

ASSESSING ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT RESULTING FROM AIRPORT
DEVELOPMENT IN RURAL AREAS

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By

Riaz Ali Aziz

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ABSTRACT

Aziz, Riaz, M.S., Program of Natural Resources Management, Department of Agribusiness and Applied Economics, College of Agriculture, North Dakota State University, December 2000. Assessing Environmental Impact Resulting from Airport Development in Rural Areas. Major Professor: Dr. Jay A. Leitch.

The objective of this study was to identify environmental impacts that occur with the development or expansion of airports in rural areas and to outline procedures for more comprehensively evaluating those impacts. This study focused on an impact unique to aviation, the collision between birds and aircraft along approach and departure routes.

Nearly 11,000 birds and 300 mammals are killed each year in the United States as a result of colliding with aircraft. Half the airport managers in North Dakota believe that birds and wildlife are impacted by aircraft operations at airports. However, some airport development projects do not require environmental assessment, and for projects that require an assessment, the geographic scope of the project area is not specified.

Airport projects in rural areas have the potential for changing the environmental conditions in ways that may not be consistent with regional objectives. Environmental assessments are necessary for public airport projects so that sound policy decisions can be made, based on more complete information; environmental assessment rules need to specify the geographic scope of the project area so that all impacts of the project are considered.