



# Cambridge Primary Checkpoint

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**ENGLISH**

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Paper 1 Non-fiction

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**1 hour**

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**INFORMATION**

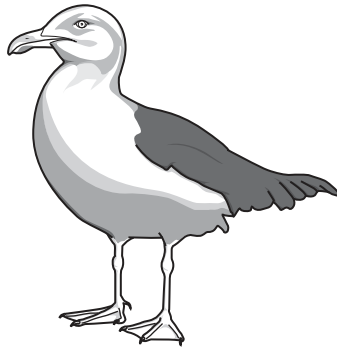
- This insert contains the reading text.
- You may annotate this insert and use the blank spaces for planning. **Do not write your answers** on the insert.



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This document has **4** pages. Any blank pages are indicated.

## Seagulls



Seagulls are common birds found all over the world. Let's take a closer look at them.

### Family

Seagull is a general term. When referring to a type of seagull, the proper term is 'gull' preceded by their specific species or name, such as 'black-headed gull'. There are many different varieties and species of gulls.

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### Characteristics

Seagulls have thick bodies, with long legs, webbed feet, long wings, and stout beaks which end in a hook. They have a small claw halfway up the lower leg that allows them to balance on high ledges without falling off. Their bodies are normally covered in white, grey, and sometimes black plumage. The colour of the head can vary by species, but is usually white or black.

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### Gender

It is difficult to distinguish a male seagull from a female. The male tends to have brighter, more colourful plumage, but the difference is so subtle that only experienced birdwatchers can tell them apart.

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### Habitat

Seagulls are common worldwide and can be found on every continent, with different species adapting specifically to different conditions. Although they are seabirds, the seagull has learnt to adapt over the centuries to take advantage of what urban environments can offer them. Most species come inland to nest, but where they choose to nest has changed. Making a nest on rooftops and in chimney pots may be preferable to dangerous cliff tops, but this can lead to confrontations between gulls and humans as gulls are fiercely protective of their chicks.

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### Diet

Seagulls are known as 'generalist feeders', which means they are highly adaptable feeders that target a wide range of prey, including fish, invertebrates, small mammals, amphibians, and reptiles, depending on the opportunity – even plants if necessary. In some areas where fish stocks are decreasing, seagulls

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have adapted to scrounge for food in towns and cities.

Gulls feed on water, on land or even in the air. They have a limited ability to dive below the water to feed on deeper prey, so will often hunt when large marine animals, such as orcas and grey whales, drive prey to the surface.

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### **Lifespan**

With an abundance of food, seagulls can live for more than 30 years. However, busy roads can lead to the untimely demise of many gulls, especially their flightless young.

### **Breeding**

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Seagulls mate for life and both parents take turns to incubate the eggs. During the mating season, they lay an average clutch of three eggs, with the young appearing about three weeks later.

### **Interesting seagull facts:**

- Seagulls are pretty smart birds. They not only learn useful behaviour but will teach it to their young. For example, if they catch a mussel and cannot open the hard shell, they will fly some distance to find a suitable surface to drop the shell on and crack it open to eat what's inside. They also follow farmers' ploughs in fields, where they know upturned insects will be plentiful. 45
- Seagulls have a complex system of communication, with a number of calls that convey important information to each other. They also use body movements as a form of communication. 50
- When away from land, seagulls can drink salt water instead of fresh water because they have a special pair of glands right above their eyes designed to flush out the salt through openings in their beaks. 55

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