

Managing Raptors to Reduce Wildlife Strikes at Chicago's O'Hare International Airport

Craig K. Pullins, USDA/APHIS/Wildlife Services, O'Hare International Airport, AMC Bldg., Room 241, P.O. Box 66142, Chicago, IL 60666 USA (craig.k.pullins@aphis.usda.gov)

Travis L. Guerrant, USDA/APHIS/Wildlife Services, O'Hare International Airport, AMC Bldg., Room 241, P.O. Box 66142, Chicago, IL 60666 USA

Scott F. Beckerman, USDA/APHIS/Wildlife Services, 3430 Constitution Drive, Suite 121, Springfield, IL 62711 USA

Brian E. Washburn, USDA/APHIS/Wildlife Services National Wildlife Research Center, 6100 Columbus Avenue, Sandusky, OH 44870 USA

Abstract. Nationally, wildlife-aircraft collisions (wildlife strikes) have been increasing over the past 25 years; denoted in the National Wildlife Strike Database that has been maintained by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) since 1990. Increasing wildlife populations and air traffic coupled with quieter, faster aircraft create a significant risk to aviation safety; the cost to the civil aviation industry is an estimated \$937 million dollars annually. USDA/APHIS/Wildlife Services (WS) provides technical and direct assistance to over 850 airports and airbases around the United States, including Chicago's O'Hare International Airport (ORD). At ORD, raptors are one of the most commonly struck bird guild and accounted for at least 25% of damaging strikes from 2010-2013. An Integrated Wildlife Damage Management (IWDM) program is implemented at ORD to reduce the presence of wildlife on the airfield, consequently lowering the risk of wildlife strikes. Professional airport wildlife biologists at ORD concentrate much of their efforts on raptor management due to the high strike risk these birds pose to aircraft on the airfield itself. A variety of techniques are currently used to manage raptor populations at ORD. Concurrently, research is being conducted to evaluate the efficacy of the Red-tailed Hawk relocation program at the airport, as well as to assess their movements within the airfield environment.