



CAR/SAM Regional Bird/Wildlife Hazard Prevention Committee
Comité Regional CAR/SAM de Prevención de Peligro Aviario y Fauna
CARSAMPAF

Recommendations for wildlife management in the aviation industry in dealing with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic

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The situation that the aeronautical industry is experiencing worldwide has been an unprecedented event. There is nothing comparable to the mandatory restrictions imposed through control and prevention measures that many countries in the world have taken in order to face the Covid-19 pandemic. These government decisions have greatly affected the entire aviation sector, putting at risk the continuity of entire companies and the loss of many jobs in the sector.

But another important factor of this difficult topic is the management of wildlife in and around aerodromes, since the presence of wildlife in the air and airport environment does not cease. On the contrary, due to the reduction in these weeks of the various activities that used to be carried out at the airport on a daily basis, this may have created conditions that favor the increase the presence of wildlife and generated other dangers associated with their behaviors (e.g. nesting in critical sites like aviation visual aids, vital aerodrome control systems, or even in the aircraft themselves).

The Regional Committee for Central America, South America, and the Caribbean and for the Prevention of Bird and Wildlife Hazards (CARSAMPAF) is a non-profit entity whose purpose is to coordinate and integrate actions in order to reduce the number of aviation incidents/accidents resulting from aircraft collisions with wildlife. Our main work is the identification, analysis, development, investigation and dissemination of all things related to the subject that imply a violation of an aerodrome's Safety Management System (SMS), in an effort to prevent and reduce the effects of possible negative interactions between aircraft and wildlife.

As a committee, we recommend that levels of mitigation actions carried out by an airport are not lowered during this period - on the contrary, we recommend that wildlife inspection and management measures be increased. If previously controlled areas are allowed to be newly colonized by wildlife, more resources will have to be used to in order to return them to their prior conditions. Without this, the start of regular flight operations could be put at even higher risk, given that the number of individuals of a species and/or the presence of new species not included in a hazard matrix may have significantly increased, which could ultimately lead to higher probability and severity in interactions of aircraft with birds/wildlife.

There are many recommendations that can be made in this regard and some organizations around the world have already proffered some very successful ones. We, as the CARSAMPAF committee, join these initiatives and recommend airports implement the following:



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1. Carry out private inspections to identify possible new attractants inside and outside the aerodrome - such as inadequate disposal of solid waste, growth of attractive plant species, socioeconomic activities with deficiencies in their processes, formation of new bodies of water, etc.
2. Complete in-depth inspections of the entire movement area to identify wildlife species found in critical areas for flight operations, either due to their large number or because they are newly identified species for the airport. In the same manner, look for evidence of their presence, permanence and use of airport facilities or infrastructure, like the control tower, airport terminals, hangars, air navigation aides, vertical signage, pergolas, telescopic jetways, vehicles and other equipment that have been parked for long periods of time, as well as any infrastructure that is within the movement area. Such evidence of wildlife presence can be nests, tracks, feathers, hairs, excrement, or food remains (e.g. bones, fruit peels, seeds, pellets, etc.)
3. Inspect perimeter fences that could potentially fail or that have already failed or deteriorated that may represent a potential entrance for wildlife.
4. Carry out an inventory and evaluation of the status and operation of existing wildlife mitigation measures at the aerodrome that are being used for dispersal, repulsion, capture, etc.
5. Continue to apply dispersion and exclusion measures that were previously being carried out and even intensify them, if circumstances so require.
6. Consider evaluating, before the recommencement of significant flight operations, if it is necessary to initiate new mitigation measures or implement different strategies that will allow for the safe initiation of flight operations.
7. Lastly, generate a report that provides a complete overview of the current situation and the needed actions to undergo in order to rectify any shortfalls.

For aircraft operators and flight school centers, aircraft should always be properly stored during downtimes, covering all accessible critical components in order to avoid colonization by birds or other small wildlife that would ultimately generate subsequent costs, or worse, a possible incident or accident.

Additionally, it is recommended to make constant inspections to check that any currently installed protectors are in good condition and in the correct positions. For example, improper protection of a PITOT tube can allow some species of wasps to enter and make their nests within the tube and this could seriously affect aircraft performance or potentially cause an accident.

It is suggested that CAAs, within their own requirements, include these recommendations in their country's rules/regulations for providers of airport services.

It is also recommended to carry out awareness and training sessions for all aerodrome personnel, particularly those working on airside operations, as they can be a good source of information and can help to take preventive measures if deemed necessary.

Finally, it is recommended at this particular juncture to create a risk matrix for the identification of hazards and evaluation of specific risks due to the presence of wildlife or to update the existing one. This will allow aerodrome operators to identify possible root causes and carry out mitigation measures or action plans in order to counteract the atypical situations resulting from the current situation.

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