

PORT LINCOLN AIRPORT

Wildlife Hazard Management

Presentation to AAWHG
Wildlife Management Forum 2011

District Council of Lower Eyre Peninsula

Location: south east coast of Lower Eyre Peninsula

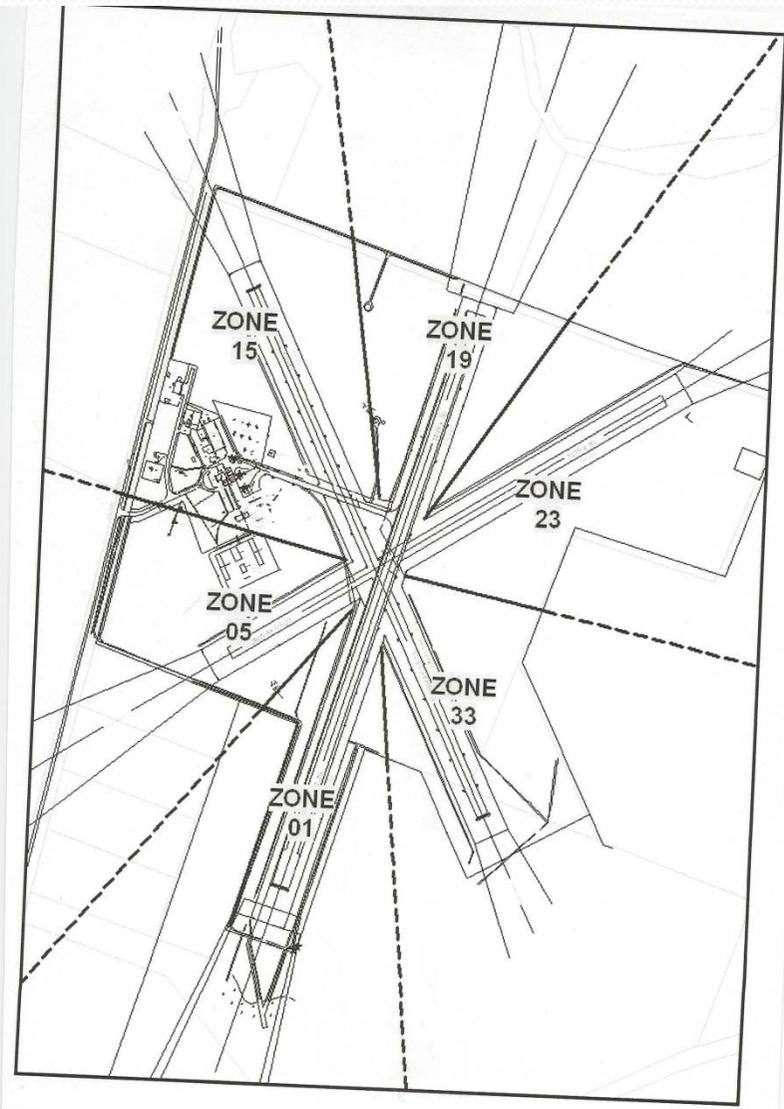


- Airport is located approximately 10 km north of City of Port Lincoln

Background:-

- The District Council of Lower Eyre Peninsula owns and operates the Port Lincoln Airport.
- Regular Passenger Service provided by:-
 - Qantaslink Q400
 - Regional Express SAAB340
- Current schedule caters for up to 4 Q400 services per day and up to 8 SAAB 340 services per day
- Carrying approx 200,000 passengers a year.
- Airport is staffed by Airport Manager, Airport Compliance Officer (2 year contract) and Airport Groundsman.

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- Council has documented its approach to bird and animal hazard management as part of the aerodrome manual.
 - Monitoring
 - Dispersal
 - Harassment &
 - Reporting
 - Airport Zones
 - Time; Zone Reference; Bird Type; Bird Numbers; Estimated Height (feet); Weather conditions; and any other comments deemed appropriate including dispersal techniques applied.





