



Land Management and Allocation of Resources
Short Term Costs with Long Term Results

At Ben Gurion International Airport controlled land management is an important factor in reducing potential sources of attraction for birds, especially as it is situated in an area of intensive agriculture and in close proximity to major municipal refuse tips. When dealing with land management at airports there are aspects that impact upon operational and safety considerations. As is the case with any large organization with limited resources, the allocation of budgets to various departments with differing priorities can lead to problems in areas where departmental responsibilities overlap. Maintenance of land in close proximity to runways and taxiways is a case in point.

While most of the arable land under Air Port Authority control is utilized for selected cultivation, not all of the area is viable for use. For those areas not in use or otherwise maintained wild plant growth can take hold and provide an environment suitable to support bird activity. From a bird control perspective it is a major source of potential problems. This threat to aircraft safety may not be evident or given priority when budget allocation is determined as was the case for a period of time at Ben Gurion Airport. However, in 1993 budget allocation was made to treat unregulated areas of plant growth and the initial result was - an increase in the incidence of bird strikes.

While this consequence may seem to be incongruous at first, not to mention unsettling, this result may be attributed to the disturbing and elimination of stable biotopes. The ensuing loss in stability for the resident bird populations with resultant changes in activity patterns may well be the reason for the consequent rise in the number of bird strikes. However, 1995 showed a significant decrease in reported bird strike incidence (as shown in the following table) and the trend has thus far continued through 1996. So, while there may be short term initial costs following a concentrated effort to deny sanctuaries for bird activity, over time a reduction in bird strike incidence will follow.

YEAR	1993	1994	1995
BIRD STRIKES	28	34	20