*International Civil Aviation Organization*

ICAO Asia/Pacific Wildlife Hazard Management Workshop and Seventh Meeting of the Asia/Pacific Wildlife Hazard Management Working Group (AP–WHM/WG/7)

*Pokhara, Nepal, 5 to 9 May 2025*

**Agenda Item 2: Review outcomes of related Meetings/Seminars**

# UPDATE FROM FOURTEENTH AIR NAVIGATION CONFERENCE (AN-CONF/14) AND WORKING PAPER ON FLIGHT SAFETY AND WILDLIFE HAZARD MANAGEMENT

(Presented by Chair AAWHG/Australia and on behalf of the Global WHM SME Group)

**SUMMARY**

This paper presents an update and summary of a key WHM related achievement; that of Working Paper (WP/54) submitted to AN-CONF/14 in 2024, initial support for which was called for and achieved via AP-WHM/WG/6.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 At AP–WHM/WG/6, specifically IP/04, the Chair AAWHG/Australia and on behalf of the Global WHM SME Group sought any like-minded APAC States who may be interested in co-sponsoring a Working Paper to the AN-CONF/14 on Wildlife Hazard Management with ultimate aim to establish a multi-disciplinary/multi-panel working group to develop best practice guidance on a systemic approach to this hazard.

## 2. DISCUSSION

2.1 The proposed paper, as presented at WHM/WG/6, garnered immediate conceptual support from many attendees and representatives at the meeting and was ultimately widely supported across APAC States.

2.2 The paper, known as WP/54, was presented at AN-Conf/14 Agenda Item 3 in Batch 7 as Revision 2 on 3rd September 2024. As presented, WP/54 Rev2 was co-sponsored by ten APAC States, with several other non-APAC States co-sponsoring as well as Airports Council International (ACI), Flight Safety Foundation (FSF) and International Air Transport Association (IATA).

2.3 WP/54 can be directly found at: AN-Conf/14_WP/54 Rev2.

2.4 In-session, the Paper gathered further significant support, from several African, South American, Northern American and Middle-eastern States. Notably, there was no negative or counter-views proposed by any of the 138 delegations present.

2.5 WP/54 highlighted several fundamental issues which limit the effectiveness of systemic WHM efforts globally. These include:

- the perception of a siloed approach and responsibility to WHM, which at least appears to place a near total burden on airports for the consideration, assessment and decision making around wildlife matters,
- a misaligned risk process, which contradicts the established doctrine of Annex 19 and leads to a confused approach and assessments that are consuming substantial resources at the aerodrome level and generating a false sense of safety for aircraft operators while providing no direct benefit to anyone; and
- consideration of a singularly prescribed area/distance from an aerodrome (13km) for WHM activities, irrespective of the size, nature, complexity or risk of the individual location.

2.6 Accordingly, the paper sought the Air Navigation Conference's endorsement to request the ICAO Council to:

***Recommendation 3.1/x — Constitute a multi-disciplinary cross-panel expert working-group, to develop systemic best practice guidance on Wildlife Hazards, Risk Management and Flight Safety.***

*This group may be similar to that created to review Flight Safety and Volcanic Ash (Doc 9974), be it a new group or an enhanced existing group like the Wildlife Hazard Management Expert Group (WHM EG). The primary focus of the group would be on the consideration of systematic cross-disciplinary management of wildlife hazards and risks, and the development of a best-practice guide to address the associated roles, responsibilities and accountabilities of aviation stakeholders.*

*The elements/parameters that may be considered are:*

*a) the need for a system-based approach to wildlife hazard and risk management, including the delineation of hazard, threat and risk and the appropriate authority for the acceptance of risk;*

*b) the opportunity to consider whether the application of prescriptive, hard limits (13km) surrounding airports that do not necessarily consider local factors or operational parameters is the most appropriate approach. This may lead to a move towards the development of and application of critical airspace, allowing for local/adapted flexibility while retaining a robust system-based approach to risk;*

*c) a structured process assigning clear responsibilities for all stakeholders; and*

*d) the need for holistic education and promotion, a shared understanding and acceptance of responsibilities for all involved stakeholders.*

2.7 To help address these dilemmas and bridge the gap between the known hazard and the possible risk, a term such as "threat" is beneficial. The term features in Procedures for Air Navigation Services — Training (PANS-TRG, Doc 9868) specifically in the area of threat and error management, where it says:

*'Threats are defined as events or errors that occur beyond the influence of the flight crew, increase operational complexity, and must be managed to maintain the margins of safety.*

*During typical flight operations, flight crews have to manage various contextual complexities, for example, adverse meteorological conditions, airports surrounded by high mountains, congested airspace, aircraft malfunctions, and errors committed by other people outside of the cockpit, such as air traffic controllers, flight attendants or maintenance workers.'*

Wildlife hazard and risk management adapts perfectly into this concept. It is as simple as:

a) the *hazard* is wildlife;

b) the ***threat*** is wildlife in airspace potentially needed by aircraft for operations; and

c) the *risk* is when aircraft are in critical airspace in the presence of wildlife.

2.8 Accordingly, and instead of substantial effort and expenditure of time and resources into risk-assessments by aerodromes, extending to 13km, effort should be placed into quantifying the extent of the *threat* to operations relevant to the nature of operations and ensuring effective and consistent communication of this threat across the system (to all parties involved but specifically the ANSP and onwards to the aircraft operators and /or pilots) in a similar manner to the transmission of meteorology (MET) information. Thus, facilitating and, in fact, requiring the aircraft operator to actively consider the risk to their operation and aircraft and accordingly make an appropriate risk-based/informed decision.

## 3. ACTION BY THE MEETING

3.1 The meeting is invited to:

a) accept the gratitude and thanks of the Global WHM SME Group, the AAWHG and Australia for the conceptual support of the AN-Conf/14 WP and if relevant co-sponsorship by APAC States;

b) note the information contained in this paper; and

c) discuss any relevant matters as appropriate.

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