this context?

Nationally and internationally significant
- Moorland colony make up ~60% of the English population: Nationally important positive/negative
- 3% of international population so significant and vulnerable

Part of ecological character
- Intrinsic value in gulls themselves part of countryside ecological character
- Culturally important as part of the landscape's character

Influencing wider ecological networks
- Within gull colonies, landscape is changing – structure of the peat by guano, erosion
- Sensitive landscape
- Sizeable, dense colonies (10,000) is changing ground structure
- Influencing ecological networks – known and unknown

Effects on breeding waders and sensitive species
- Effects on breeding waders and sensitive species on the Red List are impacted by gulls

Valuable food source and hobby
- Possibly, eggs were valuable food source and hobby

Transmission risk
- Risk to water quality and on public health grounds
- Pathogen transmission?

3.3.3 What are the challenges with gulls in this context?

Declining regional and national levels
- Declining national levels/populations effects other species
- National and regional context

Isolated colonies are vulnerable
- Gull population lack resilience as mostly in one area(s)
- Isolated colonies vulnerable

Large non-breeding population so achieving a stable population is difficult
- Difficulties with achieving a stable gull population
- Long-lived species that don't breed until 4/5 years
- Large non-breeding population so long-term commitment to stabilise

Looking after a vulnerable species while protecting other sensitive species
- How to look after a species that's vulnerable while looking after other sensitive/important species?

Replacing food sources
- Closed food tips were important food sources – what's the replacement?
- Lack closed food tips - impact on other species and on gulls survival
- Gulls are resourceful where other communities are not

Difficulties managing disturbances
- Coastal, rural areas – difficulties managing disturbances (nests, dog walkers,, etc)
- Protected areas have high hurdles for demonstrating control/impact
- Similar issues in non-protected and protected areas

Productivity counts to prevent local extinctions
- Monitoring young/breeding in species affected by gulls e.g. waders
- Prevent local extinction through productivity counts

Removal of general license makes them harder to manage
- General license removed so harder to manage

3.3.4 What more needs to be done to maintain or enhance the important roles?

Acting on known evidence
- Addressing problems that failing colonies are facing
- Acting on known evidence rather than going for research first
- Lots of information available including anecdotal
- Not always an action to maintain a colony where the landscape lack food/nesting

Reduce disturbance
- Reducing disturbance in coastal sites

Improved funding for habitat improvement
- More money/funding for nest protection/habitat improvement

Investigate specific colonies
- Investigate the specific colonies – one site is not the same as another

Manage 'nuisance' behaviour such as opportunistic feeding to improve intrinsic value
- Management of gull's 'nuisance' behaviour to improve intrinsic appreciation
- Direct opportunistic feeding of gulls elsewhere?
- Increasing awareness of gulls' value – not pests

3.3.5 What actions need to be taken to address the challenges?

More information required
- More information on where to make decisions on management
- Need more, clear evidence that gulls
- Rather than clear evidence which exists, quantifiable evidence
- Are there lots of evidence on effectiveness of management of gulls?
- In the 90's, programme using poison and shooting and caring and trapping
- Gulls learn to flee at shotgun sound
- Bigger picture, not colony by colony
- Shift to managing gulls across landscapes, not single colonies – single focus may have repercussions later on

- Are the gulls there because they have to be or are there other landscapes areas they haven't found by chance yet?

Proactive engagement in working together
- Proactive engagement from Natural England
- Everyone needs to work together rather than in isolation

Make, resource and execute a plan
- Make a plan and execute it
- Resource and support the plans well

What has happened to previously disturbed colonies?
- New colony formed as a result of disturbance on older colony
- What has happened where colonies have been disturbed previously?

Disperse colony to reduce impact
- Spread out gull colony to reduce impact on ground/landscape
- Previously done, but agreement fell through

Sterilisation?
- Sterilisation?

