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Andy Baxter

Bird Management Unit, Central Science Laboratory, Sand Hutton, York, YO41 1LZ, England

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Bird Hazard Management on Wetlands at UK Aerodromes

Andy Baxter

Bird Management Unit, Central Science Laboratory, Sand Hutton, York,
YO41 1LZ, England

UK aerodromes suffer consistently wet conditions that often result in standing water on airfield grassland or a requirement for water run-off and containment facilities. Such areas routinely present an attraction to hazardous birds including ducks, geese, waders and swans. Where possible, such features are eliminated from the aerodrome environment at the design stage or through the implementation of additional drainage. Practicalities and expense, however, can limit these options. This paper discusses the types of design features that are used to reduce the attraction of a wetland site to birds, and reports on the effectiveness of wiring, netting and bird balls as control systems for existing sites. Wire spacing needed to be reduced to 0.7m intervals before a significant reduction in total bird numbers was achieved. 20m spacing, however, was effective against swans. Netting, or wire spacing at less than 0.3m was required to exclude all hazardous birds. Bird balls excluded all species but were not suitable for all sites. Continuous active deterrence patrols were successful at preventing the use of, but not investigation of, saturated wetland sites that developed during heavy rains on some airfields.