

## DeTect Bird Radar Fact Sheet

(June 2009 Update)

- **In the aftermath of the recent birdstrike related crash of US Airways flight 1549 at New York LaGuardia airport, FAA representatives and other bird radar developers have made repeated statements to the effect that bird radars:**
  - Would have been unable to provide accurate avoidance guidance to US Airways Flight 1549 since the geese it struck were too far away and were too high,
  - Are not ready for operational deployment at commercial airports,
  - Cannot provide usable information in real-time,
  - Produce too many “false positives” due to insect and ground clutter contamination, and
  - Will require years of additional research and development.
- **These statements are misinformed and not accurate or complete:**
  - Advanced bird radars from several manufacturers are already operationally used by the U.S. Air Force (USAF), NASA, the Royal Air Force (RAF) and by airports.
    - Systems with the USAF and RAF regularly detect and track flocks of geese at ranges and altitudes well beyond the 3 miles and above the 2800 feet altitude as was the geese flock that brought down flight 1549.
    - The British Government Bird Control Unit has two bird radars with documented reliable geese detection out to 6 miles and beyond.
  - The Durban International Airport in South Africa is the first commercial airport to use a bird radar operationally in the air traffic control tower.
  - These existing bird radars provide real-time information on bird movement that is being used and has been used with systems continuously operating since 2002.
  - These bird radars already have proven records in reducing birdstrikes and in protecting aircraft, pilots and passengers.
  - The features and functions of these systems can readily be integrated into and used at commercial airports today to reduce birdstrike risk and protect the flying public.
- **Over the past nine years, the FAA has tested only two experimental “bird radar” systems:**
  - The systems tested to date by the FAA are experimental.
    - These systems use radar technologies that have not been widely used for bird detection and are not known to not be ideal for bird detection.

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(June 2009 Update, *continued*)

- The bird radar system at Seattle-Tacoma airport (SEA) was installed by the FAA in 2007 and, according to statements from the FAA, its researchers and the Canadian radar developer, will require years more research – even after already spending several million in US taxpayer money on the system.
  - The developer of this system, Sicom Systems, Ltd, of Ontario, Canada recently stated that its system “would have been unable to provide accurate avoidance guidance to US Airways Flight 1549, since at 2,800 feet and three miles from La Guardia the geese it struck were too far away” (statement attributed to Sicom President, Tim Nohara, AINonline, *Birdstrike Warning Systems Not Quite Ready Yet*, June 4, 2009).
  - Additionally, the SEA radar system reportedly does not detect all birds and has insect contamination making the data unusable in real-time.
  - The SEA system uses obsolete magnetron-based X-band radar sensors that will not detect birds in weather. Birds, especially migrating birds, do fly in rain which represents the most dangerous time for bird-aircraft strikes as the controllers and pilots cannot see the birds and the birds cannot see-and-avoid the aircraft.
  - According to the lead FAA researcher for the past nine years, it will take several years to analyze the data they have collected and 10-20 years to field usable systems.
  - Despite the failure of this bird radar to achieve operational status, and after two years and hundreds of thousands of dollars in investment, the FAA now proposes to install the same experimental Accipiter radar at other US airports, including the Chicago O’Hare and New York JFK.
- The FAA has subcontracted the bird radar evaluation to the University of Illinois Champaign (UIUC).
  - DeTect has worked for two years to get a contract with UIUC to have its MERLIN system evaluated, however to date has been unable to reach an agreement with UIUC on a contract.
    - UIUC refused to include a scope of work for the evaluation in DeTect’s contract and only wanted to evaluate part of the MERLIN bird radar system.
  - The FAA has recently approached DeTect proposing a new evaluation team of qualified subject matter experts under a defined scope of work to address DeTect’s concerns about the program, to which DeTect has responded favorably, however as of this date, no contract has been provided or issued to DeTect.

*\* The statements in this document are based upon the information and belief of DeTect management and are sourced from published media reports, communications from the FAA and other available public documents.*

