

## **World Birdstrike Association (WBA)**

### Kick-off meeting Joint Global Action Plan

#### on the Reduction of the Bird/Wildlife Strike Risk to Aviation

Kasteel Keukenhof, Netherlands - 23/24 April 2013

- The meeting was introduced by Luit Buurma, an ex Chairman of International Birdstrike Committee (IBSC). The IBSC was formed in 1964 and the website is still running at <http://www.int-birdstrike.org/>. The WBA website can be found at <http://worldbirdstrike.com/>.
- It seems there may have been some politics and Luit has been influential in the re-birth of the IBA into the WBA, in the hopes it will be more world focused, both in terms of membership and theatre of influence, whilst remaining independent. He hoped to dilute the influence of some of the existing movers and shakers by bringing in people with new ideas. The trick of course is to find people and their organisations prepare to commit in terms of time and financial obligations.
- Most of the meeting was conducted by Capt Rob van Eekeren, Executive Director of the WBA. The WBA Secretariat, Albert de Hoon recorded the minutes.
- The announced aims of the meeting were to find common ground and support for the WBA initiative to develop a Joint Global Action Plan on the reduction of the bird/wildlife strike risk to aviation, to agree the Terms of Reference and to start to develop a global action plan. A draft action plan looked to select, analyse and integrate existing best-practice into a comprehensive action plan. The Executive was keen to have high profile organisations attend. The full list of attendees is attached, together with the proposed Program and draft Terms of Reference for both the Global Steering Committee and the Global Working Group. In reality, the program changed over the course of the meeting.
- Prominent amongst the attendees were Nick Yearwood of the CAA and Andy Baxter of FERA, (both members of the UK Birdstrike Committee) and John Weller (a senior Biologist with the FAA).
- The scene was set with comment about the aspiration for the EU and US to help the more developing nations and listing birdstrike as 5<sup>th</sup> on a list of top 10 hazards. The view was expressed that working together would bring a greater reward (1+1=3). Stakeholders and specialists working together.
- The WBA hopes to be a conduit from ICAO to global recipients and also a voice from recipients to ICAO that will influence ICAO's decision and rule making. Indeed, at the end of the first day, Capt Rob disappeared for a conference call with ICAO. The WBA sees itself as an umbrella to national Birdstrike committees.
- There was some discussion about the WBA hosting a new database but also a strong view from the floor that we don't need another database, just better management and analysis of those in existence.
- The Working Group will be the technical group and have a Chairman and Secretary and a core of member organisations representing Airports, Operators, engine and airframe manufactures, IFALPA, Airspace Directors (ATC), Birdlife International / environmental

groups, Birdstrike Committee Representatives, military and other specialists as required. The aim is to have a forum that will condense experience into standards that will be set out in a report to be drafted in 18-24 months time (a two year project). The group is likely to meet around 3 / 4 times a year and rely on electronic communication and video conferencing as much as possible.

- The Steering Committee will have the politicians, capable of promoting the ideas developed by the technical people.
- There was some debate about whether or not to follow the guidance in CAP772 that the scope / area of influence should be 2,000 feet and 13 Km. It was eventually agreed to leave this to the Working Group to decide. There was also debate about voting rights (simple majority –v- 100% consensus but with a dissenting view recorded).
- There was some input about the need to demonstrate reasonable efforts had been made to minimise the risk of birdstrike, failing which there was a real risk of liability exposure. This led on to discussion about reporting and just culture.
- The CAA asked what will be achieved that is not being achieved already and what in the mandate to the Working Group will generate new ideas rather than simply a regurgitation of existing ideas and practices. It was agreed an ‘intention statement’ was required and this became the focus of one of the sessions on day two.
- It was noted that 2014 will be the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the IBSC and this should be marked. Professor Yasushi Takeda, who is promoting a Birdstrike Committee for Asia, proposed to host the WBA in Japan in 2014. The Russian delegates suggested hosting in 2016.
- Sponsorship and a scholarship targeted at the developing world were both suggested.
- There was at least provisional commitment from the German, Italian, French and Brazilian birdstrike committees, Airbus, EASA, IATA, IFALPA, FAA and Birdlife International. The UK is represented by holding two of the Director positions on the WBA. On behalf of AIG, I indicated support subject to a clearer understanding of how we can be of use and the support of management.
- More discussion followed about the need for data to analyse and support any arguments to bring about change. It was suggested that if birdstrike reporting was made simpler, then the result would be more and better data. It was also suggested data should be standardised in a common database. Against this, it was argued there is already a lot of good data available and care should be taken not to un-necessarily duplicate or simply reinvent the wheel. What is needed is a product that will sell itself to IATA and EASA and will elevate the subject of birdstrike and lead to guidance material and perhaps rule making.
- The penultimate session concentrated on a statement of intention. Subject to some fine tuning, it reads:
  - In principle we agree to the intention to work together with the other signees of this statement to jointly develop a global action plan on the reduction of the wildlife strike risk to aviation.
  - This industry and environmental initiative aims to increase flight safety whilst respecting nature and wildlife.
  - This action plan concentrates on integrating existing best practices whilst encouraging innovation and aims at measurable results.

- It will contain clear, well addressed, to-the-point recommendations and practical guidance material.
- It serves also as a source of “continuous education and enhancement” inspiring stakeholders and authorities in all aviation regions.

The finished work product will appear on the website.

- It was proposed the Working Group Chairman be John Weller of the FAA and Dr Christoph Morgenroth and Thomas Muntze of the German Birdstrike committee provide the Secretary.
- There was no further mention of the Steering Group leadership but we can presume it will include the Directors listed in the meeting participants list with Captain Rob as Executive Director and Albert de Hoon as Secretariat.
- Andy Baxter of FERA gave a short presentation about the UK CAA birdstrike database. This has existed for about 30 years and was set up to record damaging birdstrikes, caused by large and flocking birds. Andy acknowledged we now know there are many birdstrikes by small birds that do little damage. Until about 1990 the database recorded about 1,000 strikes per year. A 76% jump in reporting occurred in 2003 when the UK CAA mandated MOR's. A further jump occurred in 2009 when electronic reporting became available, making reporting easier. There are now about 2,500 birdstrike reports per year although the traffic movements remain at around the 3 million mark per year. Looking at the species, Andy advised the swallows and skylarks that do little damage are now being reported but the total count of wildfowl strikes (geese and swans) has only increased from 10 to about 25. Some of this may be explained by the effect of the geese control program now in place at Heathrow. Interestingly, the number of recorded strikes by birds of prey has increased from 60 to 210 per year and this is despite an overall decrease in the population of birds of prey in the UK – it seems they are attracted to environment at airports and the availability of small mammals. Wood pigeons (flocking birds) have seen an overall population increase from 500k to 3.5m. If FERA is invited to an airport and their recommendations are followed, they would expect the total reporting of birdstrikes to increase whilst the number of strikes by big and medium size birds to decrease.
- One member asked the CAA representative how the CAA gains support to reporting. The reply was a ‘safety culture embedded in SMS’, and a ‘just culture’ meaning people are not afraid to report. The CAA also raises awareness by engagement, posters etc.
- Captain Rob concluded by thanking all those who had attended and remarking that their energy can make the difference.

JW 29/04/13.