**Most people have forgotten about Bird Strikes at airports, but with the Pandemic, the birds strikes have return!**

**The reduction of flights at are airports has reduce the disruption of the air environment around airports and the birds are coming back.**

Who among us noticed that in recent years, the absence of birds flying around our airports have not disrupted take-offs and landings. The absence of disruptive birds around our airports has been wonderful, but the birds, of all sizes, have returned the past two years.

Small birds, or small numbers of birds do not threaten our airliners. Flocks of relatively large birds sucked into engines can cause catastrophic accidents. Believe it or not, this past year there has been 45 reported incidents involving bald eagles. Who wants to harm our national emblem?

In October last year, an engine on a Spirit Airlines Inc. flight caught fire after it ingested a bald eagle during a takeoff from Atlantic City International Airport. The flight had to be aborted, and all passengers evacuated via slides. The strike caused major damage to the engine’s fan blades.

Flocks of seagulls, or geese sucked into the engines can also be a hazard, and cause a serious accident.

The Bird Strike Committee USA, a volunteer group of wildlife specialists are advocating measures to reduce bird-strike risk. Let’s hope that the campaign is effective and successful, or I will be going on a cruise to Hawaii in the next few months.

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**Source:**

**‘Bird Strikes’ Rise as Flocks Settle in Quiet Airports**

Airlines are contending with an unexpected consequence of the pandemic: a rising rate in bird collisions.

Called “ bird strikes” in the industry, such collisions are rare but potentially dangerous. A flock of birds crippled both engines of the jet that Chesley “Sully” Sullenberger safely ditched in the Hudson River in 2009. Most collisions are less catastrophic, but airports and pilots train extensively to avoid them.

Airport executives, safety agencies and wildlife biologists blame quiet airports over the past two years for the rising rate of strikes. Airports handled many fewer flights, and in some cases, smaller fields weren’t used at all for long stretches. Birds moved in, nesting atop parked aircraft, inside engines and on unused gear like passenger bridges and boarding stairs.

Geese have been a problem at Portland International Airport in Oregon. Seagulls flocked to Rome’s Leonardo da Vinci airport. Black kites are a new hazard for pilots taking off and landing in Bangalore.

“There has been a significant increase in risk,” said Phil Mountain, director of U.K.based Birdstrike Management Ltd., which advises airlines and airports on mitigating wildlife risks. Aviation and wildlife officials around the world have documented or modeled sometimes-steep increases in incident rates, though data are often collected differently country by country, making it difficult to put a figure on the issue at a global level.

Aviation industry officials haven’t seen an increase in damaging accidents despite the rising rate of collisions. In the U.S., though, officials noted a substantial rise in the number of bigger bird species involved in collisions. Bald eagles, whose numbers have grown in the U.S. overall, were involved in 44 strikes with aircraft last year, up from the previous record of 35 for each of 2020 and 2019, according to Richard Dolbeer, a wildlife adviser at the U.S. Agriculture Department.

In October last year, an engine on a Spirit Airlines Inc. flight caught fire after it ingested a bald eagle during a takeoff from Atlantic City International Airport, according to Federal Aviation Administration records. The flight was aborted, and passengers evacuated via slides. The strike caused major damage to the engine’s fan blades.

The increased rate of collisions has been more notable in Europe, where a hodgepodge of national travel bans have restricted intercontinental flying much more severely than in the U.S. In the first quarter of 2021, the rate of strikes in Europe jumped 205% compared with the same quarter in 2020, according to the European Union Aviation Safety Agency, Europe’s counterpart to the FAA. For the third quarter of last year, the latest period for which data are available, the number of bird strikes was up more than 18% from the same quarter in 2019, at 240.8 strikes per million flights.

In the U.S., bird-strike rates rose sharply early in the pandemic. As domestic traffic largely resumed across the country, rates have fallen back to historical levels, according to data modeling by academics and wildlife specialists at the Agriculture Department.

Geese posed a problem in Portland International Airport. Gaggles resided on properties surrounding the airport, said Nick Atwell, senior wildlife manager for the Port of Port-land and chairman of Bird Strike Committee USA, a volunteer group of wildlife specialists who advocate for measures to reduce bird-strike risk.

The rate of recorded bird strikes at the airport from April through June 2020 rose 122%, according to FAA data compiled by The Wall Street Journal.