ALASKA AIRLINES PLANE STRIKES, KILLS DEER ON RUNWAY, SONOMA COUNTY AIRPORT OFFICIALS SAY

News / Airports / Routes

An Alaska Airlines plane arriving from Seattle struck and killed a deer on a runway at the Charles M. Schulz-Sonoma County Airport near Santa Rosa Wednesday evening, airport Manager Jon Stout said Friday.

The plane had not yet touched ground and was only a few hundred feet along the 6,000-foot runway when it clipped the deer just before 6:00 p.m., Stout said. The impact from the deer's antlers punctured one of the plane's tires, and both tires were replaced, Stout said.

The pilot was not sure he hit the deer, and none of the passengers were aware of the deer strike. The plane was about 60-70 percent full, Stout said.

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The deer died soon after it and its antlers were found on the runway, Stout said.

The plane was scheduled to fly to Los Angeles and return to Santa Rosa at 10:00 p.m. It was inspected and flew to Los Angeles the next morning, Stout said.

The incident shut the airport down for about 20 minutes, Stout said. Two other Alaska Airlines planes arrived without incident at 6:40 p.m. and 6:50 p.m. Wednesday. Some of the passengers who were on board the plane that hit the deer were rerouted to Seattle to fly to Los Angeles, Stout said.

Another inbound and an outbound flight at the Santa Rosa airport were canceled Wednesday night, Stout said.

The airport is located on Airport Boulevard north of Santa Rosa and south of Windsor. Deer are occasionally seen along a creek in the area, Stout said.

"It's the first deer strike I'm aware of in the 13 1/2 years I've been here," Stout said.

The airport has a wildlife management plan, but it is not 100 percent effective, Stout said.

The Charles M. Schulz-Sonoma County Airport (STS) offers non-stop flights to Los Angeles, Portland, Seattle and San Diego, and will fly to Orange County starting in March 2016.

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