

THE USE OF WORKING DOGS AS AN INTEGRATED TOOL FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF WILDLIFE ON AERODROMES

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ABSTRACT

International Dog Academy is a division of Hanrob Pty Ltd and has been providing education and detector and working dog training services since 1994. During this time we have provided services to Australian and International Governments and businesses, pet industry organisations, utility organisations and secondary education providers.

Detector and Working Dog Range of Services

In the support of Countries National, Border and Bio Security commitments and commercial company requirements, IDA provides detector and working dog services in the following applications;

- Quarantine
- Drugs / Narcotics
- Explosive
- Firearms
- Security
- Pest Control
- Humanity Response - Search and Rescue
- Animal Deterrent / Harassment Working Dogs
- Feral Animal Detection and Management

The services delivered to the above applications;

- Strategic planning
- Risk analyses and recommendations
- Operation implementation and development
- International advisor for Governments for detector dog programs
- Handler training, recruitment and validation
- Dog breeding, procurement, selection, training and validation
- Team performance.
- Operational efficiency Audits/Assessments.
- Assessment and ongoing training of teams in the field.

Education Range of Services

The education programs offered provide long and short certificate courses and work experience courses for companies, individuals and secondary educational providers. The training is competency based theory and practical training providing training and coaching of skills for a vast range of clientele. The courses are designed for animal industry companies, government bodies, students who want to study in the industry, dog training and utility organisations whose employees come into contact with animals.

Our programs present participants with a realistic perspective of the knowledge and skills required to work in the pet industry. Our academy offers the following education course;

- Dog Behaviour and Certificate Course
- Staff Competency Training – Workplace Training

- Education Tours
- Work Experience Courses
- School Dog Safety Program

Key words: Working Dogs, Integrated Tool, Deterrent, Harassment, Introduced predator

INTRODUCTION

This document is focused on the management, control and minimisation of damage to aircraft and risk to human life as a result of bird and/or animal strikes to aircraft. It highlights how the integrated use of specifically trained working dogs can significantly compliment existing strategies.

The frequency and impact of bird and animal strikes to aircraft is recognised as a serious issue to aviation, worldwide, with only a moderate number of incidents being reported.

Possibly the most recognised authority in relation to this issue is Richard Dolbeer. Richard is the National Coordinator for the Airport Wildlife Hazards Program and Chairperson of the Bird Strike Committee USA (1997-2008).

Richard states that every year, approximately 7,000 to 8,000 bird strikes are reported to the Federal Aviation Administration primarily by commercial airlines nationwide. The reporting is a voluntary system. It's not mandatory, so he states we know that not all of the bird strikes are being reported. He estimates that as much as 80 percent of the strikes are not reported.

Changes in legal responsibilities have resulted in Aircraft operators and their insurers increasingly being the subject of legal action for cost recovery purposes at airports where bird strike damage occurs (International Bird Strike Committee, 2006).

Australian statistics reveal the following:

In 2002 there were 780 bird strikes in Australia.
In 2009 this figure rose to 1477.
The average birdstrike rate for 2008-2009 is slightly higher than the 8-year average for most airports, in particular, Cairns and Brisbane. However, Canberra and Perth have remained stable and the Gold Coast and Hobart had a lower birdstrike rate in the 2008-2009 period.
Australian Animal Wildlife Hazard Group promotes bird strike reporting.
Bird Strikes primarily happen between 6am – 10am & 3pm – 9pm in line with busy times.
Majority of major and regional airports have all experienced bird strike incidents.
Over the five year period 2002 to 2006, there were 5,103 reported bird strikes; this equates to one bird strike per 6,407 movements

Another important factor is modern turbofan aircraft like the Airbus 320. Their engines are much quieter than older aircraft. And almost all the noise comes out of the back of the engine. Birds are less able to hear or see modern aircraft. There are more airplanes in the sky, more birds in the sky and this is where the conflict comes in.

METHODS

The unique capability of trained working dogs is that they are trained to focus on targets once identified as those forming the greatest risk to aircraft and airport operations whilst ignoring non target entities in and around the search environment.

Unlike some other detection or disruption strategies dogs are extremely transportable, smart, adaptable to new and varied operational environments. The dogs can easily be utilised both within the airport environment which is identified as the major deployment area and in other high risk non airport controlled areas such as runway approach areas and flight paths.

One of the main reasons trained working dogs are so effective is dogs become the predators of the birds/animals in a safe predator environment (safe haven) near and on airports. The dog's integration into airport operational programs forces birds to change their migratory patterns and enhance the likelihood of them disbursing to a less threatening area outside the bird strike airport risk zone.

Dogs target a direct line towards the bird flock, directed and controlled by the trained handler to ensure the species are directed away from the aircrafts. The working dogs speed and vocalisation enforces them being a new introduced predator and with continuous planned deployment the dogs become one of the most efficient and effective tools for the management of this issue.

In addition to the deterrent and harassment deployment programs, pending on Airport Authority requirements these working dogs can also be trained to locate specific species living habitats such as fox lair's to provide the operation with intelligence to manage and potentially eradicate the threat.

RESULTS

Key Benefits for the Integration of a Working Dog Program

- Dogs are adaptable and smart
- Effective and efficient (high land coverage)
- Provides intelligence and reporting through GPS device
- Predator to animals which enhances deterrent strategies
- Integrated into current operational strategies
- Non lethal program

CONCLUSION

The deployment of specially trained working dogs enhances the overall bird strike management programs. With the correct disciplines in the dogs training and staff / handler training with quality ongoing assessments and validations the safety of working airside becomes paramount with no disruptions to day to day activities. Working dogs are one of the most efficient and effective deterrent tools and forces birds to change their migratory patterns due to introducing a predator in a safe haven environment. With quality dogs and training programs, and clear management structures working dogs can be an integral tool for the management of wildlife on Aerodromes.

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