

The Altitudinal Distribution of Identified Bird Strikes

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The flight altitudes of 363 birds (102 species) were recorded as birdstrikes to civil aircraft in the United States above 500 feet from January 1990 through September 2008, identified to species by Smithsonian Institution personnel, and logged into the FAA Wildlife Strike Database. The highest altitude recorded was for a Snow Goose (*Chen caerulescens*) at 15,000 ft. The second highest altitudes were a Northern Pintail (*Anas acuta*) and a Blue-winged Teal (*Anas discors*), both at 14,000 ft. Many of the Passeriformes species were recorded up to 6,000 ft and a few were higher. The highest passerines were American Robin (*Turdus migratorius*), Horned Lark (*Eremophila alpestris*), and House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) at 7,000 ft, Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*) at 8,500 ft, House Wren (*Troglodytes aedon*) at 9,000 ft, and the highest was a Fox Sparrow (*Passerella iliaca*) at 11,000 ft. About two-thirds of the identified strikes involved single birds. Only a few of the multiple strikes involved more than 10 birds..