Impact on waders
- Wading bird chicks make up small part of gulls' diet 11
- – but could have a larger impact on waders 11

3.4 Urban

3.4.1 How are gull populations changing in this context and why are they changing?

Population and number of colonies is increasing
- Population is increasing
- Number of colonies are increasing
- Why? Because productivity is greater than mortality – hard to measure

Perception of population change may be different to fact
- Given this – why are LBG=amber list and HG are Red List?
- Perception may be different to fact
- Urbanisation of gulls will alter this
- Really hard to survey urban areas
- We strongly expect that they are increasing but its hard to know for sure

Moving inland
- Moving more inland
- No longer 'Seagulls' but 'Roofgulls'

More media coverage and perception of negative interactions
- Perception that more negative interaction in urban environments
- More media coverage

Implication of urbanisation on pathological diseases
- Implications of this urbanisation – i.e. zoological diseases and contamination has not yet reached the public but need to prepare
- Gull specific flu virus

Considering immature birds
- Need to consider immature birds

Lack of predation allowing colony spread
- Problem – we are losing from natural sites – because gulls rely on colony defence but without as many predators they are able to spread

3.4.2 What important ecological, cultural, or other roles do gulls play in this context?

Cultural importance – sound track to the sea and British sense of humour
- They are the most used species in sound tracks for being by the sea
- British sense of humour – interactions in urban areas – ie Steven the Gull / gull pinching food from Tesco

Media coverage encouraging people to learn
- Media coverage encourages people to learn more

Provide competition for food
- Less rats as the gulls eat all the food
- HG in urban areas will feed in local fields – impacting on other things that eat earth worms – is there an impact?
- Competition for food

Generalist species which is very good at learning
- Gulls have become more tolerant of man. They are generalist and opportunist so good at adjusting
- They are generalist as a species but individually very good at learning

Behaviour impacting spread of diseases
- Direct transmission of pathogens
- Gull behaviour and interactions could influence the spread of these diseases – high levels of interface

3.4.3 What are the challenges with gulls in this context?

Understanding and defining the impacts and gull evolution

Defining the impacts
- How to define the impacts – through these conversations to change the paradigm

Health and safety implications
- nesting material getting into vents – H&S of clearing
- There are areas of industrial activity where it is hazardous to work due to Gull activity
- Sleep deprivation – can be really physically impacting not just nuisance

Evolution of gulls
- How the gulls have evolved – ie certain deterrents no longer work

Managing negative interactions and identifying cost-effective controls

Managing negative interactions
- They get a bad rap – classed as vermin/nuisance
- How do we manage that interaction

Identifying better breeding sites
- Identifying better breeding sites

Effective and cost-effective control methods
- What are effective control measures on properties?
- Lack of expertise to offer advice for proofing
- Not cost-effective cheap ways to move them on – financial challenge to completely proof
- Would a deurbanization programme work?

Addressing the limitations of the NPF

Limitations of national planning framework
- National planning framework doesn't consider. Ie industrial next to residential and not consider nesting opportunity so they cross
- Hard to retrofit these
- Every planning application within 30km of an airfield must include to plan areas to attract so that they don't need to go to the areas you don't want them

3.4.4 What more needs to be done to maintain or enhance the important roles?

Fill in evidence gaps

Fill in evidence gaps to inform decisions
- Take step back and do science – need solid data to know the impact they have – what makes them good and bad and what impact do they have on other species not just humans
- Solutions need to be data based
- Fill in the evidence gaps to enable decisions to be made
- People's perceptions of gulls – assume negative but some may be positive
- Proof people are happy with them is the among of the feeding

Understanding how diseases can be transmitted
- Easy to leverage understanding of how disease could be transmitted within these kind of sites.
- High energy food sources are most important for transmission of diseases – ie 95% of food from fish etc but most important is the 5% from landfill

Connect and trial methods to reduce conflict

Connecting people who are trialling methods
- Need linkages with people who are trialling. We can piggyback

Deciding and designating methods to reduce conflict
- Is this appropriate? Do we not want them back in natural environment?
- Gulls are a way for people to interact with nature
- So designate urban areas where they likely to have less conflict

Educating each other from different angles
- Education
- Letter campaigns
- Of whom? – councillors, ecologists – everyone!
- Us educating each other from different angles
- Celebrate it – ie welcome to the town of Gulls

Provide predator free areas and gulls will use them
- Safe haven for gulls in Barrow in the British aerospace place – fenced off and gulls breed there
- If you provide a predator free area for them it will encourage them out of areas you want to protect

3.4.5 What actions need to be taken to address the challenges?

These are all linked
- These are all linked and feed into each other

Develop and fund partnership working

Partnership working built on common ground
- Danger politically where problems can become bigger that the whole
- How the conversation is had – important to control it (so it doesn't get out of control)
- More cross working between agencies
- Partnership working
- Where there is disagreement start on the common ground

More financing
- More financing

More understanding

- More understanding
- More understanding from a political view that there is an issue here

