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“Birdstrike” – What’s the Word? (Poster)

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The word(s) “bird strike”, “bird-strike”, or “birdstrike” has been used inconsistently throughout the literature for as long as birds have been colliding with aircraft. A recent search of peer-reviewed articles in the Zoological Record and Biological Abstracts dating back to 1969 resulted in 52 articles that pertained to bird-aircraft collisions. Of those, 67% used two words (bird strike); 22% used a hyphenated word (bird-strike); 5.5% used one word (birdstrike), and 5.5% actually used both two words and the hyphenated version in the same paper! A brief glance through the proceedings and abstracts of recent *Bird Strike Committee Meetings* also exemplifies the inconsistent use of the word(s) that we apply to our profession.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* (1989) lists bird-strike as a hyphenated word under section (9) Special comb[inations]... of the word bird. However, they go on to cite references of the first published versions of this word in newspaper articles which quoted it as one word ‘birdstrike’ (*Daily Telegraph*, 19 June 1963; *Idle Moments*, 15 Oct. 1967). For this discrepancy, we turned to the scientific literature. According to the rules of scientific nomenclature (*The International Code of Zoological Nomenclature* [1964] Article 23 - Law of Priority)...“The valid name of a taxon is the oldest available name applied to it...[published]” Although this rule was established to settle differences in the proper naming of species and not inventing words for the English language, it is referenced here because interviews with a linguist (Dr. Suzanne Kemmer, Rice University, personnel communication) revealed that there are no English rules for creating compound words. However, the normal evolution of a new word is generally from two words - to a hyphenated word - to one word, depending on the frequency of use. Therefore, even if we dismiss the scientific rules of “*The Code*”, the term for bird-aircraft collisions has been in use since at least the early 1960s. This year marks the 12th annual meeting of *Bird Strike Committee USA*. It is time that we begin consistent use of **BIRDSTRIKE** as one word in published articles and recommend a change in the Air Force Pamphlet 91-212 (1 April 1997 – Safety) to reflect the modern day, modern-day, or modernday use of the word.