APPENDIX I

GULL FACTS FOR AIRPORT WILDLIFE CONTROL PERSONNEL

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GULL FACTS FOR AIRPORT WILDLIFE CONTROL PERSONNEL

1. There are about 50 species of gulls in the world of which 15 are regularly found in North America.

2. Gulls are the most frequently reported birds struck by civil aircraft in the United States. From 1990-1998, about 30% of all identified bird strikes involved gulls.

3. The sexes are identical in plumage but males are generally slightly larger than females. For example, male laughing gulls weigh 10% more than females on average whereas male herring gulls weight 19% more than females.

4. Gulls are generally long-lived with annual survival rates of 70 to 90%. A number of banded herring gulls have been recovered after 20 years and the record is over 30 years. Gulls begin losing bands due to wear and corrosion after 10 to 15 years so we really do not know how long they may live in the wild.

5. Male and female gulls form pairs during the nesting season and both sexes contribute about equally to nest building, incubation, and feeding of chicks. Clutch size is usually 3 eggs and incubation takes about 20 (laughing gull) to 28 days (great black-backed gull). Young fledge 35 (laughing gull) to 50 days (great black-backed gull) later. Gulls will renest if nests are destroyed early in the nesting season.

6. Gulls attain adult body size within 6 to 8 weeks of hatching but do not obtain adult plumage and mature sexually until 2 years (for small gulls) to 4-5 years (for large gulls). Plumage is generally all brown in the summer-fall of hatching year. Plumage acquires more adult characteristics with each successive molt. Plumage of immature gulls can be quite variable. Species identification and age classification of immature gulls can sometimes be difficult.

Sources of information about gulls

Dunning, J. B. Jr., editor. 1993. CRC Handbook of Avian Body Masses. CRC Press, Boca Raton, Florida. 371 pages. (Body weights for birds throughout the world)

Ehrlich, P. R., D. S. Dobkin, and D. Wheye. 1988. The Birder's Handbook. Simon and Schuster, New York. 785 pages. (Provides a wealth of conveniently summarized life history information on gulls and most other North American bird species)

Grant, P. J. 1986. Gulls: A Guide to Identification. Buteo Books, Vermilion, South Dakota. 352 pages. (Detailed plumage characteristics in all age classes)

FACT SHEET FOR COMMON GULL SPECIES IN NORTH AMERICA

Species	Mean body mass: pounds (grams)			Mean length: inches (centimeters)		Age (yr.) of first repro-duction
	Male	Both sexes	Female	Bill to tail	Wingspan	
Bonaparte's gull *Larus philadelphia*		0.5 (212)		11 (28)	32 (81)	2-3
Franklin's gull *Larus pipixcan*		0.6 (280)		11 (28)	35 (89)	2-3
Laughing gull *Larus atricilla*	0.8 (345)		0.7 (312)	13 (33)	41 (104)	2-3
Mew gull *Larus canus*	1.0 (432)		0.8 (375	14 (35)	42 (107)	3-4
Ring-billed gull *Larus delawarensis*	1.2 (566)		1.0 (471)	16 (41)	49 (124)	3-4
California gull *Larus californicus*	1.4 (657)		1.2 (556)	17 (43)	52 (132)	3-4
Herring gull *Larus argentatus*	2.7 (1226)		2.3 (1044)	20 (51)	55 (140)	3-5
Glaucous-winged gull *Larus glaucascens*		2.2 (1010)		22 (56)	54 (137)	3-5
Western gull *Larus occidentalis*		2.2 (1011)		21 (53)	55 (140)	3-5
Great black-backed gull *Larus marinus*	4.0 (1829)		3.3 (1488)	24 (61)	65 (165)	4-5