The Issues:

- We have a couple of unique issues that have come to bare over recent years and this has prompted a review of the our Animal and Bird Hazard Management program.
- Airport staff have observed a problem with increased numbers of Silver Gulls flocking on the airport during late winter.
- At times staff have recorded up to 1400 gulls both flying and grounded and have spent up to 5 hours of the day using various techniques to disperse them.

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- These large numbers are generally recorded during the period mid July to late September.
 - Mostly between hours 06:30 to 11:00.
 - There are occasions when they have been present during the afternoon as well.
 - This situation poses an obvious danger to the safety of aircraft operations in and out of Port Lincoln Airport.

Causes:

- Port Lincoln is well known for its Tuna Industry.

Lincoln Cove Marina is home to most of the vessels catching Blue Fin Tuna in the Australian Bight.



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- Farming Southern Blue Fin Tuna involves:
 - Catching the wild fish in the Great Australian Bight in late summer each year;
 - Transporting the fish in tow cages to sites behind Boston Island near Port Lincoln;
 - The Tuna is then fed on site daily, growing the tuna into a premium quality product for the export market;
 - They are then harvested for sale in mid Winter.

TUNA FEED CAGE



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- Once the Tuna feeding ceases the gulls are looking for other food sources.
 - Airport
 - Marina area
 - Schools
 - Waste Management sites
 - The presence of gulls in large numbers is a problem for the whole community.
 - The Islands near Port Lincoln are National Parks and a perfect grounds for breeding and roosting.
 - Tuna Industry has changed the feeding practices.
 - However, still a good source of food for the gulls.

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- What do they feed on at our Airport?
 - Worms and frogs
 - During the winter months after significant rainfall the worms come to the surface.
 - Easy pickings for the gulls
 - Current management methods of
 - Monitor
 - Disperse – birdfrite, vehicles, live shot
 - Shooting – (Permits from National Parks allow shooting of 20 at a time)

Are having little to no effect on birds that are present in such large numbers.

Cape Barren Geese:

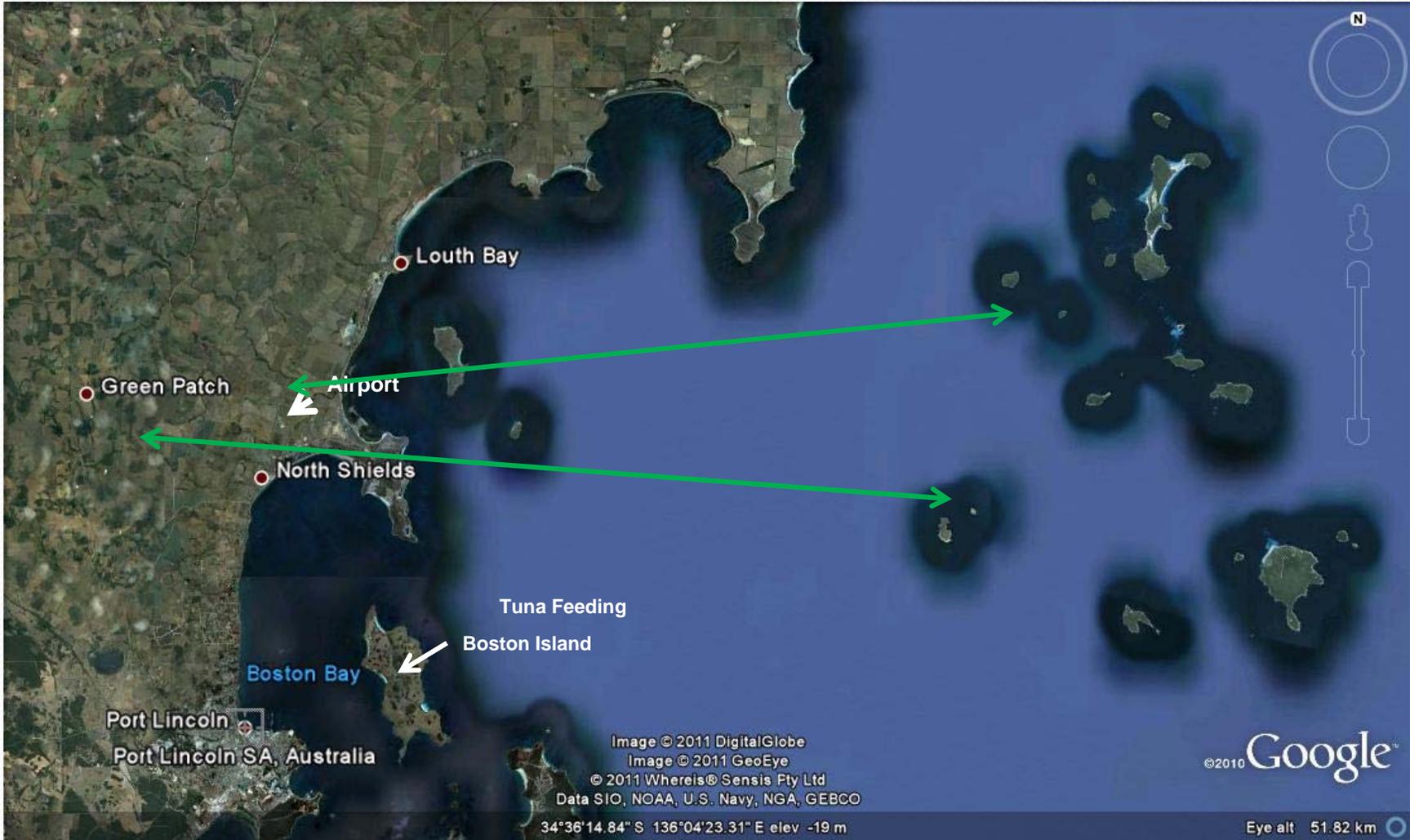
- Another significant problem we have is Cape Barren Geese (protected species).
- Once again this involves the islands off the coast.
- In the past:-
 - Islands were farmed which provided food and water and a nice place to roost and breed.
- Present:
 - Islands are now owned by National Parks.
 - Cessation of farming has removed the abundance of food and water.
 - Geese need to source food and water elsewhere.

