

Ecological research at Hamburg airport 1966.

To find out what species of birds are living on an airport, it is necessary to do ecological research-work during a period of several years. In connection with the German Birdstricke Committee and the airport-company, the birdprotectionstation Hamburg and the avifaunistic birdwatching group did these researchwork at the airport of Hamburg. Two members of the birdwatching group made there observation once a week. They did made the researchwork in quantitative and qualitative sight. The countings of the birds were made in a special system. During the controlltime the airportauthorities gave the birdwatchers a motorcar. For each controllvisit they need several hours. Besides this observations the airport-company itself give advice, that the men who are working at the ramp, the taxiways and so on, also should look at birds. They had also a special list, to put in all observations. Also the flightsafetyofficials at the controlltower did give help to observe birds, so far as they could do it.

From January till December 1966 the observers determined 75 bird-species. 22 species did breed on the airport. The greatest population had the Sky Lark. The observatores were sure, that a great number of eggs or nestlings get distroied by lawncutting-maschines. 5 species however, who did come to the airfield searching for food, were a potential danger for the starting or landing airoplanes. This were Black-headed Gull, Lapwing, crows, Ringdove an Starling. Normaly about 10 Gills and Crows were searching for food on the airfield. The birdwatchers found 15 breeding Lapwing paires. From March till November 50 Lapwings did life normaly on the airfield. On the 1th of October a fourengine-airoplan did flight through a group of about 50 Lapwings. 15 birds were killed. So far as the observers did recognise, the airplan did have no heavy damages. It continued there take-off.

Birds used to visit taxiways and runways, when after rain great numbers of earthworms were laying on it. The most observad birdspecies who did feed earthworms were Black-headed Gulls and Crows. It could be also observed, that House-pigeons and carrier-pigeons, who did fly across the run- and taxiways were much more dangerous for the starting or landing aircraft as Ringdoves. We know, that pigeons also like to pick up little stones along the shouldiers of the run- and taxiways.

The investigations will be continued for several years and give us a very good help for ad-hoc-actions and a lot of other researchwork at airfields.

Now I want to show you some slides about fluctuation of the five most important birds at Harburg airport during the year 1966.

F - Fockenheim, 4.6.1967

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