FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Bird Strike Committee USA (BSC-USA) Members:

A new year is upon us, and I’d like to wish all members a happy and prosperous 2020!

BSC ended 2019 with a strong finish and is off to a good start for the new year as we look forward to our annual mid-winter meeting at the offices of the American Association of Airport Executives (AAAE) in Alexandria, Virginia, on February 11 and 12, 2020.

Before we move forward with new business in 2020, I’d like to take some time to talk about the great work your committee representatives accomplished in 2019.

North American Bird Strike Conference 2019

Our Canuck colleagues from the Bird Strike Association of Canada (BSAC) hosted an absolutely terrific conference from August 12 to 15, 2019, in beautiful Halifax! The conference was a great success with 272 attendees from 17 countries.

Conference attendees provided high-level presentations on diverse subjects such as risk and data analyses, Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) use, long-term monitoring, avian radar and other wildlife management tools, aircraft sensors, litigation, international Bird Strike Committee practices, international data sharing, and much more. Presentations are available to membership at the link below: https://www.aaae.org/AAAE/BirdStrike/Past_Conferences/2019_Presentations.aspx.

The success of the conference was due largely to the exceptional efforts from Gary Searing and the BSAC, the BSC USA conference committee led by John Ostrom and Jim Laughlin, the ongoing conference support from AAAE, as well as the critical-thinking attendees interfacing with one another throughout the week – thank you one and all.

BSC Outreach Worldwide!

A long-sought meeting between the BSC USA and aviation industry took place in June 2019 during AAAE’s annual conference in Boston. Sarah Brammell, John Ostrom, Jeff Turner, and I provided a panel discussion for conference attendees that included an overview of wildlife hazards to aviation and an introduction to BSC USA.

Continued on Page 2
FROM THE CHAIR

Continued from Page 1

As in the past, the BSC USA Steering Committee will continue to represent the aviation industry as national expert body to the FAA, aviation / wildlife organizations, other BSCs internationally and the public.

Volunteer Update

The annual conference marked the end of tenure for Steering Committee members who have fulfilled their duties. We send a heartfelt goodbye to three committee members. Veterans Johnny Metcalf (Airports Division) and Steve Osmek (Operations/Policies Committee Chair) each volunteered 4 noteworthy years. Special thanks go to Phyllis Miller (Secretary), who contributed countless hours to BSC USA for nine years! It’s time for a rest Phyllis! We thank you, Johnny, Steve and Phyllis for jobs well done and appreciated.

The BSC USA Steering Committee welcomed several new Steering Committee members at the conference including Cathy Boyles (DFW Airport), who will follow Johnny Metcalf in the Airports Division, and Erin O’Connor (AAAE), who will take over for the vacated Airport and Secretary positions.

Congratulations go out to Christopher Pollock who was elected as the new Operations/Policies committee Chair in December 2020. Welcome aboard.

Next Year in Minneapolis

The Minneapolis-St. Paul airport has graciously agreed to host next year’s BSC USA Bird Strike Conference, which will be held from August 25 to 27, 2020. There is much to do between now and then, and the conference committee is already working on our behalf.

Looking forward to seeing you in Minnesota!

John Weller
Chair, Bird Strike Committee USA
SMITHSONIAN RECEIVES BSC SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARD!

The success of the Smithsonian Channel's documentary *Bird vs. Plane: Miracle on the Hudson* (released in January 2019) and indefatigable accomplishments of the Smithsonian's Feather ID Lab more than warranted recognition by the BSC USA! During the 2019 Conference, BSC awarded the Feather ID Lab received the Special Recognition Award, for having distinguished themselves through outstanding service, innovation and commitment to the field of aircraft/wildlife strike hazards. It is an award richly deserved!

LATEST FROM THE LAB

Mandatory Occurrence Reports

The busiest time of year at the Smithsonian Feather ID Lab is during full fall migration, with the number of identification cases reflecting the increased seasonal movements of birds. Each year, around the end of August, the Feather ID Lab gets its own version of “zugunruhe” – or migratory restlessness. We know it won’t be long before we start seeing birds that migrate early (like shorebirds) and warblers in their fall plumage. Keep on sending remains in for identification – not just during migration, but year-round!

The Feather ID Lab wants to thank the Bird Strike Committee USA the special recognition award received in Halifax. We are very grateful and look forward to continuing our work with military and civil aviation to increase flight safety.

Pictured from left to right are Jim Whatton, Faridah Dahlan, Carla Dove, Marcy Heacker, Sarah Luttrell
Photo by B. Schmidt, Smithsonian Institute Bird Division
WHMP APPROVAL PROCESS
By Janell Barrilleaux, Federal Aviation Administration


As stated in 14 CFR Part 139.337, “When the Administrator determines that a Wildlife Hazard Management Plan is needed, the certificate holder must formulate and implement a plan using the wildlife hazard assessment as a basis. The plan must be submitted to, and approved by, the Administrator prior to implementation.” WHMP approval is a federal action requiring NEPA review to identify, evaluate and document the environmental and social impacts of the federal action. The AC clarifies that FAA’s approval of the WHMP constitutes an approval of the plan itself as well as approval of the individual wildlife hazard management elements/measures proposed for implementation in the plan. This clarification applies to new WHMPs as well as WHMP updates prepared by Airport Sponsors for FAA review and approval.

FAA has revised the process for the review and approval of new and updated WHMPs. To make the process as efficient as possible, the Airport Sponsor should discuss the proposed updates/revisions to the WHMP with the FAA Airport Certification Safety Inspector (ACSI) before submitting the revisions formally for approval. This early coordination will help to ensure that the required information will be included in the WHMP and can help identify potential triggers for NEPA review early on in the process.

