**Hawking and falconry report for the Britannia Square area – w/b 13 April 2020**

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| Monday 13 April – no session due to Easter Monday bank holiday |
| Tuesday 14 April – session began 8.15 am   * Three pairs of gulls in the area at the start – around Numbers 28/29, 47/48 and the terrace that includes 10 to 13 Britannia Square. * A Harris’ hawk was flown; two of the three pairs moved away, but the pair at Numbers 47/48 was more persistent. They required targeted passes over their roosting/nesting site before they lifted off, although they remained in the immediate vicinity. * Five to six gulls were attracted in from the direction of the city centre due to the distress calls of the resident gulls. However, they only came as far as the area to the immediate south of the Square and did not enter it. They left after a few minutes. * The three resident pairs returned to their favoured locations later during the session and lifted again when the acoustic bird scaring device and hawk were deployed concurrently. * The gulls returned to Numbers 28/29 and 47/48 as the hawker/falconer departed; the last of the three pairs circled over the south-eastern entrance to the Square. |
| Wednesday 15 April – session began at 1.30 pm (approximately)   * Three pairs of gulls were present upon arrival – on or around Numbers 28/29, 47/48 and 10 - 13 Britannia Square. * A Harris’ hawk was flown. All three pairs lifted off. Two moved away from the area, but the pair at Number 47/48 circled close by. . * Six gulls were attracted in by the distress calls from elsewhere in Worcester; they remained for a short time. * When the hawker/falconer departed at around 3.45 pm, the pair at Number 47/48 had returned, but the Numbers 28/29 and 10 – 13 pairs had not. |
| Thursday 16 April – session began at 8.30 am   * The resident core of 3 pairs was present upon arrival – at Numbers 28/29, 47/48 and 8/9. * A hawk was flown; later, a young falcon. Six to seven gulls were attracted in from the south/city centre; they remained for a few minutes. * The Numbers 28/29 and ‘south terrace’ pairs readily moved off and stayed away. The gulls at Numbers 47/48 moved off, but returned after about 20 minutes. * The hawker/falconer noted that the persistence of the Numbers 47/48 pair suggests that they are close to egg-laying. * As the hawker/falconer departed, three pairs were observed above the main RGS site on the Tything. |
| Friday 17 April – session began at 6.30 am   * Upon arrival, a pair of young-looking gulls was observed in the vicinity of Number 39; they have not been seen before. The pair readily flew off when the falcon was deployed and did not return. * The pair at Numbers 28/29 was not present throughout the session; they were probably away feeding. * The ‘south terrace’ pair quickly moved off and did not return before the hawker/falconer departed. * The determined pair at Numbers 47/48 lifted every time the falcon was flown, but quickly returned to their nesting site. * Interestingly – and for the first time – none of the gulls issued distress calls when the falcon was flown and no gulls from elsewhere were attracted in to investigate. The acoustic scaring device was not used during the session. |
| Comment  No gull activity was observed in Stephenson and Albany Terraces during the week. It appears that the varied time of day, intensive programme of raptor flights is, to some degree, disrupting the gulls’ activities and appears to be deterring other incoming nesting pairs. It will be interesting to see if the young-looking pair observed early on Friday morning is seen again. The lack of distress calls on Friday and the reduced numbers and change in behaviour of the gulls attracted in from elsewhere by distress calls may be signs of habituation. |

Gordon Dugan

**Technical Officer (Gull Control)**

**Worcestershire Regulatory Services on behalf of Worcester City Council**