What determines population – food supply and nesting sites?
- Find out why – what determines – food supply and availability of nesting sites

Where do juveniles and young adults go?
- In Lucia LBG are carrying stuff (diseases) across
- Lack of understanding where the juveniles and sub-adults go to

See what is effective in different regions
- See what works in different regions

Devise relevant experiments
- Devise experiments that are relevant – these conversations are important in devising priorities

Effective measures

Identifying new colonies to break the cycle
- Identify places that have been newly populated – haven't established so smaller number – break the cycle with early intervention ie and airport - small population need to manage. Hard to get the message across at this point that something needs to happen
- Need to address challenges regularly to break the cycle. Needs to be ongoing
- Can we identify where these are going to be in advance?

Control food supply to control populations
- Control food supply to control population

Live more in harmony
- To live more in harmony with each other

4 Session C: Knowing and learning about gulls

4.1 Urban

4.1.1 What do we already know about gulls in this context? What is that based on? (e.g. data, research, observation, experience). Be specific about species.

Knowledge based on
- 2 censuses
- Case studies
- anecdotal on both species
- Observational data of aggression to humans
- A lot of it hasn't been qualified

Difficult to estimate overall population
- Difficult to estimate
- 2021 Census in England for gulls – used to be big confidence intervals, managed to narrow it down due to the methodology
- When organisations survey, often reference nesting or urban, not overall population

Lots of rural monitoring – need more in urban environ
- Rural areas lots of monitoring – not same in urban areas
- Need more urban productivity data

General trend of population increase in urban environment
- General trend is increase in urban gulls over the years
- Increase in urban areas is due to productivity – high amount of food etc
- Urban areas are safe and secure, easier to avoid predators

More foraging than nesting behaviour in urban environ
- More foraging in urban areas, less so nesting

Perception of gulls as a problem/ annoyance
- Often perceived as a problem but do we have the data? – regional, national etc
- Devizes, Wiltshire – annoyance (social media) on people

Gull adaptability – HG vs LBBG
- Do Herring Gulls adapt to urban sites better than LBBG
    - Usually urban nesting gulls are Herring Gulls
    - Bristol are more LBBG than Herring Gulls in terms of population

4.1.2 What more do we need to know to better understand and manage gulls in this context?

Define the context and social impact of gulls in urban areas

- What is the issue with gulls in cities
- Can't manage if we can't define problem
- What are the thresholds to define a problem
- Wealthy areas there's more complaints – is this reflected in abundance?
- Social impact of gulls on: people, business, well-being

Develop better understandings of gulls

More accurate survey methods
- More accurate survey methods
- Use drones for more accurate survey - counting active breeding nests

Better understanding of drivers of population expansion
- Better understanding of drivers of productivity, survival etc
- What are the drivers for population expansions?
- Could congregate around successful territories

Gull behaviour – flight paths and distance travelled
- How far do they travel?
- Where are the flight paths?

How learnt behaviour occurs individually and through colonies
- Learning behaviour of other individuals?
- How learned behaviour can be transferred through the colonies?

How and if disease transmission occurs
- What diseases (if they have them) do they have?
- does proximity to humans' matter?

Agree management plan to reduce conflict with urban gulls

Agreed management plan for urban gulls
- Agreed management plan for urban gulls

Reduce conflict with urban gulls
- Need to reduce conflict: Education, moving birds, also on industrial

4.2 Industrial

4.2.1 What do we already know about gulls in this context? What is that based on? (e.g. data, research, observation, experience). Be specific about species.

Access to a bank of historical data
- Historical data – ecological – from groups, but much has changed since then
- Animal Surveys
- Know more than in other contexts

Less data for Lancashire than Cumbria
- 2009 data in Lancashire, less available now?
- Don't know as well for Lancashire as Cumbria

Know the current situation
- How many we have, problems they're causing and where they are distributed

Noise complaints
- Complaints about noise (etc) from gulls in industrial sites

Mostly LBBG in Sellafield
- 15 pairs of GBBGs in Sellafield
- 2,000 mostly LBBGs in Sellafield
- Shift from more HGs to LBBGs in Sellafield

50/50 HG/LBBG in Hesham
- 220 pairs 50/50 HGs/LBBG in Hesham

Knowledge of behaviour influences

Industrial birds are more productive than non-industrial
- Industrial birds more productive than outside, but hard to separate urban influence on this

Why industrial sites are desirable – size and protection
- Size of industrial areas makes it better for nesting
- Broadly know why they like industrial sites – inaccessible to non-flighted species

Experience of deterrents effectivity
- Ulverston at GlaxoSmithKline – some displaced gulls (both HG and LBBG) partially solves problems of nuisance
- Experience of what deterrents do and don't work through trial and error
- Pull/Push strategy should include fledging success in natural areas
- Push/pull strategy applied to coastal

4.2.2 What more do we need to know to better understand and manage gulls in this context?

Identify knowledge gaps

- How much do we know about roof-nesting gulls?

