



Small birds pose huge threat to aircraft safety



Ornithologists who presented papers in the recent seminar on Bird Strike on Aircraft in Bangalore said that a better waste management system is important for India for containing bird hits on aircraft.

to change the vegetation around the station so its pilots could get on with their sorties.

The air force expects the tiny birds—a big threat to aircraft movement—to return next year to areas near its Hakimpet and Begumpet stations of Hyderabad. “We are gearing up for that,” S. Srinidhi, deputy director of the ornithology cell at IAF’s directorate of flight safety, said at the seminar organised by Aeromag Asia along with SIATI, Aeronautical Society of India, National Aerospace Laboratories, GTRE and Bombay Natural History Society .

Bird hits on aircraft are a major safety issue globally. It is increasing in India as the country’s aviation industry grows. In 2008, 304 bird strikes were reported in the country as against 217 in 2007 and 167 the year before. As on October 2009 , 241 bird strikes were reported to the Directorate General of Civil Aviation, the National Bird Control Committee, a body of the ministry of civil aviation. Ahmedabad tops the list of airports that saw high bird hits.

Ornithologists say India’s effort in containing bird hits is not effective. “Even after two-and-a-half decades, airport managements, be it civil or military, have not woken up to the difference between a perfect job and clumsy job,” said Robert Grubh, Director, Institute for Restoration of Natural Environment, Nagercoil.

Grubh, who worked with noted ornithologist Salim Ali, had in 1989 submitted 17 reports on the ecological control of bird hazards on Indian airports, covering both civil and military airports. “Results are not satisfactory,” he said.

Former Director of Gas Turbine Research Establishment; DRDO Dr. K. Ramachandra, SIATI Secretary General Air Commodore (Retd) Joseph Varkey, P.Harikumar (Chief Infrastructure Officer - BIAL), DeTect Inc President Ronald L. Merritt, Prof. Ananth Deb, IISc, Vijay Kumar (Hyderabad Airport) , S. Shanmugam, Joint Director DGCA, Dr Goutam Narayan (Bombay Natural History Society and EcoSystems-India), Dr Satish Chandra (NAL), S Ramachandra, Dr. Rajeev Jain, (GTRE), Harish Iyer (Kreisel Technologies Pvt. Ltd) and Sunny Jerome (Managing editor, Aeromag Asia) were among othese who spoke at the seminar.



Dr. C.G.Krishnadas Nair, Managing Director of Cochin International Airport, inaugurating the first Bird Strike India seminar at Bangalore



Dr. Rajeev Jain



Prof. Ananth Deb



S. Shanmugam



Ajay Bharadwaj

“The bird strike threat is for real. As we add more airports in India and more people fly, we need to be ready to tackle the issue,” said Dr. C.G.Krishnadas Nair, Managing Director of Cochin International Airport Ltd.

India is upgrading 35 airports in non-metro cities, adding to the 95 airfields and airports in use. Bird hits in Cochin airport has reduced “significantly” this year after it put in place a waste management programme, closed drains and cleared the vegetation surrounding the area, said Nair in his inaugural specch.

The Indian Air Force (IAF) base at Bidar in Karnataka was dotted with the Greater Short-toed larks, migratory birds the size of sparrows last year .The birds had migrated in hordes of hundreds from Gujarat, then facing sparse rainfall, to the agrarian district and eventually forced IAF



Vijay Kumar



Dr. Goutam Narayan



Dr Satish Chandra



Harish Iyer



Ronald L. Merritt



Dr. K. Ramachandra



Sq. Ldr. S. Srinidhi



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