

## **A PARADIGM SHIFT IN BIRD STRIKE PREVENTION BY THE ISRAELI AIR FORCE**

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### **Abstract**

Over the past twenty years, the Israeli Air Force (IAF) has focused its attention in bird strike prevention on collisions between aircraft and migrating birds during low-level flight operations. Only in the last 2 years has the IAF begun to tackle the problem of reducing bird-aircraft collisions at or near its airfields. A dramatic shift in thinking has led the IAF to initiate complete wildlife control programs at its airbases, featuring the employment of Border collies and wildlife control officers to help eliminate the risk of wildlife collisions within the control zone (CTR) of each of its airfields.

As a crucial component of this program, the IAF has initiated major changes in habitat management at its airfields, eliminating agricultural initiatives and undergoing large-scale modifications in airfield maintenance practices. Additionally, the IAF has altered flight and ground operations where possible to attenuate the risk imposed by birds and has coordinated efforts within a wide range of departments at each airbase to address bird strike control issues. Awareness and the resolve to eliminate wildlife hazards at its airfields are key features to the IAF's new directive on bird strike prevention.

Though still in its infancy, the IAF's new wildlife control program has already shown dramatic improvements in the reduction of bird strike hazards at its airbases. In light of the results achieved during this short working time frame, it would indicate that utilization of Border collies can be a highly effective mechanism for the IAF to combat its bird strike problem. The most important result is obviously the bottom line – there have been no damaging bird strikes to aircraft since the commencement of the wildlife control program. Moreover, the threat of a serious bird strike has been greatly reduced by the elimination of larger birds from the airfields and a 3-km. radius outside the airbases, as well as the overall reduction of major bird populations on the AOA.

**Key words:** control methods, predators, Border Collie, harassment, Wildlife Control, birds, Israeli Air Force, IAF, airbase, Habitat Management