Where and what they are eating

- Where they're feeding and what they're feeding on

Connectivity and origins of industrial gulls

- Where gulls that colonise industrial sites come from
- Need to know about connectivity between gulls that nest on industrial sites and gulls further afield
- What is it that attracts big gull colonies to industrial estates?
- More behavioural data needed on urban nesting gulls (to separate urban influence on increased productivity of Industrial birds)

How effectively manage roof gulls

- Bibliography on offer to support knowledge of how to manage roof gulls <27>
- How to manage one site of gulls, so doesn't move the problem elsewhere
- Not all industrial sites and issues are the same
- Sites may have different management approaches for the same/similar problems
- Where are they best applied?
- What success do control measures have? Gulls tend not to leave sites

Nestable roof requirements for HG and LBBG

- Difference between what different species consider a nest-able roof

Understanding and decide upon external considerations

Site tolerance levels and desired end point

- Worth knowing at each sites, how much tolerance there is for gulls on site eg Zero gull policy on some estates / warehouses
- What is the desired end point be for industrial sites? Industrial sites as cohesive/coordinated landscape

Ethical considerations

- Is it ethical to control numbers of a Red List species? Or when? Example: HGs nesting at end of a runway

4.3 Inland/Rural

4.3.1 What do we already know about gulls in this context? What is that based on? (e.g. data, research, observation, experience). Be specific about species.

Surveys and data

National/ international context

- Sea bird survey: national context
- LBG – least conservation concern IUCN
- Ground nesting gulls declining overall – seabird survey
- More than two times urban nesting than rural – seabird survey

Breeding data

- Shed-load of historic breeding
- Regular monitor of breeding in Belmont Island

Recent aerial survey of LBBG in Bowland

- Recent aerial survey LBG Bowland

Impacts of Gulls

Gulls impact diversion feeding of hen harriers

- Gulls impact diversion feeding of Hen Harriers - observation

Some predation of red-list waders by gulls

- Some degree of predation of gulls on waders
- red listed waders

Prevalence of various zoonotic diseases
- Prevalence of various zoonotic diseases on seabirds through colony (studies)
- Prevalence of disease in farm livestock
- Sheep – gull plus or minus campylobacter
- Can vaccinate sheep for campylobacter
- Potential impact of ticks – through vaccinate against so?

Impact on water quality
- Impact on water quality for:
    - Gull quality in Bowland -= 1.000x
    - Safe bathing water
- Regular water quality sampling

Impacting gulls

Restricting feed alters movements
- RSPB – gull proof sheep feeder trial if you restrict feed it changes movements

4.3.2 What more do we need to know to better understand and manage gulls in this context?

Logistics of decision making

Plenty of evidence – it is time to make decisions
- Plenty of evidence out there so its decision time

How to transition the data to knowledge and decisions
- Divergence comes in how we use that information
- How to make the decisions
- How we transition from data → knowledge → decisions
- Could be driven by different values and priorities

Better understand what is acceptable for all stakeholders (including gulls)
- What an acceptable number of gulls would be
- Query - can we change 'acceptable' to sustainable?
- Response – Used acceptable, rather than sustainable, as levels of acceptability would be different depending on context
- Knowledge of what the stakeholders want to make the decision more accepted
- Need to better understand perspectives of all stakeholders

How to maintain buy in
- What are the factors that would continue to motivate people to come to these forums
- Key is the buy in

Funding opportunities
- NE need to be funded properly to be able to undertake work
- Don't know the cost of the 'data → knowledge → decisions' process
- Where can this money come from

Better understanding of gull impacts, populations and management

Understanding and quantifying impacts
- Need to quantify impacts to be able to make decisions
- Water quality – good handle of coliforms but not associated impacts on water taste and odour

Understanding management outcomes
- Knowing what the outcomes are and what the benefits can be

Better understand population dynamics
- How does push pull strategy between colonies work – better understand population dynamics

Understanding how learnt behaviour is transferred
- How learnt behaviour is transferred between colonies/individual(s)

Nest differences that impact disease transmission
- The way gulls nest in rural/protected environments is different to that in urban due to predators – this will impact how disease can be transmitted

4.4 Coastal Protected Areas

4.4.1 What do we already know about gulls in this context? What is that based on? (e.g. data, research, observation, experience). Be specific about species.

