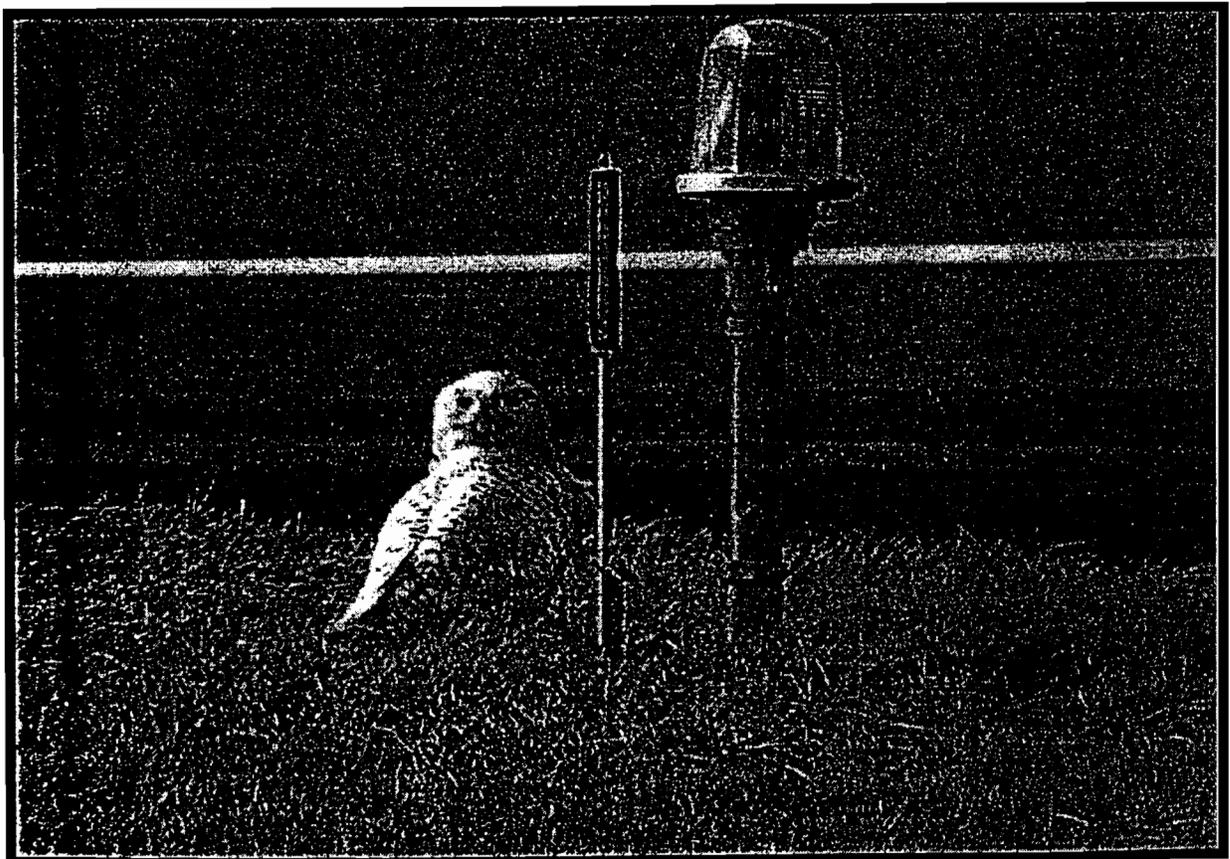


Seventh Annual Meeting of
BIRD STRIKE COMMITTEE - USA

“Bird strike prevention: blending old and new technologies”

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Snowy owl beside a taxiway at Logan International Airport.

Photo by Jim Powers (MASSPORT)

(34) PREFERENCE OF GROUND COVERS BY CANADA GEESE AT ELMENDORF AIR FORCE BASE, ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

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Abstract: Bird strikes to aircraft are a serious safety and economic problem in the United States. Maintaining vegetation height to reduce bird use is a common approach to habitat management at airports. Waterfowl, specifically Canada geese (*Branta canadensis*), are generally attracted to airfields because of a variety of preferred forage and large open areas. At Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska our study determined Canada goose foraging preferences for alternative vegetation types not normally planted on this airfield. We compared Canada goose preference for Kentucky bluegrass (*Poa pratensis*), bluejoint reedgrass (*Calamagrostis canadensis*), beach wildrye (*Elymus mollis*), silver hairgrass (*Aira caryophyllea*), lupine (*Lupinus nootkatensis*), dandelions (*Taraxacum* spp.) and flightline turf (a mix of Alaska brome (*Bromus sitchensis*), dock (*Rumex acerosella*), and red fescue (*Festuca rubra*). There was a significant treatment-by-choice interaction ($F = 25.36$; $P = 0.0001$; 4, 136 d.f.) Flightline turf was preferred over Kentucky bluegrass and silver hairgrass was marginally less preferred than Kentucky bluegrass. Lupine, bluejoint reedgrass, and beach wildrye were avoided when Kentucky bluegrass was present as an alternative choice.