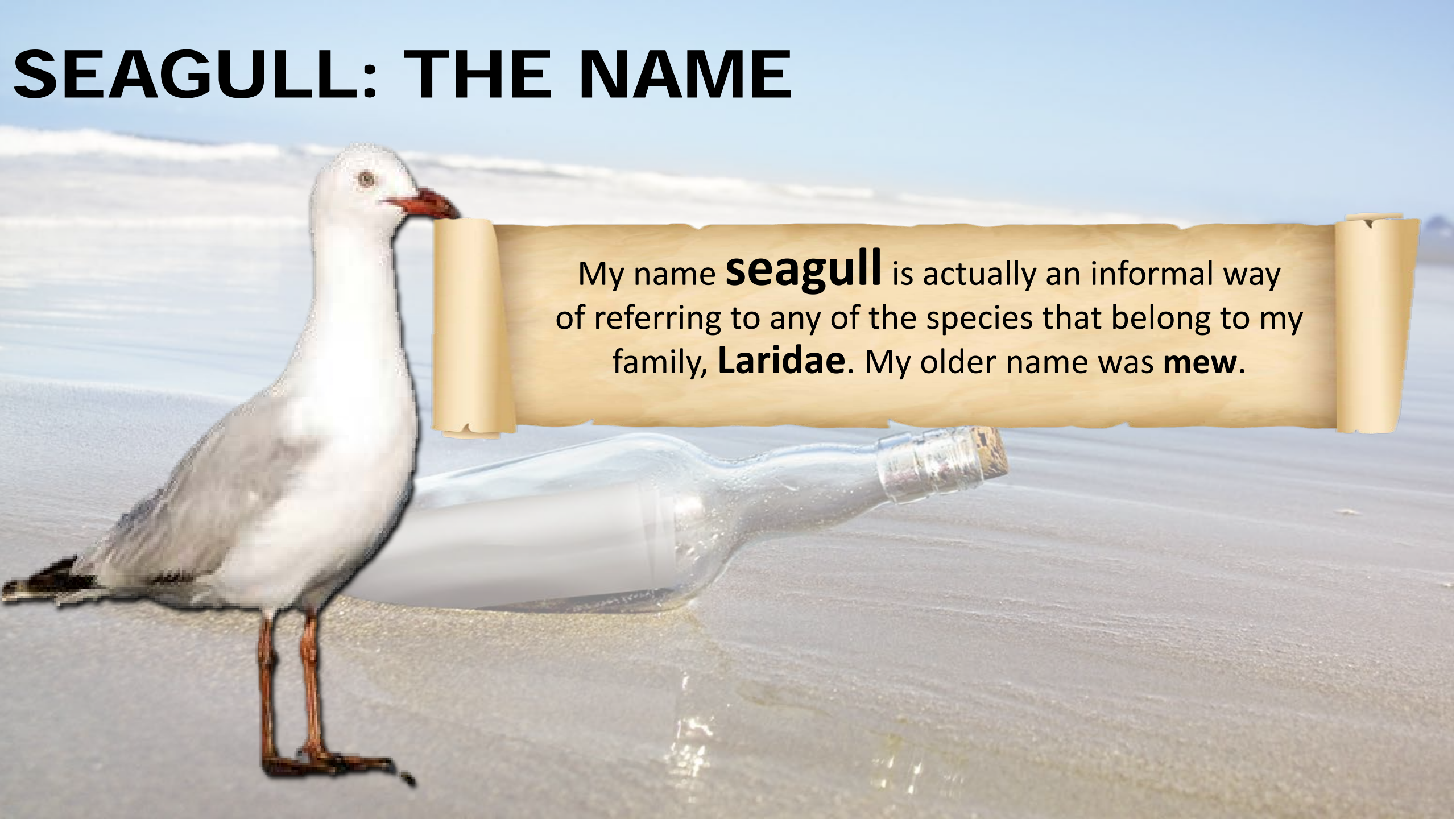




**OCEAN LIFE**  
**SEAGULL**

# SEAGULL: THE NAME

A seagull with white and grey feathers and a red beak stands on a sandy beach. To its right lies a clear glass bottle with a cork. A horizontal scroll of aged, yellowish paper is positioned in the middle ground, partially overlapping the seagull and the bottle. The background shows gentle waves of the ocean under a clear blue sky.

My name **seagull** is actually an informal way of referring to any of the species that belong to my family, **Laridae**. My older name was **mew**.