Good idea of population since 1950s

- Monitored since 1950s. We know how many we have. Good idea of population
- Historical and up to date view on colonies, numbers past and present and how they have changed in relation to each other. <29>
- Numbers on years gone by/now at sites

Site declines coincide with global declines

- Site decline coincides with global decline

Decrease in coastal populations of HG and LBBG

- Massive decreased in coastal populations for both HG and LBBGs
- Decreased in natural coastal areas

Some HG recovery (South Walney)

- Some HG recovery but levels aren't fully recovering
- Increase in past 3 years in South Walney but nowhere else

Population decline perspectives are a matter of time and distance

- Some areas, people are complaining of too many, in others population's declining.
- Question of time and distance scale of decline

Pressure from food availability and predation

- Pressures include food and predations

Plans for new coastal protection

- Take into account new coastal protected areas
- Lots of planned for protection

Gull behaviour in the landscape

How gulls use landscape – tracking showing colonies have specific feeding areas

- Work being done in tracking gulls. This information is in the public domain.
- There is more to learn about how gulls use the landscape
- GPS work being done, colonies have specific feeding areas – new gulls in colonies need to learn this
- We know where they're feeding due to GPS tracking <8>

Gull behaviour – site faithfulness in response to stressors

- If they have a bad breeding year, they nest elsewhere the following
- If gulls are having a bad time, they'll move, site faithful until something cuts them off
- HG more site faithful in spite of stressors
- LBBGs will migrate if disturbed

4.4.2 What more do we need to know to better understand and manage gulls in this context?

Why populations change

- We don't know why populations change

Connectivity between colonies

- Is there transfer between populations or are they separate?
- We need to know if colonies are self-contained and how connected they are
- Keeping tabs on 3 colonies in Ribble, South Formby and Rock Cliff
- Is there connectivity between coastal/inland urban areas
- Raising chicks from these colonies and releasing
- Needs people to go to colonies on cliffs and mix populations
- Hard to do this as grass quickly gets high

Where and on what are they feeding?

- More information needed about diet
- Diet not straight forward – where are they feeding?
- Some go out to sea. Some use landfill

- What they're feeding on – knowledge gaps
- Colonies can collapse if landfill site close
- Distinction between feeding chicks and winter
- Limited data on winter feeding
- LBBGs migrate over the winter.

More reliable methods for observation

- Observations difficult as we don't know if we are observing the same birds
- More colour rings needed – 1000 rings per year?
- Radio tagging being done – Motus tag gets read as gulls fly past different places
- If gulls going over flyways – can be tracked to – few km

More information on predation pressures

- Do we need to know more about predation
- Predation pressures different on coast eg additional dog walkers
- Disturbance kept to a minimum on some areas such as Rock Cliff
- Seen nesting in no-reserve places with no disturbance. Some for the first time

Recognition/ identification of more protected sites

- Some sites aren't being recognised as sites
- There should be more than 3 protected sites
- We need to look for more protected sites and guide them there
- 10,000 sightings at Rimmel

5 Priorities

5.1 Out of everything that has been discussed today, what for you are the priorities for the Cumbria and Lancashire gull network to focus on?

Developing an adaptive management plan built on consensus

Ensure stakeholder buy in through consensus

- Finding consensus on where we want stable gull population to be breeding or foraging
- Finding ways to reach consensus on the ways to balance different factors/interests
- Understand the hopes of key stakeholders in regard to gulls in Cumbria and Lancashire
- Agreeing to shared goals/priorities across stakeholders
- Ensure support for works/research
- Stakeholder buy-in

Define goals of protected sites

- Are protected sites to protect the gull species or for protection of the other designated features against every expanding gull numbers!
- NE reconsider favourable condition on individual SPAs / SSSIs

Develop a realistic and ethical action plan

- What is the plan of action after this forum
- Realistically, legally, and ethically what can be done on/for gulls in the future

