

Birds vs. offshore helicopter operations

Capt. Glenn Christiansen, CHC Helikopter Service



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-Some facts from Offshore (Oil and gas) helicopters in the North Sea area:

-All weather operations, day and night, from Denmark, Netherlands, UK, Ireland and Norway

-Approx 324 000 flights per year (OGP)/Approx 150 000 flight hours per year.

-In the Norwegian Continental Shelf there are three operators; CHC, Bristow and Blue Way ;

-40 000 flight hours/ 750 000 passengers including shuttle (NCAA)



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-Primary helicopters in use;

-S- 92 A ;

Eurocopter AS 332/ EC 225;



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Report: Bird strike caused Marine helicopter crash

Associated Press - Thu, May 17, 2012

- CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. (AP) — A bird strike caused a deadly helicopter crash at Camp Pendleton last year that killed two Marines, according to a Marine Corps investigation.
- The AH-1W Cobra attack helicopter collided Sept. 19 with a red-tailed hawk that had a wing span of about 4 feet and probably weighed about 3 pounds, according to a report obtained by U-T San Diego (<http://bit.ly/KxrFT1>).
- Both pilots onboard were killed in the crash.



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-Bird strike statistics offshore helicopters ?



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-From Flight Operation Reports (FOR) from CHC and Bristow 2007 – 2011 (5 years);



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CHC (worldwide)	152 birdstrikes
Bristow (worldwide)	84
Total =	236/ 47 per year



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- Bird strike statistics offshore helicopters ?
- From Flight Operation Reports (FOR) from CHC and Bristow 2007 – 2011 (5 years);

CHC (worldwide)	152 birdstrikes	North Sea	51
Bristow (worldwide)	84		17
Total =	236/ 47 per year		68/ 13



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- Bird strike statistics offshore helicopters ?
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"CREATING DAMAGE, FEAR, DELAYS AND COST"



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- A rough estimate of these reports indicates;
- 1/3 happening just after take off from shore.
 - 2/3 happening either on cruise, or close to/ or at the helideck
 - Some few even at night in 3000 ft...



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Passive bird scaring devices...



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-Typical Bird Strike Report

-Report #: 12- xxxxx Title: Birdstrike

Description: After departing Stornoway climbing through 600 ft at 135 KIAS approximately 2nm after coasting out for SAR Training, the PNF called "Birds ahead". A widespread flock of 8-10 gulls was seen above and below the current height, spread from left to right across the flight path. Despite avoiding action by the PF, a single bird was seen to pass close to the RH cockpit side and a loud thump was heard and felt. Airspeed was reduced to 80 KIAS and a return to Stornoway initiated. Inspection by the rearcrew revealed bird remains on the RH sponson leading edge.

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-What are the operative procedures to prevent bird strikes?



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-What are the operative procedures to prevent bird strikes?

-Answer; None ! (Not part of any procedure or training programme.)



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Operating manual A. (OMA) CHC and Bristows;

-OMA based on JAR OPS 3;

Xx.xx Bird Hazards and Strikes, Reporting Requirement;

- A Commander shall immediately inform the appropriate ground station whenever a potential bird hazard is observed.
- A collision between a helicopter and birds shall be reported on report form NF-2007...
- The reports may be sent individually or together prior to the 15-th of the following month.
- See above for the reporting of birdstrikes which have caused material damage (form NF-2007).
- The Commander shall immediately after the flight submit an Air Safety Report and fill out form..

Dangerous goods: - Restricted articles: - Birds:

- i. Large birds shall be transported in cages, boxes or similar.
- ii. Some offshore installations have custom-made birdcages available for the purpose.
- iii. Birds shall not be let loose in the cabin during flight.



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Operative procedures/ Best practice; Look to Canada!



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Essence of the "Bird Avoidance Brochure";

Bottom line-Approach to unmanned, or bird infested helidecks

- Fly slow. Below 80 kts,
- All Lights on
- Consider windshield heat
- Consider dummy approach at distance, to allow birds to depart
- If avoiding birds –climb
- If hit, inspect the aircraft after landing

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Guidelines for pilots should be part of the operative documentation, and should be a part of the anual recurrent training programme!

IBSC is a key player here to get the right procedures available globally.

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