# SEAGULL: Scientific classification

KINGDOM

PHYLUM

CLASS

ORDER

FAMILY

GENUS

SPECIES

ANIMALIA

CHORDATA

AVES

CHARADRIIFORMES

LARIDAE



Oh God!  
I have too many  
cousins!

55

# SEAGULL: Genus, Species

Genus: *Larus*, *Rissa*, *Pagophila*, *Rhodostethia*, *Xema*, *Creagrus*, *Leucophaeus*, *Chroicocephalus*, *Ichthyaetus*

S  
P  
E  
C  
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S



**Family Beach  
Party!!!!**

**Guests:  
250.000.000  
gulls around  
the world!**

# SEAGULL: Physical Characteristics

The larger great black-backed gull (*Larus marinus*) grows to an average 70 cm,

while the little gull (*Larus minutus*) is around 28 cm.



# SEAGULL: Physical Characteristics

The background of the entire slide is a photograph of a large colony of seagulls on a sandy beach. The birds are mostly white with some grey and black markings. Several callout boxes are overlaid on the image, each containing a specific physical characteristic of seagulls. The callouts are arranged in a roughly vertical sequence from top to bottom. The first callout is at the top left, the second is in the middle left, the third is in the middle left, the fourth is in the middle right, and the fifth is at the bottom left. The birds in the background are in various poses, some standing, some sitting, and some with their heads tilted. The overall scene is bright and sunny, typical of a beach environment.

Larger gulls typically have long, pink legs, and medium or small gulls have yellow, black or red legs.

They are usually grey or white, often with black markings on the head or wings.

They commonly have harsh wailing or squawking calls.

Gulls have unhinging jaws which allow them to consume large prey.

Large white-headed gulls are typically long-lived birds, with a maximum age of 49 years.

# HABITAT

No matter where they are around the world, seagulls are never far from water.



## **Coast to Coast**

Seagulls live near the coast - any coast. There is no difference for seagulls between saltwater and freshwater. In fact, seagulls can even drink saltwater, as their bodies are adapted to filter out the salt when they drink it.

## **Living Amongst Humans**

Because these birds are so adaptable, they are used to living amongst humans, even in heavily populated communities.



## **Protective Nesting**

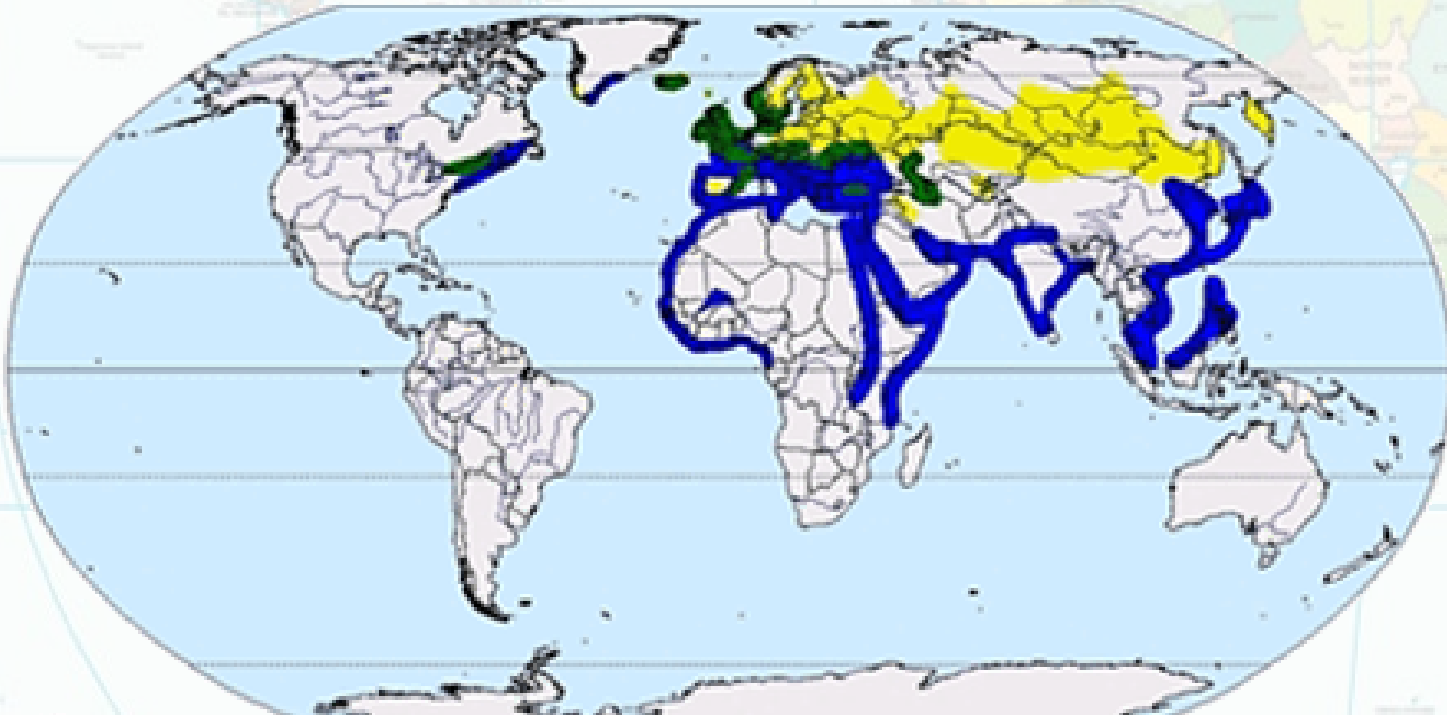
Seagulls are highly protective of their young and build their nesting sites on the roofs of buildings, closer to the water.