Cooperative working, and knowledge sharing

- Cooperative working between different stakeholders – 'joined up thinking' for management – e.g. how does management of an industrial site impact neighbouring sites?
- How do we share knowledge, learning, experience to achieve an 'holistic' approach to the gull challenge

Landscape scale coordinated and adaptive management

- Adaptive process of gull management
- Landscape scale management
- A coordinated approach to species management across stakeholders

Enable flexibility in licencing and legislation

- For licensing and legislation not to be so black and white and make it an easier/more stream-lined process in moving large, urban colonies posing a H&S risk
- Flexibility in licencing arrangements for proven responsible operators with genuine need for licenced activity – e.g. nuclear sites

Collect data to fill in knowledge gaps

- Start further research into gaps in knowledge which are needed to influence decisions
- Collect data to fill in key knowledge gaps that were identified today

Better understanding of the current situation

- Better characterisation of the numbers, distributions, and population trend of large gull in C&L
- What is the population/meta population structure of gulls across the region (and beyond)?
- Achieving parity of learning about rural and urban gulls
- Better understanding of gull population in the wider area
- Monitoring – long term view for more colour-rings being fitted and read

Understanding gull behaviour

- Cultural transmission and learned negative behaviours eg food snatching
- Define/quantify gull population dynamics (rural & urban)
- More research into mixing or not of breeding colonies
- Better understanding of gull movement/interaction in landscape
- Filling evidence gaps on gull population dynamics and impacts
- Colony exchange and what are the drivers for movement
- Finding out more about gull diet. Specialism of foraging strategies
- More research into feed behaviour in different breeding colonies
- Identify high energy resources that fuel populations of both species throughout the region

Drivers of demographic shifts in gulls

- Understand gull disease dynamics related to their ecology
- What role do diet and disease play in driving demographic shifts in gulls?
- Understanding causes of increased predation at natural sites

Understanding of the issues surrounding gulls and their solutions

- Greater knowledge of the issues surrounding gulls and what are the solutions – will need to research/data driven to get funding
- Building knowledge base on special distribution of gull impact and how to mitigate them
- Greater understanding of predator number inflation due to release of game birds

Wider impacts of gulls

- Understand wider impact of gulls on habitats and species
- Do gulls play a 'not insignificant' role in the maintenance of zoonotic pathogens in their region? If so, which gulls etc
- Fully understand impacts on water quality

Develop effective control measures

- Identify potential ways in which numbers might be controlled and for birds shifted from one site to another
- Access effectiveness of potential control measures
- Developing well-evidenced and reliable measures for improving colony success at natural and other sites where they are well tolerated.
- Where control is necessary, what effective measures are available and how are they licensed/implemented
- Evidence base decision making whether for reducing or increasing numbers
- Pull together evidence base to improve risk mitigation to reduce cull 'conflict'
- Mitigating risk at industrial and urban colonies
- Finding methods of mitigating/compensation that assist natural colony recovery
- How to better manage the gulls

6 Session D: Working Together

6.1 What do we see as the benefits of working together?

Making a difference to perception of gulls
- Making a difference!
- More positive perception of gulls for humans

Sharing resources

Achieve more together than apart
- Having more people on board = more likely to succeed
- We can achieve more

Share knowledge
- Multi disciplined
- Niche Knowledge
- Knowledge sharing
- Knowledge sharing
- Pooling knowledge/ideas – easier said than done
- The bigger picture
- Generating a better understanding of spatial scale of gull demography

Share learning
- Learning
- Finding out what works and what doesn't work
- Don't need to repeat the same mistakes
- Myth busting, anecdotes – if repeated can start to trust more

Share skills
- Different skill sets
- Sharing knowledge and skills

Coordinate activity and increase efficiency
- More coordination
- More chance of off-setting EA removing eggs and rehousing on our sites; carbon; net gain; etc
- Coordination for the benefits of protected areas – more efficient
- Opportunity to standardise approaches and methods
- More likely to monitor, improve and coordinate monitoring

Access to more resources
- More likely to be funded
- Access to more resources
- Access to sites for research
- Funding opportunities/opportunities to apply together
- Scale up projects – eg ringing – and makes longitudinal approaches more viable and successful
- Combining resources and seeing where research overlaps
- Financial assistance

Access to different contexts and new perspectives
- Having people of different views on the problem
- Different perspectives
- Generating new perspectives
- Bringing together people that have different problems
- Combination of knowledge from different experiences
- Speaking with people from different contexts

