**Hawking and falconry report for the Britannia Square area – w/b 6 April 2020**

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| Monday 6 April - session began 1.00 pm (approximately)* Three pairs of gulls in the area at the outset – around Numbers 28/29, 50 and 13 Britannia Square.
* Fifteen gulls were attracted in to the area due to distress calls when the falcon was flown.
* The gulls attracted in left after about 15 - 20 minutes.
* Four pairs of gulls were in the vicinity when the hawker/falconer departed at 4.00 pm.
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| Tuesday 7 April – session began 8.00 am* Three pairs of gulls in the area at the start – around Numbers 28/29, 50 and 13 Britannia Square.
* A Harris’ hawk was flown; the three pairs moved off.
* Ten to fifteen gulls were attracted in from elsewhere due to the distress calls of the resident gulls; they remained for about 20 minutes.
* The main focus of gull activity when the hawker/falconer departed was around the Tything.
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| Wednesday 8 April – session began at 2.00 pm (approximately)* Three pairs of gulls were present upon arrival - around Numbers 28/29, 50 and 13 Britannia Square.
* A Harris’ hawk was flown; it is understood that the three pairs lifted off and moved away from the Square.
* No gulls were attracted in from elsewhere in Worcester by the distress calls of the resident gulls.
* When the hawker/falconer departed, the three pairs of resident gulls quickly returned to Number 28/29 and 13; there is some uncertainty about the return to location of the third pair.
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| Thursday 9 April – session began at 1.00 pm (approximately)* The resident core of 3 pairs was present upon arrival.
* When the hawk was flown, 5 - 6 gulls were attracted in from elsewhere; they moved off after about 20 minutes.
* There was a marked increase in the gulls’ level of aggression towards the hawk.
* After a report that the gulls at Numbers 47/48 did not lift when the birds of prey were flown, the hawker/falconer was asked to focus on this property; he reported that the gulls did move when the building was focused upon by the hawk.
* The hawker/falconer noted that the gulls were particularly ‘agitated’ by the presence of the hawk.
* Two pairs of gulls returned to the area when the hawker/falconer departed – to Numbers 47/48 and 13.
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| Friday 10 April – session began at 12.00 noon* Upon arrival, gulls were observed in the vicinity of Numbers 13, 28/29 and 47/48 Britannia Square.
* No gull activity was noticed in Stephenson and Albany Terraces.
* The acoustic bird scaring device was sounded at high volume by Mr John Ball when the hawk was flown; some 30 -40 gulls were attracted in; they remained for 15 – 20 minutes.
* Two pairs were observed at the end of the session – at Numbers 28/29 and 47/48 Britannia Square.
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| CommentIt appears that the gulls resident in the BSRA area may have decreased from 5 pairs to 3. If this is correct it may be that the birds of prey have possibly deterred two pairs of newly-arrived migrant or younger gulls. The remaining ‘hard core’ of 3 pairs may have been last year’s nesters who will be very resistant to being moved. It is interesting that on Wednesday, no gulls were attracted in by the distress calls and only a small number on the following day. Could this be a sign of the beginnings of habituation to the raptors? However, on Friday significant numbers of gulls were attracted in when the acoustic scaring device was used in conjunction with raptor flights. One of the falcons used in the operation was lost on Monday, but recovered again on Friday. Rather disturbingly, it appears that a third party may have attracted the raptor with bait and then captured the bird. The falcon’s original telemetric collar had been removed by the third party so the bird could not be traced immediately.  |

Gordon Dugan

**Technical Officer (Gull Control)**

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