

ICAO WILDLIFE MITIGATION – THE NEXT STEP?

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Abstract

ICAO (International Civil Aviation Organization) is the aviation arm of the United Nations. As such it sets Standards and Recommended Practices for its 180+ contracting states worldwide. ICAO has indicated that it is desirable to change wildlife mitigation on airports from a Recommended Practice to a Standard, implying a much greater level of effort on airports' part. Unfortunately ICAO has no training program or advisory system in place to educate airports on 'best practices'. ICAO has used a variety of methods to develop international aviation policy in the past, from large state sponsored Panels to simply hiring one consultant. IFALPA (International Federation of Air Line Pilots Associations) believes that the Air Navigation Commission of ICAO should call for a Wildlife Mitigation Study Group. This paper explains IFALPA's rationale for such a call, what constitutes a Study Group as opposed to Panel, Working Group, etc., and the type of experts who should be involved. Further, the Study Group must have Terms of Reference (TOR) to define a work program. IFALPA believes that the Study Group must clearly identify those techniques which work on airports worldwide, those efforts more suitable for airports with low funding levels and those techniques which do not work at all.

1. Introduction

ICAO, the International Civil Aviation Organization, has recognized collisions between wildlife and aircraft as a hazard. Recently ICAO has proposed amending its Annex 14 on Aerodromes to change wildlife control on airports from a Recommended Practice to a Standard. However, there are further steps that ICAO can, and should, take.

2. ICAO

The International Civil Aviation Organization is the international body which is responsible for developing principles and techniques for navigation of international airspace. There are over 180 signatory states participating in ICAO and observing its Standards and Recommending Practices worldwide.

2.1 The Air Navigation Commission, ANC, is the part of ICAO directly responsible for the development and adoption of SARPs, Standards and Recommended Practices.

2.2 Within the ANC, the Aerodromes, Air Routes and Ground Aids Section (AGA) deals directly with matters pertaining to airports and their environment.

3. Development of Standards and Recommended Practices

3.1 To help the Air Navigation Commission develop SARPs the ANC will, from time to time, set up Panels, Committees or Study Groups (SGs) composed of experts to advise the ANC on a certain area. Examples of Study Groups working with the ANC include the Airworthiness SG, ARFF SG, and Volcanic Ash SG. Currently the AGA administers one Panel and four Study Groups.

3.2 States may assign personnel to participate on these various projects. For example, the Australian government has representatives on 14 Air Navigation Panels and 24 Study Groups. Canada is represented on 13 Panels and 23 Study Groups.

3.3 Personnel participating do not need to be government employees, but rather recognized experts in a field. Example: a representative of the International Air Line Pilots Association is a member of the Visual Aids Panel, dealing with lighting, marking and signage on airports.

3.4 Experts serving on Study Groups do not represent their states' position on a subject, rather they contribute their personal expertise towards solving a particular aviation problem.

4. Proposal

As collisions between wildlife and aircraft cost airlines more than US\$1 billion each year and as over 130 people have lost their lives in collisions with wildlife since 1995, ICAO should convene a Wildlife Mitigation Study Group.

- 4.1** This Study Group would be responsible for developing best practices for both industry and government to implement to reduce the threat of collisions with wildlife. Since this endeavor crosses many boundaries geographically and professionally it would be necessary to involve experts from several aviation disciplines.

5. Wildlife Hazard Mitigation Study Group

It is IFALPA's proposal that a Study Group be formed and funded by the ICAO Air Navigation Commission.

- 5.1** The purpose of this Study Group would be the review of and recommendation of methods to reduce the potential for collisions between wildlife and aircraft.
- 5.2** This Study Group should be composed of experts in the field of aviation operations, airport operations, airframe/engine design & construction, government regulation and wildlife biology.
- 5.3** The Study Group should meet at ICAO headquarters in Montreal to initially set its work program, and then meet periodically as required.

6. Study Group Work Program

The Work Program is the guideline that the Group agrees upon as its roadmap to reach its goals.

- 6.1** Study Group members should be prepared to discuss wildlife mitigation on a worldwide scale.
- 6.2** Some proposed goals of the Study Group could be the compilation of a publication, using current documents from states worldwide, listing effective means of wildlife mitigation on airports. This work would amend and supplement the ICAO Airport Services Manual, Part 3, Bird Control. The "Handbook of International Airways Volcanic Watch" is an example of such an ICAO document which addresses an aviation hazard. The development of a system to coordinate the observation of large flocks of migrating birds to serve as early warning to aircraft is another potential product. The development of aircraft operating techniques to be used when faced with this hazard is another potential product. The development of education tools to inform the aviation industry and government regulators of the seriousness of the hazard is another potential product.

7. Conclusion

While ICAO has worked to raise the awareness of its member states worldwide on the wildlife hazard to aviation, there are several more steps it can take to mitigate the wildlife hazard. These steps could be modeled after several other successful programs the Air Navigation Commission has developed and implemented.