



Tailored arrivals initiative benefits Air New Zealand - and the environment

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A ground-breaking initiative at San Francisco Airport to increase the efficiency of air traffic is resulting in significant fuel and emission savings for Air New Zealand.

Air New Zealand's General Manager Airline Operations and Chief Pilot Captain David Morgan, says that since the airline began participating in the operation in January, it has saved an estimated 22,000 kilograms of fuel, and 69,410 kg of CO₂ emissions.

Air New Zealand was the first international carrier invited to join the San Francisco Oceanic Tailored Arrivals Trial, which is a joint venture between Boeing, NASA, the FAA and SFO Airport.

Captain Morgan said the initiative allowed Air New Zealand's Boeing 777-200ER aircraft to make full use of interlinked onboard and ground technology to descend into the airport, with minimal direct Air Traffic Control intervention.

The technology is similar to RNP technology used on Air New Zealand's Boeing 737s flying into Queenstown, and allows aircraft to fly a highly optimised flight path into the airport.

By being able to continuously descend into the airport rather than flying a series of level segments as required under standard Air Traffic Control procedures, the aircraft is able to reduce both noise and fuel consumption - in turn reducing its environmental impact.

Air New Zealand joined the 12-month operation in January this year and Captain Morgan said the airline had used the full tailored arrival procedure around 30 times and a partial procedure about 100 times.

When the airport is too busy for Air Traffic Control to assign the full procedure, the airline still benefits from a partial procedure, which is being assigned on days when the full procedure is not available.

Each full tailored arrival saves between 300 and 400 kilograms of fuel, with lower savings for the partial procedure.

Captain Morgan said the initiative took on a special significance given the challenges for airlines from the record high cost of fuel, and Air New Zealand's efforts to reduce its carbon emissions.

"We are committed to reducing the amount of carbon emitted from our operations and have a number of different initiatives in place throughout the business. This includes everything from more efficient flight planning and tracking to more effective use of engine power in all phases of flight and reducing weight on aircraft.

"The tailored arrivals into San Francisco provide significant commercial and environmental benefits to Air New Zealand. In a very challenging commercial environment, the potential savings from initiatives such as these are very encouraging. The results we have achieved at San Francisco demonstrate the real difference that efficient, highly automated air traffic control systems can make to airline operations."

Captain Morgan said Air New Zealand, which has a long-standing relationship with both Boeing and the FAA, was thrilled to be selected to take part in the operation.

Captain Mark Shepherd, a Boeing 777-200ER captain and Air New Zealand's Air Traffic Management specialist is playing a key role in managing the project.

Captain Shepherd regularly flies into San Francisco and said the tailored arrival simplified procedures for pilots and "allows the aircraft automation to maintain the aircraft on the optimum path to the runway."

Customers would not notice a significant difference when the aircraft was using the tailored arrival although it may be slightly more comfortable due to a more gentle descent and less changes in engine power, he said.

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