

SAFETY GRAM 4.0

March 2021



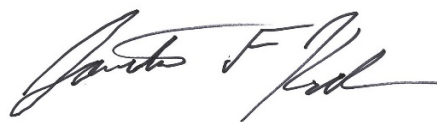
Air Force Aero Clubs,

As we begin to welcome spring weather in 2021, depending on location, some clubs are also welcoming an increase in bird migration activity while others are seeing them decline. In North America there are four major flyways that migratory birds typically follow; The Atlantic Flyway, Mississippi Flyway, Central Flyway, and Pacific Flyway. These are the major “highways” in the air for various species of birds as they migrate each year. Depending on your clubs specific location these flyways and the birds that travel them increase the chances of experiencing a bird strike while flying.

Bird strikes can pose a significant threat to aircraft safety and can cause costly damage, but like with any risk there are multiple ways to mitigate. First and most importantly, each club should have a plan for their locality on how to deal with and mitigate the risks of bird strikes. Luckily this plan should already be completed by your Installation and/or Wing Safety office. Specifically, Club Managers, Instructors, and Members should have access and be familiar with the local AFI 91-212 supplement or Bird and Wildlife Strike Hazard Plan (BASH Plan). The Installation BASH plan is made to protect Air Force assets at your base and may not always be the best solution for clubs GA flying. Work with your local safety advisors, safety office, and USDA representative to build on or tailor it to best fit your club’s needs, while also implementing appropriate BASH risk mitigation and incorporate that into club SOP’s. Second, know the resources that are available to help identify and mitigate bird strike hazards. Some of these include FAA resources found here https://www.faa.gov/airports/airport_safety/wildlife/. Another is using the Air Force Aviation Hazard Advisory System found here <https://www.usahas.com/>. Lastly just being familiar with your installation bird watch conditions, what they mean and how they differ from civil airports bird reporting. Third and finally report strikes if you experience them. Not only is it important to report it because of possible damage to the aircraft, but reporting with either the USAF or FAA helps the experts continue to build a macro level view of bird activity within a given area and will give greater fidelity to forecasting potential bird hazards in the future.

Birds have been in the sky flying long before we first took flight. Although they do present a significant threat to our safety in the air, by having a plan, and being educated on the specific bird threats near your club and resources available, you will be much better prepared to mitigate that risk.

Fly Safely,



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