Establishing a gull network

- Establishing a gull network

Opportunity to share power
- Power sharing
- Opportunity to hear from voices not usually considered in decision making
- Empower all stakeholders to contribute to prioritisation

Identify & address shared priorities
- Address the priorities
- Understanding/identifying share priorities

More communication & understanding – reduces potential conflict
- More communication

- Reducing the potential for misunderstanding and therefore conflict
- Enable a 'no surprises' approach
- All sectors – hopefully avoids controversy

Better idea generation & decision making

- Better idea generation
- Enabling better decision by bringing together
- Enables better/well-rounded decisions

Challenge to maintain action

- Danger of management by committee – too much talking, not enough action

Fun and stimulating

- Fun collaboration
- Stimulating

Shared interest and understanding

- Sharing an interest
- Other people are experiencing the same problem

6.2 What ethics, values and principles should guide how we work together?

Wider influences

For the benefit of the environment/ species/ biodiversity/ Animal welfare

- Animal welfare
- Should overall be for the benefit of the species? Biodiversity? A balance?
- Notion of management is problematic – management is human centred

Law

- The law

Governance structure

Effective governance structure

- Having a structure of the network
- Effective governance structure – could mean groups and subgroups with different roles and responsibilities

Partnership working

- Partnership working

Values

The values agreed this morning

- The guidelines we agreed this morning
- Feel free to disagree but not be disagreeable

Respect

- Working fairly and respecting each other
- Respecting knowledge and experience
- Respect
- Common decency
- Respect
- Respect

Professional relationships

- Working together in a professional capacity, not making personal

Work in good faith

- Work in good faith

Shared decision making and realistic and achievable goals

Shared decision making to come to working solutions

- Shared decision making
- Compromise on solutions
- Workable compromises – not expecting 'perfection'
- Pragmatism in decision making – we don't live in a perfect world
- Managing expectation of network

Agreed priorities

- Agreed objectives
- Priorities are also subjective and vary widely

Realistic and achievable goals
- Realistic and achievable goals

Effective and appropriate communication

- Regular 2 way communication
- Not too regular – balance

Transparency
- Transparency
- Transparency – especially from bodies such as NE
- Openness and honestly between participants

Transparency and confidentiality when appropriate
- Transparency in a forum is interesting – may need non-disclosure agreement to allow more freedom of speech
- Confidentiality
- Transparency withing group but elsewhere confidential
- Respecting the space for free discussion and not misrepresenting outside of the group

Research

Good research practice
- Making sure the research is valid and good research and ethical
- Good research Practice

Evidence based management and decisions
- Evidence to inform and support action; evidence-based management
- Principle of making evidence-based decisions

Other things to consider

Importance of good coffee
- Good coffee

Difficulty of defining values due to subjectivity
- Values difficult as subjective and wide-ranging
- Difficult due to: Personal Ethics, organisational ethics, legal framework

6.3 What could you/your organisation offer towards future work and research around gulls and their impacts? (E.g. info, skills, methods, resources)

Offer	Name or badge number	Definite commitment	In principle	Don't hesitate to ask
People & Data (could commit to other with funding)	19	✓		
People & Data	20	✓		
People & Data	12	People & data		Labs /facilities
Data, Management land and heritage cultural/social benefit	34	✓		
People, management land and heritage	17	✓		
Education, possibly use research to inform	22		✓	
Potentially people, interpretation, data, project management	3		✓	✓
Time-Funded* project management, data people	29	✓	✓	✓ it depends
People to some extent, corporate funding, data, access to site	5		✓	
People to some extent, corporate funding, data, access to site	31		✓	
BTO – Time-funded* people, interpretation, data, promotion, project management	8		✓	
Time-funded* data processing, knowledge and knowhow, skills and project management * Time-funded = time would need funding	26			
Access to a big gull colony – Langdon Head	23			✓
Funding acquisition and data management	15	✓		
Data analysis and management	30	✓		
RSPB – staff time, data collection and processing partnership, project management – don't have money!	16			
NE – access to data primarily protected sites. - May be able to secure funding for specific research projects	9		✓	
UU – have historic data specifically around waste quality and gull population – access to credited labs	23	✓	✓	
Design and execute experiments and data analysis and have lab facilities and some resources to field notes	13			
Staff time	23		✓	

