

**The Conflict Between Wildlife Control and Conservation:
A False Dichotomy?**

Nicholas B. Carter, Ph.D.

Birdstrike Control Program

16051 E FM 1097, Willis, Texas 77378-4077 United States

Phone: (936) 856-3745 FAX: (936) 856-3916

<nick@birdstrikecontrol.com> ~ <http://www.birdstrikecontrol.com>

Philip Pruitt, Ph.D.

Civil Engineering

Hurlburt Field AFB

1SOCES/CEV, Hurlburt Field, Florida 32544 United States

<Philip.Pruitt@hurlburt.af.mil> ~ <http://www2.hurlburt.af.mil>

Rebecca Rushing, M.Sc.

Birdstrike Control Program

Hurlburt Field AFB

Hurlburt Field, Florida 32544 United States

Phone: (936) 856-3745 FAX: (936) 856-3916

<becca@birdstrikecontrol.com> ~ <http://www.birdstrikecontrol.com>

Abstract

Wildlife control and conservation efforts are generally seen as mutually exclusive efforts, as animals are “culled” and airfield habitats are eliminated or dramatically altered, in the context of improvement of air safety. Hurlburt Field Air Force Base, located along critical coastal habitat in the Florida panhandle, has succeeded in balancing its conservation efforts and wildlife management, while at the same time dramatically improving its overall air safety and lowering its birdstrike damages.

As a result of its efforts, Hurlburt Field was awarded the prestigious U.S. Air Force’s General Thomas D. White Natural Resources Conservation Award, with the BASH (Bird Avoidance Strike Hazard) program playing a prominent role in garnering the award. Despite the conventional opinion of the air safety community that effective wildlife control cannot be achieved without lethal control and massive habitat destruction, Hurlburt Field has dramatically improved safety through the implementation of purely non-lethal methods and with minimal impact to its local environment.

This presentation will examine how Hurlburt Field specifically, and other airfields in general, can achieve tremendous improvements in air safety with the reduction or elimination of birdstrike hazards, while at the same time minimizing its effect on the local environment. Conservation need not be a dirty word to the birdstrike control community and airfields can take their place as “environmentally-friendly” partners in worldwide conservation.

Dr. Nicholas B. Carter earned a Ph.D. in zoology from Ohio State University and a J.D. in law from the University of Miami School of Law.

Dr. Carter is a board member of the International Bird Strike Committee and CARSAMPAF, the Central and South American Birdstrike Committee. He is also the program director for CARSAMPAF's Education and Training Group, responsible for instructing member countries in the development and implementation of wildlife management programs at airports throughout Central and South America. CARSAMPAF (El Comité CAR/SAM de Prevención del Peligro Aviario) is an entity whose principal mission is the coordination and integration of actions to reduce/minimize the number of incidents and accidents in the CAR/SAM region (Caribbean, Central America, and South America) resulting from the collisions between birds and other wildlife with aircraft.

Dr. Carter is also the North American representative for the IBSC steering committee, the International Bird Strike Committee. The IBSC is a voluntary association of representatives from organizations who aim to improve commercial, military, and private aviation flight safety, by sharing knowledge and understanding concerning the reduction of the frequency and risk of collisions between aircraft, birds and other wildlife. IBSC facilitates the collection, analysis, and dissemination of data to describe and define operational as well as functional, regulatory, and legal aspects of the bird strike risk to aviation; the description and evaluation of methods to define and reduce the severity, frequency and costs of bird strikes, to define and increase the ability of aircraft to tolerate the bird strike event, and to help air crews to anticipate and react adequately; and the cooperation and collaboration on investigative efforts in order to broaden applicability of results while minimizing duplication of effort.

Dr. Carter is also the only expert consultant for ICAO (International Civil Aviation Organization) with respect to birdstrike concerns and issues. ICAO's Technical Cooperation Programme is a program in which member states contact ICAO for individual experts on particular subjects and ICAO provides them with the experts to assist in the matter. These experts provide advice and assistance to Contracting States in the development and implementation of projects across the full spectrum of air transport aimed at improving the security, efficiency, regularity and operational safety of national and international civil aviation with a view to achieving standardization, as specified in ICAO's Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs). Dr. Carter is currently the sole individual that ICAO maintains for programs and projects related to birdstrike concerns.

Dr. Carter has been actively involved in the wildlife management community for the past 21 years and directly involved in wildlife management programs at airports and airfields around the world for the past 10 years. Dr. Carter has personally developed the Wildlife Management Hazard Plans (WMHP) and wildlife management program for the entire Israeli Air Force at all major airbases in the country and was responsible for the development of the bird avoidance strike hazard (BASH) programs for the US Air Force at Dover Air Force Base (Dover, Delaware) and Hurlburt Field Special Operations Wing (Ft. Walton Beach, Florida). Dr. Carter was also a key consultant for the development of the wildlife management program at August Regional Airport (Augusta, Georgia). Dr. Carter also implemented wildlife control utilizing Border collies to actively harass wildlife in existing management programs at Vancouver International Airport (Vancouver, Canada), Cold Lake Air Force Base (Cold Lake, Canada), and Southwest Florida International Airport (Ft. Myers, Florida).

Dr. Carter was also the principal consultant for the development of two new airports in Guayaquil, Ecuador and Houston, Texas. Dr. Carter helped in the creation and construction of both airports, conducting comprehensive wildlife scientific studies, along with complex risk assessments that would aid the airports in the development stages of the airfields.

Prior to his involvement with the birdstrike community, Dr. Carter was a professor of ecology and wildlife management. Moreover, with his background and degree in the discipline of law (he is a licensed attorney in the state of Texas), Dr. Carter is also able to assess the legal considerations of any management techniques or habitat changes and help airfields steer clear of legal problems created through the imposition of inappropriate plans. He is also fully qualified to evaluate existing or proposed land-use and operative legislation from both a practical management and legal perspective. Due to his expansive experience at airports and airbases worldwide (from the arctic tundra of Cold Lake Air Force base to the deserts of southern Israel), Dr. Carter is not only familiar with the diverse requirements of airfield wildlife management for many types of airfields, he is also able to apply this knowledge to the assessment of other international airports and their existing or developing management protocols.