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A Year in Photographs: Photographic Identifications of U.S. Air Force Wildlife Strikes

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Abstract. In FY 2018, *Air Force Instruction 91-212* included guidelines for submitting photographs of wildlife carcasses struck by military aircraft to the Air Force Safety Automated System (AFSAS). Smartphone technology allows easy and accurate photo documentation of wildlife strike events, including the whole wildlife carcass, which may be used for species identification purposes. During FY18, 67 identifications were made for 23 species of birds and 7 species of mammals using photographic evidence. Photos were submitted from 23 different USAF airfields, including 6 foreign bases. Allowing photographs of whole carcasses to be directly uploaded to AFSAS saves time in the field, eliminates excessive carcass shipping and handling for overseas cases, improves mammal species identifications, and allows the Feather Lab and BASH Team access to the total evidence associated with the event. Guidelines for submitting whole carcass photographs and some of the challenges associated with photographic identifications are reviewed here. U.S. Air Force and the Feather Identification Lab continue to work together to improve wildlife strike documentation by utilizing modern technology that ultimately improves BASH data.
