



Figure 2. Two adults and four juvenile Ring-billed Gulls stand along the gravel embankments of the retention pond in Des Plaines, Illinois. Photo taken 1 July 2001 by Doris Johanson.

tions where gulls had been reported nesting on rooftops were posted to IBET (the Illinois birding list-serv), WISBIRNET, and the Cayugabirds bird list-serv (Cornell University and Ithaca, NY). Acquaintances posted similar requests for information to birding listserves in New York, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Connecticut, and elsewhere.

The earliest report of rooftop nesting gulls in North America, among those reported to me, was one of Herring (*Larus argentatus*) and Black-backed Gulls (*Larus marinus*) nesting on the roof of the Boston fish pier as early as 1960, according to Ferren. Steve Mirick of Newmarket, New Hampshire sent me a quote from the "Atlas of Breeding Birds of New Hampshire." Foss (1994) wrote, "Small numbers of Herring Gulls now breed along New Hampshire's mainland coast on salt marshes and smaller islands, and inland on buildings, bridge abutments and islands in the larger lakes. A population, which in 1980 produced 14 successful nests, on the roof of a large mill in Manchester had grown to 59 by 1984 (R.M. Bollengier, pers. comm.)."

In the Niagara region of New York and Canada, Ferren notes that Ring-billed Gulls seem to be quite resourceful as nesting birds. "For instance, they nest on the cliffs at Niagara, between the American and Canadian Falls. This is almost a 'mainland' kind of

habitat, but probably the cliffs serve as a predator-free habitat just because of the steepness that would keep raccoons at bay," said Ferren. This type of predator-free environment is likely what has attracted gulls to nest on flat-top roofs of buildings.

Within the last 10 to 15 years, reports of gulls nesting on flat rooftops have been on the increase in other locations. Steve Mirick mentioned an article in "Ontario Birds" by Blockpoel and Smith (1988) in which the authors noted Ring-billed Gulls reportedly have nested on a garbage dump near Ottawa, Ontario, and on a rooftop at Owen Sound, Ontario.

Robert Guenther, of Boston, Massachusetts, reported that Herring Gulls have been nesting in a roof garden at One Federal Street in Boston since at least 1992. "The roof garden is not at the very top of the building, which is 35 stories tall, but rather is adjacent to some executive suites about 10 stories up," he said. "The roof garden is roughly 40 by 80 feet, covered in coarse gravel with a boardwalk, and features a series of planters scattered about the roof. Typically, three or four pairs of Herring Gulls have nested there and have successfully fledged young. The nests are usually located underneath small crabapple trees in planters."

"One of those planters was six feet from the windows, and people really enjoyed watching the progress of the nestlings. During the nesting season, access to the roof garden was restricted to maintenance personnel. I haven't worked in that building in some years, and do not know whether nesting continues. Looking out the window of the building where I work now, I can see plenty of roofs and plenty of gulls (Herring, Ring-billed, and Great Black-backed) but no gull nests."

In the 1990s, Ferren, who has been researching birds in Rhode Island for many years, was among those who found Herring and Great Black-backed Gulls "nesting on the Galilee fish packing plant on the coast of Rhode Island. Since then, we have discovered numerous nests on buildings in Narragansett Bay at Quonset and Newport. They also nest on roofs on several small islands in Narragansett Bay where gulls also nest on the ground," he said.

Rachel Farrell, of Rhode Island, noted that "area birders observed up to 40 Herring Gull nests on roofs in Narragansett, Rhode Island in June 2001. Most nests were on a flat roof, but a few were on a shallow sloping roof. Small bits of twigs and grass were placed in a half-circle, to secure the eggs on the downslope."

Ring-billed Gulls have been nesting on rooftops in upstate New York since the 1990s. Jay Greenberg, of Rochester, New York, said "Ring-billed Gulls are known to nest on rooftops at the Marketplace Mall in Henrietta, outside Rochester, and also on a small island in a man-made pond at this mall. This was