People / funds / interpretation / data / promotion / management land and heritage / cultural / social benefit	14		✓	
People / funds / interpretation / data / promotion / management land and heritage / cultural / social benefit	4		✓	
Making gull publications available and circulated (Cumbria biodiversity data centre website)	27	✓		
Local land management data	2	✓		
Sharing & publishing data				
Putting it in the public domain				

Annex 1 Agenda

'Cumbria and Lancashire Gull Forum'
8th February 2024
Agenda

9.45 **Getting Started – Registration. Tea, coffee, and pastries will be available. Starting activity.**

Add your thoughts to those of others in response to this question:

Q Imagine it is 2034 and you are at an event celebrating the successes of the Cumbria and Lancashire gull network. The two things that please you most are…

10:00	**Facilitators Introduction**	**Ross Freeman**	**Dialogue Matters**
	Welcome and briefing (incl. Cumbria & Lancashire Gull Project)	**Alice Risely**	**University of Salford**

10:20 **A. The wider context for discussion about gulls**

Visit each of the different topics below and share your thoughts

Bigger Picture

Q. Thinking of the bigger picture, what trends and changes are taking place or on the horizon that need to be considered when thinking about gulls?

Information

Q. Who is already doing what around gulls?

Understanding Gulls

Q. If gulls could speak, what would they say?

Identifying connections

Q. Capture connections between gulls and other elements of life

Gull populations

Q. Where are gull populations now and where would you like them to be in the future?

11:10 **Tea and coffee break**

11:30 **B. Thinking about gulls in different contexts (4 groups)**

a/ Protected Areas (AONB/National Landscape, National Park, SSSI, NNR…)

b/ Economic Areas (industrial sites, town centres, farms, estates, business parks…)

c/ Rural (including farmland, open landscapes, rural residential, not protected…)

d/ Urban (including towns cities, coastal resorts, residential…)

Q1 How are gull populations changing in this context, and why are they changing?

Q2 What important ecological, cultural, or other roles do gulls play in this context?

Q3 What are the challenges with gulls in this context?

Q4 What more needs to be done to maintain or enhance the important roles?

Q5 What actions need to be taken to address the challenges?

	Circulate, review, and add any additional comments
12:45	**Lunch (45 mins)**
13:30	**C. Knowing and learning about gulls (4 groups)** a/ Urban b/ Industrial c/ Inland/rural d/ Coastal protected areas Q1 What do we already know about gulls in this context? What is that based on? (data, research, observation, experience). Be specific about species (Herring gull, LBBG) Q1 What more do we need to know to better understand and manage gulls in this context? Q2 Out of everything that has been discussed today, what for you are the priorities for the Cumbria and Lancashire gull network to focus on? *Circulate, review, and add any comments.*
14:15	**Break (15 mins)**
14:30	**D. Working Together** Q1 What do we see as the benefits of working together? Q1 What ethics, values and principles should guide how we work together? Q2 What could you/your organisation offer towards future work and research around gulls and their impacts? E.g. info, skills, methods, resources Communication sign-up form – how do you want to be kept informed of progress?
15:00	**Wrap up workshop**
15:10	**Finish no later than this**

Annex 2 List of Attendees

	Name	Organisation
1.	Alice Risely	University of Salford
2.	Bart Donato	NE
3.	Ben Hibbins	NE
4.	Caitlin Henderson	Armstrong McCaul
5.	Dan Haywood	Lancaster & District Birdwatching Society
6.	David Elphick	Field Studies Council
7.	David Shelton	EDF Energy
8.	Emma How	NE
9.	Ian Hartley	Lancaster University
10.	Jeremy Duckworth	Bleasdale Estate
11.	Joe Murphy	Cumbria Wildlife Trust
12.	Joseph Jackson	Salford
13.	Laura Havieson	Dumfries Council
14.	Laurence Browning	NE
15.	Leejiah Dorward	Bangor University
16.	Neil Kilgour	Abbystead Estate
17.	Nick Curry	Sellafield
18.	Nicola Lewis	Crick Institute
19.	Nils Bunnefeld	University of Stirling
20.	Pete Wilson	United Utilities
21.	Philip Miller	RSPB
22.	Richard Birtles	University of Salford
23.	Robin Sellers	Local birdwatcher
24.	Roy Armstrong	Armstrong McCaul
25.	Sam Langlois	British Trust of Ornithology
26.	Sarah Dalrymple	RSPB
27.	Wes Davies	RSPB

Annex 3 Maps in context

Image showing the areas depicted in maps A, B and C in relation to each other.