

ATTACHMENT #12**Pam Chapin**

From: Jeannie Johnson
Sent: Wednesday, December 09, 2009 1:56 PM
To: Pam Chapin
Subject: Info for Board

Bird risk to jets a 'flashing beacon'

By Alan Levin, USA TODAY

Several spectacular collisions between aircraft and birds in recent months are stark evidence that last January's water landing of a US Airways jet that hit geese is far from unique and that the hazards may be increasing, according to federal records and aviation safety experts.

The Commercial Aviation Safety Team, a government-industry aviation safety group, on Friday for the first time elevated birds to its list of priority issues at the urging of the Federal Aviation Administration and Agriculture Department.

In an incident jarringly similar to the collision with birds that is now dubbed the "Miracle on the Hudson," large birds damaged both engines on a Frontier Airlines Airbus A319 that had taken off from Kansas City on Nov. 14. One engine sputtered out, but the other engine maintained power after the birds hit its exterior, missing the critical fan blades by inches, according to a preliminary accident report by the National Transportation Safety Board. None of the 130 people aboard was hurt after an emergency landing.

Also last month, a bird blasted a hole through the windshield of a cargo plane over Arizona and another gouged an 18-inch tear in the side of a Delta Air Lines jet near Phoenix. Birds also have been involved in several helicopter accidents this year, including a crash in Louisiana that killed eight people headed to an oil platform.

"This is a big flashing beacon," says Carla Dove, head of the Smithsonian Institution's bird identification lab. The lab's load of cases assisting federal accident investigators has soared this year. "It's time to wake up."

"I don't think we can dismiss what happened to (US Airways Flight) 1549 as some freak event that is unlikely to happen again," says Richard Dolbeer, a retired Agriculture Department wildlife biologist who has studied bird hazards for decades. "These incidents that we've seen recently are proof of that. It's something we need to be concerned about."

Since January's Hudson River accident, the FAA has improved reporting of bird strikes and is writing tough new requirements for how airports should combat birds and other wildlife, says Kate Lang, FAA's acting associate administrator for airports.

Airlines believe that the risks from birds are relatively small, but it deserves more attention because other hazards have been addressed, says Basil Barimo, vice president for safety at the Air Transport Association, the trade group for large airlines.

Bird experts contend that the FAA and the industry have not moved quickly enough. There needs to be a massive effort to create new technology, such as radars that track birds, and to study other ways to reduce risk, they say. "The time to act is now," says Russ DeFusco, former chief of the Air Force's effort to reduce bird hazards.

http://www.usatoday.com/travel/flights/2009-12-06-bird-strike_N.htm

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