

SDS DEIS Issues Paper
SDS Impacts on Bird-Aircraft Strike Hazard

Collisions between birds and aircraft can threaten life, jeopardize military missions, and cause property and dollar loss in repairs and lost revenue. Because the Alternatives evaluated in the Southern Delivery System (SDS) Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) proposed new reservoirs that can potentially attract waterfowl, the Bird-Aircraft Strike Hazard (BASH) risk was evaluated.

The area airports potentially affected are: Colorado Springs/Peterson Air Force Base Airport (COS/Peterson), Air Force Academy Airfield, Butts Army Airfield and Meadow Lakes Airport. Of all three proposed reservoirs – Jimmy Camp Creek, Williams Creek and Upper Williams Creek, the reservoir at Jimmy Camp Creek would most impact BASH because it is within the COS/Peterson flight path area.

The DEIS analyzed how bird concentration areas, measured in square miles, may change within the existing aircraft flight paths of the airports following reservoir construction for the Alternatives studied. All the Alternatives are compared to the No Action Alternative, which is used as the “baseline.” The No Action Alternative is compared to Existing Conditions or the current conditions that exist in the environment.

Key DEIS Finding: A minor increase in potential bird concentration areas within the flight paths of COS/Peterson would occur under all the Alternatives compared to Existing Conditions. None of the Alternatives would affect potential bird concentration areas within the flight paths of Butts and the Air Force Academy Airfields and the Meadow Lakes Airport.

Existing Conditions

Baseline concentration areas were established using the locations of existing roosting and feeding locations, and the movement of birds between these locations. There are 140 square miles of potential water bird concentration areas within the aircraft flight paths for COS/Peterson with varying concentrations of birds, ranging from very low to very high (see table below).

Potential Water Bird Concentration Areas within Aircraft Flight Paths in Square Miles

Potential Water Bird Concentration Area	Existing Conditions (Baseline)	No Action Alternative (Alternative 1)	Proposed Action Alternative (Alternative 2)	Highway 115 Alternative (Alternative 7)
Very Low	2.8	1.9	1.9	1.9
Moderately Low	60.6	56.3	56.3	56.3
Moderately High	53.6	58.8	58.8	58.8
Very High	23.0	23.0	23.0	23.0

No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative would slightly increase the potential for bird/aircraft strikes over existing conditions because the area of moderately high bird concentration would increase by 5.2 square miles within the flight paths.

Proposed Action Alternative (Alternative 2) and the Highway 115 Alternative (Alternative 7)

These Alternatives would have the same BASH risks as the No Action Alternative.