



## ***VIRGINIA FLIGHT SCHOOL SAFETY ARTICLE – NO 11/08***

### **BIRD STRIKES**

In the USA alone, reported bird strikes are averaging between 1200 to 1400 per year costing +- \$20 Mil per year.



### **BIRD STRIKE OCCURRENCES**

Statistically 60% of bird strikes occur below 1000' and the vast majority occur below 2000'. Highest recorded bird strike is an Airliner with a condor at 37 000'.

There is a reluctance by pilots to take bird strikes seriously – it doesn't happen to me – or simply just ignore that the hazard exists.

### **IMPACT FORCES**

A ½ kilogram bird with a 3" diameter striking an aircraft at 100 kts has an impact force of 600 kilograms and the impact force increases exponentially with an increase in speed. At 200 kts the force is 2400 kilograms

A C 152 descending through 1000' at 90 kts struck a sea bird of  $\frac{3}{4}$  Kilograms. It went straight through the windscreen and hit the pilot on the side of his face. Fortunately the bird was deflected before impacting the pilot and he managed to land safely. Had he taken the impact squarely in the face the consequences could have been fatal.

#### AVOIDING BIRD STRIKES

- If you are flying at 2000' or less be aware of a higher potential for bird strikes and LOOKOUT!
- Ensure all aircraft strobe lights are on as well as the landing light.
- Inform other aircraft of the proximity of birds.