When a WHMP is submitted to the FAA for approval, the ACSI will review the updated plan for compliance with 40 CFR Par 139 regulatory requirements and discuss the approach to NEPA and special purpose law compliance approach with the Regional and Airports District Office Environmental Protection Specialists (EPS), if warranted, based on the scope of the changes. If environmental review pursuant to NEPA is required, additional information over and above what is typically presented in a WHMP may be required. Close coordination between the Airport Sponsor, the ACSI, and the EPS is prudent to conduct the environmental review as efficiently as possible.
STRIKE REPORTING: AN AIRLINE PERSPECTIVE
By Troy Levanen, Manager, Maintenance Safety, Alaska Air Group

The Alaska Air Group (AAG), which is composed of Alaska, Horizon and Virgin America Airlines, recently reviewed and compared bird strike data among its pilot internal safety irregularity reporting system, maintenance records, and the FAA database records. The results were surprising.

AAG recently compared bird strike data from its pilot internal safety irregularity reporting system and compared it to their maintenance records, and the data pertaining to bird strikes did not match. To identify the source of this discrepancy, the airline undertook additional research to see how their pilot report data and aircraft maintenance records compared to the FAA’s National Wildlife Strike Database (NWSDB), but even more disparities were identified. The most notable disparity occurred between the data in the pilot voluntary safety irregularity reports and the FAA database: both data sources contained less than one-third the total number of strikes identified in aircraft maintenance records.

Identifying the Data Gaps
To help identify data gaps and differences among the data sources, Alaska created a real-time interactive dashboard. The dashboard displays things such as counts and rates of strikes on AAG aircraft by airport. This first-generation dashboard automatically assigns the strike to the airport where the aircraft lands, because information from the NWSDB indicates that 64% of all strikes occur during descent, approach, or landing roll and in areas near or close to an aircraft’s destination. All strikes found on an aircraft are logged in the maintenance records, physically inspected, and wiped clean to look for and – if necessary – repair damage. Consequently, a strike impact will be recorded only once in the logs.

Using the data gained from the maintenance records and dashboard, AAG has been able to identify priority airports and places where there may be opportunities for improvement—especially in strike reporting. The data also can be used to help airport operators revise or enhance their mitigation programs. By presenting the airport-specific information in various ways, the detailed data can provide both airport operators and the FAA with a new a perspective on wildlife strike occurrences.

Moving forward, AAG will work to enhance reporting by both pilots and technicians, which can provide better information to the FAA and individual airport operators to mitigate wildlife strike hazards and improve safety to the benefit of both air travelers and wildlife.
The Sandy Wright / Richard Dolbeer Excellence in Strike Reporting award recognizes one Part 139 certificated and one GA airport that have exhibited a noteworthy strike reporting program. The criteria for determining which airports will qualify for the award are objective and include both quantity and quality of strike data.

The criteria include, but are not limited to:
- Number of reports filed;
- Completeness of reports;
- Percentage of reports identified to species level;
  - Percentage of reports filed online;
  - Timeliness of reports being submitted;
- Remains collected when available or necessary; and,
  - Consistency in filing reports.

And the Awards go to …
The FAA proudly recognizes the superior strike reporting programs at Seattle/Tacoma International Airport (SEA) and Page Field (FMY) as the winners of the 2018 Sandy Wright/Richard Dolbeer Excellence in Strike Reporting Award. The bar remains high and these airports are well deserving of this recognition.

Congratulations to our winners!

DID YOU KNOW?
For over 20 years, the FAA and USDA have collaborated in a reporting system and database for civil wildlife strikes to collect accurate information on this issue. The primary resource for this reporting has been the online FAA form 5200-7. In August, a new version of the database was released. This new system hopes to keep improving on the collection and processing of wildlife strike data. Take a look for yourself! Please report any issues directly to the link provided on the home page. Keep on reporting those wildlife strikes!

wildlife.faa.gov
TECH TIPS

Cleaning Pyrotechnic Launchers Between Use

Submitted by Russell O’Dell, USDA Wildlife Services

When using pyrotechnics, the manufacturer’s recommendations are clear: it is very important to have clean equipment not only for proper operation but for safety too. A quick and easy way to accomplish this is to carry a bore snake or muzzle brush, depending on the type of launcher you have. In between events, a quick pull through the barrel with the bore snake or push with the muzzle brush will dislodge most of the residue (always check to make sure the launcher is unloaded). These tools will buy you time and allow you to continue to operate until you can pause for a deep cleaning of your equipment (always follow manufacturer’s recommendations for cleaning).

BoreSnake
Muzzle Brush

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR FUN ‘N SUN

The BSC Outreach Committee is looking for volunteers from the southeastern U.S. to help out at the Bird Strike Committee USA booth at the upcoming Sun ‘n Fun Aerospace Expo. The event will be held from March 31 through April 5, 2020 at the Lakeland Linder International Airport in Lakeland, Florida. For more event info, go to https://www.flysnf.org/sun-n-fun-intl-fly-expo.

We are specifically looking for volunteers to set up the booth on Monday, March 30, 2020. Volunteers can either attend the event in whole or in part – any and all help is welcome! BSC will reimburse volunteers expenses such as hotel, flight, mileage and/or per diem.

Please contact BSC member Amy Reed if you are interested in volunteering. Amy can be reached by telephone at 813-966-9410 or by email at areed@ersenvironmental.com.
2019 PHOTO AND POSTER CONTEST WINNERS

The 2019 photo contest received numerous photo and poster entries. William Ward provided the winning photo entry, and Grace Kazak submitted a winning poster.

William Ward
2019 Photo Contest Winner

Grace Kazak
2019 Poster Contest Winner