

DCA24LA330

OPERATIONAL FACTORS

Attachment 10

FAA Bird and Wildlife Strike Data

April 24, 2025



IN THIS SECTION

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Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

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Q: How often do wildlife strikes occur?	^
A: There have been about 292,000 reported wildlife strikes with civil aircraft in USA between 1990 and 2023 (about 19,700 strikes at 780 U.S. airports in 2023). An additional 5,100 strikes have been reported by U.S. Air Carriers at foreign airports, 1990–2023.	
Q: In what part of the year do most bird strikes occur?	^
A: About 54% of bird strikes occur from July to October which is when young birds recently have fledged from nests and fall migration occurs.	
Q: At what time of the day do most bird strikes occur?	^
A: About 62% of bird strikes with civil aircraft occur in day, 8% occur at dawn or dusk, and 30% occur at night.	
Q: Do most bird strikes occur while en route, at takeoff, or landing?	^
A: A: About 61% of bird strikes with fixed-wing civil aircraft occur during landing phases of flight (descent, approach and landing roll); 36% occur during take-off run and climb; and the remainder (3%) occur during the en-route phase. For helicopters, about 75% of strikes occur en-route.	
Q: At what altitude do most bird strikes occur?	^
A: About 70% of strikes occur between 0 and 500 feet above ground level. From 1990-2023, there were 31 strikes with commercial aircraft at heights from 20,000-32,000 feet AGL.	
Q: How many deaths and destroyed aircraft have been attributed to wildlife strikes?	Provide Your Feedback

A: From 1988 to October 2024, there were 499 human fatalities and 361 aircraft destroyed that were attributed to wildlife strikes globally for military and civil aviation.

Q: How many people have been injured due to wildlife strikes?



A: From 1990 to 2023, there were 357 human injuries attributed to wildlife strikes with U.S. civil aircraft.

Q: What bird strike incident resulted in the largest loss of life in USA?



A: On October 4, 1960, Eastern Air Lines Flight 375 struck a flock of European starlings during take-off. All four engines were damaged and the aircraft crashed in the Boston harbor. There were 62 fatalities. This incident occurred prior to the creation of the FAA Wildlife Strike Database.

Q: What part of the airplane is most frequently damaged?



A: For civil aircraft in USA, wings and engines are the components most frequently damaged by bird strikes; each accounting for 25% of all damaged aircraft components from 1990 to 2023.

Q: What is the economic loss from wildlife strikes?



A: The reported costs for civil aircraft in USA totaled \$1.48 billion for the 34-year period, 1990 to 2023. When costs are adjusted for reported strikes in which costs were not provided, losses could be as high as \$300 million per year.

Q: Who reports wildlife strikes?



A: Most bird strikes are reported by pilots and airport personnel. For additional information please visit the [FAA Wildlife Strike Database](#).

Q: How do I collect bird remains if I have a strike?



A: Please watch the released [USDA instructional video](#) and see the "Resources" box on the [Smithsonian Institution Feather Identification Lab](#) page to learn more about collecting wildlife remains for identification.

Q: When was the first bird strike reported?



A: The first reported bird strike was by Orville Wright while flying over a corn field in Ohio in 1905.

Q: How are the bird-remains identified?	^
A: Many remains are identified by trained wildlife biologists working at the airports. The Smithsonian Institution's Feather Identification Laboratory is able to identify a bird species from its remains. Depending on the condition of the remains, birds can be identified based on physical characteristics, feather fragments, and/or DNA analysis. For additional information, please visit the Smithsonian Institution Feather Identification Lab page.	
Q: Are all of the birds struck by aircraft identified?	^
A: Not all remains are saved or sent to the Smithsonian for identification. In 2023, 59% of the remains from reported strikes with civil aircraft in USA were identified to the species level and an additional 12% were identified to species group.	
Q: Are other animals besides birds struck by aircraft?	^
A: Yes. While 96% of all strikes with civil aircraft in USA involve birds, strikes with other animals such as deer, coyotes, turtles, skunks, bats, alligators, and iguanas have also been reported. White-tailed deer and coyotes are the most struck non-bird species, 1990–2023.	
Q: What is the bird most commonly struck by aircraft?	^
A: Mourning doves are the most common species of bird struck by civil aircraft in USA, accounting for about 11% of the birds identified to exact species, 1990–2023. Waterfowl (ducks and geese) account for only 4% of the strikes but are responsible for 27% of the strikes that cause damage to the aircraft.	
Q: How do airports reduce the risk of wildlife strikes?	^
A: Airports reduce the risk of wildlife strikes though integrated wildlife management programs. These programs include changes to the habitat at and in the vicinity of the airport and methods to disperse or remove the birds and other wildlife that pose a risk to aviation safety. For additional information please reference: FAA/USDA manual for managing wildlife hazards at airports (PDF)	

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