

COMMENTS ON THE BSCI 2020 REPORT

The year 2020 was a quite anomalous year for the wildlife strike statistics. In fact, the almost total blockade of flights at the beginning of the pandemic, and the subsequent slow resumption of activities, had significant effects also on this aspect.

At a global level it was feared that the lack of air traffic at airports could lead to a sort of abandonment of the territory, with the consequent occupation by fauna, no longer contained and kept away from the movement of men, aircraft and vehicles. Indeed, the most reliable international statistics seem to give credence to this fear, as emerged in several meetings.

The BSCI report highlights that besides a 72.5% drop in passengers, there was a parallel drop of 58.95% in the number of impacts. However, the report does not show the drop of movements (take-offs + landings), so it is difficult to infer the direct correlation between the two data.

Furthermore, the usual datum of the number of impacts per 10,000 movements is provided, which is increased at least as regards the commercial aviation. Although this data is largely insufficient to define the "dangerousness" (the impacts are not all the same), however it should be noted that from 2008 onwards it exceeds the level of 5, at the time established as the "attention" threshold. At the moment it appears to have the value of 15.35.

The report then lists the proportional increase in multiple impacts (+ 12%), engine ingestions (+ 16%), effects on flight (+ 10%) but also the significant decrease in damaging strikes (-71%).

In conclusion, at least as far as Italy is concerned, the feared dramatic proportional increase in impacts does not seem to have occurred, and least of all in absolute terms. This seems to be also due to the fact that the Italian airports have not completely interrupted the surveillance and ground control services, unlike what has happened in other countries.

It would be desirable to acquire more information in the future also on the direct and indirect costs of the wildlife strike phenomenon, which at the moment are valued at about 8 million euros per year.

Lastly, it must be noted a total lack of any mention in the report of the most modern prevention system, namely the avian radars, at this point subject of countless studies, tests, experiments, and already operating in many airports. This is certainly not due to a BSCI flaw, but to the fact that in Italy this system is simply not yet taken into consideration. Italy, which in terms of prevention of w/s has been at the forefront for years and can boast a vast wealth of knowledge and experience, is instead lagging behind in this aspect.

On the other hand, the future creation of a web portal is very interesting, as it is "*consisting of an interactive map which aims to offer information to aviation users on the wildlife that could influence air operations*". We add that this portal would acquire fundamental importance if it could count on a radar network in the airport locations, which would also allow a tactical management of air traffic depending on the bird presence.