



MEDIA RELEASE

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ANNUAL WILDLIFE HAZARD WORKING GROUP MEETING

Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands (30 October, 2014) Residents interested in learning more about what the Cayman Islands Airports Authority (CIAA) is doing to prevent wildlife strikes to aircraft flocked to the annual Wildlife Hazard Working Group meeting held on Monday, 27 October.

The meeting was chaired by CIAA's senior manager, safety management systems Andrew McLaughlin. Mr. McLaughlin said, "Wildlife strikes can not only be catastrophic, but they also cost the airport industry billions of dollars in damages each year, therefore it's a major concern for the CIAA."

This year has been very busy, since bird migration season started early. Since mid-September there has been an abundance of cattle egrets, great egrets, stilts and swallows in the area. However, Mr. McLaughlin explains, "CIAA is doing all it can to keep wildlife, which includes birds, turtles and iguanas, from causing any major interferences to aircraft operations and ensure a safe operating environment at the Owen Roberts International Airport. "



One of the most widely used safety measures is the Zon Gun Propane Cannon better known as the “air cannon”. The blasts are generated by propane gas that causes a popping noise that scares the birds away.

Due to the increase in wildlife, CIAA has extended the hours of deployment of the air cannon, which has caused some complaints from the public. However, Mr. McLaughlin says, “While we apologize for the inconvenience, the air cannon serves a higher purpose in maintaining the safety of aircraft operations.”

CIAA also plans on posting signs along the airport fence to alert motorists about the use of the air cannons for wildlife management. The goal is to ensure all passing motorists and residents in the area are made aware of the cannons so they won’t be alarmed by the sound.

CIAA is also encouraging the public to do its part to help prevent wildlife strikes by informing airport staff about wildlife, covering trash cans, picking up garbage and not feeding the birds in the areas surrounding the airport.

PHOTO CAPTION:

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1. CIAA officials gather for the Wildlife Hazard Working Group meeting
2. Zon Gun Propane Cannon
3. Example of Bird Migration pattern from North America

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