

FACT SHEET

City of San Diego

Bird Control Program

Miramar Landfill



- Bird control at the City's Miramar Landfill is successful, nationally recognized, and unique. No other landfill in the United States offers such a program.
- The Miramar Landfill--the City of San Diego's only active landfill--is operated by the City's Environmental Services Department (ESD) under a grant of easement issued by the Marine Corps Air Station Miramar.
- In operation since 1959, the 1,500-acre site accepts about 1.4 million tons of trash each year.
- One element of the City's contract with the United States Navy is that an effective bird control program must be in place. The Miramar Landfill is located immediately adjacent to Miramar Marine Air Station.
- Seagulls, ravens and other birds attracted to food waste found the landfill could get sucked into jet engines. This endangers pilot's lives and can damage sophisticated and costly flight equipment.
- Using a combination of bioacoustics, decoys and firecracker ammunition, the program has reduced the number of birds hovering over the landfill to virtually none. Bioacoustics is a method where gull distress calls are broadcast at amplified levels around the landfill.
- Along with bioacoustics, stuffed seagulls are placed in deathlike positions around the landfill to frighten other birds.
- The training of bird control personnel consists of a firearms safety class and instructions on B.A.S.H. (Bird Aircraft Strike Hazard) strategies.
- At least one ESD employee is stationed each day at the landfill's working face (where trash is unloaded) armed with a shotgun firing blanks to discourage the birds.
- The bird control program has received national recognition by SWANA (Solid Waste Association of North America) and has prompted calls from places such as Canada and San Diego County requesting details on how to replicate the program. Disneyland, which experiences bird problems at its food stations, has also inquired.
- Professional trade journals and other publications have shared information about the program. The State Department of Health Services has shown interest in implementing a similar program.