

## A DRONE OVER YOUR BACK YARD?

Do you recall that article about drones in the EAA 172 [October, 2011](#), issue of the *Pea Patch Post* with a follow-up in the [December, 2011](#), issue? You probably chuckled, and said “Just a nerdy project that perhaps doesn’t belong in an aviation newsletter.” It’s assumed you don’t think that any more. Right now, around the country, especially in California,



The SHARK drone

real estate agents are using drones to take photos of properties they’re selling. Law enforcement, as well as private detectives, are snooping on what people are doing. In most cases these are unlicensed operations with uncertified, unlicensed machines flying below legal airspace, and in most cases trespassing. And this is not only in California or some distant place, but around here:

In dozens of on-line newsletters and reports there is a story about an environmental / anti-hunting group interrupting a legal hunt on private property by flying a drone over the hunting area. The property is one EAA 172 pilots have flown to many times for the South Carolina Breakfast Club – Broxton Bridge Plantation, Ehrardt, South Carolina (SC55) (pvt.). One article, from [The Blaze](#), had this information:

Posted on February 17, 2012

A remote-controlled aircraft owned and operated by an animal rights group called SHARK, was reportedly shot down near Broxton Bridge Plantation, South Carolina, on Sunday.

Steve Hindi, president of [SHARK](#) (SHowing Animals Respect and Kindness), said his group was preparing to launch its [Mikrokopter drone](#) to video what he called a live pigeon shoot on Sunday when law enforcement officers and an attorney claiming to represent the privately-owned plantation near Ehrhardt tried to stop the aircraft from flying.

Hindi said the animal rights group decided to send the drone up anyway but that seconds after it hit the air “numerous shots rang out.”

“As an act of revenge for us shutting down the pigeon slaughter, they had shot down our copter.”

He claimed the shooters were “in tree cover” and “fled the scene on small motorized vehicles.”

Hindi estimated damage to the drone at around \$200 to \$300. ...Hindi said he will seek charges against those who shot down the drone. “This was SHARK’s first encounter with the Broxton Bridge Plantation, but it will certainly not be the last,” Hindi said. “We are already making plans for a considerably upscaled action in 2013.”

**Several notes:** In South Carolina shooting varmint flying creatures such as starlings, English sparrows, and pigeons is legal, with no season limits. On private lands statewide, Sunday hunting for all game is legal. See the [regulations](#). One commenter wrote: “So it would seem that if you have a UAV buzzing around your property operated by animal rights groups, you’re perfectly entitled to shoot it down, exercising your rights as a property holder to end the trespass of an object that’s interfering with your enjoyment of the land.”

There’s a Supreme Court case regarding this, [U.S. v. Causby](#) (1946),

SEVERAL ARTICLES ABOUT DRONES INCLUDING THE BROXTON BRIDGE ONE:

<http://dronejournalism.tumblr.com/>

Certainly much more will be said about this incident, but the airstrip is open to EAA members, so don’t be afraid to fly there for the April 29 South Carolina Breakfast Club – you will be welcome!

(Information adapted from multiple sources including 2011 - 2012 Hunting Rules & Regulations - South Carolina, Drone Journalism.com, The Blaze.com , U.S. v. Causby (1946))

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## SPECIAL SUN 'N FUN ADMISSION DISCOUNTS FOR AOPA MEMBERS

New in 2012: AOPA members can enjoy a \$5 discount off daily admission to the thirty-eighth annual Sun ’n Fun Fly-In, every day of the show from March 27 through April 1 in Lakeland, Fla. Come celebrate “Spring Break for Pilots”! AOPA is once again the Platinum Sun ’n Fun sponsor and will have many exciting activities going on around the show grounds throughout the week. Make your travel plans now! For show details, highlights, and ticket information, visit the AOPA website. To receive the admission discounts, show your membership ID at the admission gates (the discounts are not available through advance online purchases at this time). (Information from *AOPA e-Pilot*, 03/02/12)

## WATCH OUT FOR UNCHARTED LOW (*INVISIBLE*) TOWERS

Do you often fly low over farm fields? You have checked the charts and found no Cell towers in the area. You even contacted FSS and were told there were no new towers. You look out over the acres of fields and see nothing. Yet there is a danger that has sprung up recently because of companies interested in installing one or more wind turbines.



Could you see this unmarked, unlighted tower, especially at dawn or dusk?

The death of a 58-year-old crop duster on Jan. 10, 2011, was a tragedy that could have been prevented. The 26,000-hour commercial pilot was killed when his Rockwell S-2R hit an unmarked meteorological evaluation tower (MET) while he was treating a field in Costa County, California. Witnesses confirmed that he made a reconnaissance pass before beginning the application, but the tower was bare metal, unpainted, and not marked by any lights, flags, or other warning devices. The NTSB quoted an article by the National Agricultural Aviation Association (NAAA) which observed, "The fact that these towers are narrow, unmarked, and grey in color makes for a structure that is nearly invisible under some atmospheric conditions."

According to the witnesses, he made no apparent attempt to avoid it before the impact.

In March, 2011, the FAA had suggested a protocol for marking meteorological evaluation towers to make them more visible to low-level aviators. This didn't go far enough, according to the NTSB. "The NTSB is concerned that the application of the FAA Advisory Circular is voluntary, and, without mandatory application and marking requirements for METs, many METs will still be constructed without notice to the aviation community and will fail to be marked appropriately," the board said in a [Safety Alert](#) issued in March, 2011. Meteorological Evaluation Towers (METs) are used to measure wind speed and direction during the development of wind energy facilities, and many fall just below the 200-foot threshold for FAA-required obstruction markings and can be difficult to see from the air. That's a dangerous proposition for aircraft conducting low-flight operations, including aerial applicators, emergency medical helicopters, law enforcement, fire suppression and other low-altitude activities, such as private gyroplane or helicopter operations. The fatal tower mentioned above was 197 feet tall AGL. The NTSB is urging pilots to maintain vigilance during low-altitude flights and asking them to encourage the markings of METs in their area. (Information adapted from multiple sources, including *AvWeb*, the NTSB, FAA, in 2011 & 2012, and *AOPA* e-magazine, 03/02/12)



**This goes along with the above –  
that it is very easy for your eyes, and brain, to not see something right in front of you!**

### MOTION INDUCED BLINDNESS

This is frightening! It works exactly like it says, and is one major reason people in cars can look right at you (when you're on a motorcycle or bicycle)--AND NOT SEE YOU. Or you can look at an unlighted tower right in front of you AND NOT SEE IT! From a former Naval Aviator: "This is a great illustration of what we were taught about scanning outside the cockpit when I went through training back in the '50s. We were told to scan the horizon for a short distance, stop momentarily, and repeat the process. I can remember being told why this was the most effective technique to locate other aircraft. It was emphasized (repeatedly) to NOT fix your gaze for more than a couple of seconds on any single object. The instructors, some of whom were WWII veterans with years of experience, instructed us to continually 'keep our eyes moving and our head on a swivel' because this was the best way to survive, not only in combat, but from peacetime hazards (like a midair collision) as well. We basically had to take the advice on faith (until we could experience for ourselves) because the technology to demonstrate it didn't exist at that time."

Click on the link below for a demonstration ...

<http://www.msf-usa.org/motion.html>

