

# Aircraft hit birds, kangaroos, even turtles in Australia

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The rate of Australian aircraft hitting birds increased sharply in the last decade, with data Monday showing that even kangaroos, wombats and turtles are occasionally involved in accidents.

An Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB) report noted that more than 1,750 birdstrikes occurred in 2011, mostly involving "high capacity" [aircraft](#) which have more than 38 seats, compared with 780 in 2002.

"For high capacity aircraft operations, reported bird strikes have increased from 400 to 980 over the last 10 years of study," it said, giving these planes a strike rate of more than nine per 10,000 movements in 2011.

Domestic aircraft such as Boeing 737s and Airbus A320s were the most likely to hit a bird, with take-off and landing the danger times, the report said.

"It is likely that the speed and size of these aircraft, longer take-off and landing rolls, and large turbofan engines are factors contributing to the higher rate," it added.

Bats or flying foxes are the creatures most commonly hit, while birds in the lapwing and plover families were also recurring victims along with the bright-pink galah cockatoo.

The report noted that only 12 incidents of bird strikes had resulted in serious damage between 2002 and 2011 and only seven caused injury.

This included one instance in which a [flying fox](#) crashed through a helicopter windscreen, hitting the pilot in the face and leaving him with minor injuries.

Animal strikes were relatively rare, with hares and rabbits most likely to be involved, along with [kangaroos](#), wallabies, dogs and foxes.

Other animals to have been hit included echidnas, turtles which strayed onto runways and in one instance, an emu.

In one of the worst accidents a microlight hit several wallaroos, an animal similar to a kangaroo, when a group jumped onto airstrip into the path of the powered hanglider.

The impact caused the pilot to lose control, skidding along a gravel strip, leaving him with a broken lower back and ankle, fractured eye socket, broken nose and severe cuts.

The report detailed several other instances of bird strike including a helicopter hitting a wedge-tailed eagle with its rotor blades, forcing it to land in a grassy area that was then set alight by the helicopter's exhaust.

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