# POPULATION AND CONSERVATION

Seagulls are found along coastal areas all around the world, including North and South America, the Caribbean, Europe, Australia and even islands around Antarctica.

**Distribution world map**



## Conservation

Seagulls have a large range, with an estimated global Extent of Occurrence of 10,000,000 km . Their global population estimated to be 250.000.000 individuals.

## Conservation Status Scale



# DIET

## Diet

A seagull's natural diet consists of fish, marine invertebrates, worms, bird eggs, insects and rodents. However, gulls are opportunistic feeders who take advantage of almost any food source. That's why it's important to properly discard all trash and food waste when in the seagull's environment.

## Please don't feed the gulls

- It affects their health
- It encourages the stealing of food and waste
- It makes gulls aggressive towards humans
- It causes nuisance



# LIFE CYCLE

Gull mating season occurs in April and May. Pairs of gulls court each other in early April and females build their nests out of straw, grass, twigs and paper and lay two or three eggs in early May.

Average incubation is three weeks, at which point the infant chicks hatch around the beginning of June.

Gull chicks grow rapidly, and are ready to fly by August. They will reach full sexual maturity in three years.

The average life expectancy for most seagulls is between 15 and 20 years.

# RELATIONSHIP WITH HUMANS

Gulls are such a fascinating species. They exhibit really interesting behaviour but they are a bit misunderstood.

They are very clever and they have adapted really well to life in urban areas.

Sometimes, they like to steal human food and they can be quite aggressive. .

But the fact they are able to take advantage of every opportunity they can get, is just really interesting..



# THREATS

Although seagulls are on the “least concern” conservation status scale, scientists report that within the last 50 years, 200 species have disappeared. In 1970’s there were 245 species of seagulls while currently 55 are only reported.

The fact that they continue to rapidly lose ground demonstrates that even relatively common species can never be taken for granted.

Populations of most seabirds tend to decline because of a combination of human activities.

They are particularly vulnerable to climate change, which disturbs the balance of marine ecosystems and alters the availability of prey species on which seabirds feed.

# THREATS

Threats include oil pollution, organic pollutants and other hazardous substances, food shortages resulting from overfishing, bycatches, disturbance of nesting sites, alien species, and climate change.

Seagulls are particularly vulnerable to plastic pollution and are widely observed to ingest floating plastic.

Seagulls are putting their lives at risk as they eat too much junk food, that humans leave on beaches.

Oil spills in oceans affect Seagulls. Many oiled seagulls eventually succumb to exhaustion, dehydration, or starvation.

Sharks and marine mammals bite gulls who rest on the water or dive for fish.



# IMPORTANCE TO ECOSYSTEMS

Seagulls are an important component of marine ecosystems.

Historically, seabirds and their eggs were a vital part of the diet.

Many seabirds have specialized feeding habits and are at the top of food chains. This explains why they are useful indicators of the health of coastal ecosystems: it is possible to use seabird numbers as a basis for predicting changes in other key populations, for example the size of fish stocks.



**SAVE  
YOUR  
OCEAN**

World Oceans Day  
JUNE 8

**WORLD OCEAN DAY**  
OCEANS ARE CRITICALLY IMPORTANT FOR OUR SURVIVAL!  
SAVE THEM



**I.M.PANAGIOTOPOULOS SCHOOL**

**Aris Roulias – January 2019**