

Just when you thought you knew your target species, look what happened to us!

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In 1985, an Air New Zealand 747 on rotation (V1) struck a flock of black-backed gulls (*Larus dominicanus*), damaging 3 engines. Due to this incident, Christchurch International Airport Limited (CIAL) formed a wildlife management committee and the Airport Fire Service commenced bird harassment duties. In 2006, CIAL underwent a risk assessment and bird control audit by Central Science Laboratory to bring the wildlife control programme in line with international best practice. One recommendation was to employ a full-time wildlife control officer. When I commenced as the wildlife control officer in February 2007, the hazardous bird species were already clearly identified and airfield improvements were underway.

But just when you think you know your target species, look what happened to us. In July 2007, not only had the feral pigeon (*Columba livia*) numbers over flying the airport significantly increased, but by 2008, Canada geese (*Branta canadensis moffitti*) had moved to the top of the bird hazard list.

This paper will cover the methods being used to control bird numbers, including the sponsoring of a Canada goose shoot and will discuss a Wildlife Protection Review regarding shifting Canada geese from Schedule 1 (New Zealand Government, Department of Conservation) - protected game bird species for recreational hunting to Schedule 3 – which provides protection but will allow for their numbers to be proactively managed.