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- Lower Eyre Peninsula is a major cropping area which provides ample food and water source for the geese.



- The geese are still roosting and breeding on the islands but fly over the airport on their way to the abundant farming land in search of food and water.



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- Despite the existence of these hazards we have had one reported strike in 2010 and one reported strike in 2011.
 - 2010 strike was unidentified species and the strike in 2011 involved swallow.
 - No reported aircraft damage.
 - The low number of strikes in the last two years has been fortunate and at the same time we are aware of the serious threat that exists.
 - We have engaged David Paton to advise on possible solutions.
 - David has visited the airport and perused our data. He has recently provided his report and we will explore the recommendations provided.



Recommendations:

- The documentation in the Wildlife Hazard Management Plan in the Manual needs to be expanded especially in relation to Monitoring and Assessment.
- The updated Wildlife Hazard Management Plan should follow the template produced by the AAWHG.
- Establish a electronic data base for the recording of daily assessments of bird activity – until recently this was a paper based recording process.
- The Assessment of hazards should follow a more formal risk assessment for the airport.

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- The trigger for NOTAM should be more defined in the Aerodrome Manual and when a NOTAM is raised it should contain more information in relation to bird species and time of day that the more acute risk is usually present.
 - Continue to obtain permits from NPWS for the culling of Cape Barren Geese (whether the cull takes place or not).
 - Bag and label remains with date, strike details and freeze for later examination.
 - Storing image of remains of birds involved in a strike and cross reference to strike date base.
 - Hold two meetings per year to raise the profile of the bird strike issues with off airport stakeholders who have the potential to contribute to the bird problems for the airport.

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- Instead of conducting separate monitoring specifically to collect abundance data etc, once a week record against each species of bird that has been recorded on the airport the maximum number seen during the week during other activities.
 - The zones currently being used should be sub-divided into core areas (near the intersection of runways) and peripheral areas (the outer part of the current areas) and into east or west (or north or south sides) of the runways to improve precision.
 - Or use of a GPS to record exact locations.

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- All recommendations will be taken on board during the development of a new Wildlife Hazard Management Plan for the airport especially in relation to monitoring, data collection and recording methods, liaison with off airport stakeholders and passive and active management actions.
 - Thank You.