

Beyond the Fence: Lessons Learned from Flight 1549

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As the crash of US Airways Flight 1549 clearly demonstrated, even the best of wildlife control programs on an airfield may not prevent the most serious of bird strike incidents. Many of the most damaging strikes occur outside the airfield fence, along with many of the bird species posing the greatest risk to aircraft (geese, ducks, vultures, etc.). Yet this area oftentimes goes completely neglected by a wildlife control program.

The principal problem with wildlife control efforts outside the airfield is that generally these lands are owned by private entities. We have endeavored, from Israel to the Midwest United States, to engage local landowners in their cooperation in all aspects of wildlife control – from access onto their property, modifications in farming practices, notifications of bird presence, etc.

This presentation will address the problems and solutions to extending wildlife control efforts outside of the airfield limits, to a distance of more than 5 miles and the strategies involved with selective harassment of bird species and securing the cooperation of the local community. We will explore the political, economic, and social motivations of each of the parties and the successful methods we have employed in acquiring the support of an airfield's neighbors.