

BEYOND FALCONRY BETWEEN TRADITION AND MODERNITY: A NEW DEVICE FOR BIRD STRIKE HAZARD PREVENTION AT AIRPORTS

Dr. Valter Battistoni (1),
Dr. Alessandro Montemaggiore (2), Dr. Paolo Iori (3)

- 1) BC & T – Birdstrike Consulting and Training – *Former Chairman of Bird Strike Committee Italy*
- 2) Ornithologist, Member of Bird Strike Committee Italy
- 3) Project Designer of “Falco Robot GBRs” model

1) Via Su Furrage A, 9 07040 OLMEDO (Italy) Ph. & Fax +39 079 902316 –
E-mail: battvtr@tiscali.it

2) Via Federico Tozzi, 9 00137 ROMA (Italy) Ph & Fax + 39 06 4403315;
E-mail: alessandro.montemaggiore@poste.it

3) Frazione Calvenzano, via Bottega n. 33/d Vergato (BO), Italy – Ph. +39 0534 22244
E-mail: info@birdraptor.com

ABSTRACT

Most accredited studies in Italy and all over the world emphasize the problems related to traditional falconry used as a means against bird hazard at airports.

Some negative features of using falcons are the impossibility to be employed during some periods of the year and adverse weather conditions, unforeseen animal behaviour, its biological needs, the tight dependency on the falconer and the limited employment over the day.

Above all, high costs play a key role due to the value of the animals, to their training, to the numbers necessary to be effectively operated on a medium/large size airport and finally to the employment features.

The attempts to use remote-controlled aircraft models instead of real falcons proved to be unsuccessful because of the habituation effect it produced on other birds, that are certainly harassed by the device, but do not recognize it as a natural bird of prey, whose hunting area must be avoided.

So it is the frightening effect that is missing, upon which also other dispersal methods are based, such as distress calls or predator effigies.

The use of full scale bird of prey accurate reproductions, engine powered and fully remote-controlled, seems to have reached the goal to match the natural predator effectiveness with employment flexibility, cost reduction and mass production.