

# The cost of flying birds

An important issue has long been ignored, and I find it inexcusable that the subject has yet to be addressed. It concerns bird rights. The cost of flying birds is way out of control. For years, our flying friends have been treated as second-class citizens, particularly in the area of air travel, of all things.



**You can't beat a system you can't understand**

By Sam Bari

turn to Rhode Island with Baxter, a one-way ticket for the little guy would cost an additional \$80.

The difference is not just the money; it's the weight. I weigh over 200 pounds and Baxter weighs just over one ounce. U.S. Air is charging more to fly Baxter than to fly me. Is that fair? I don't think so. Transporting 200-pounds at Baxter's rate of \$80 an ounce would cost \$256,000.

While I was in Fort Lauderdale, I decided to take Baxter home. But I was sure that regulations and probably a token fee would be involved for bringing a pet on board an airliner.

When I called to inquire about the matter, a nice lady answered the telephone and said, "Of course you can take your bird, but he must be kept in a carrier that fits under the seat."

I assured her that Baxter would be in his little carrier that's about eight inches square with a handle. It's shaped something like a doughnut box with windows on the side so he can enjoy his surroundings. It even has a swing perch and containers for his food, as well as a couple of toys to keep him from getting bored.

Then she said, "His carrier will be one of your two pieces of carry-on luggage. You can only carry on one other bag."

Okay, I'll go along with that, I thought. That's not bad. Baxter and I can fly together, and he'll stay under the seat during take-off and landing; the rest of the time he can sit on my lap. She then added, "and there will be a charge of \$80 for carrying a live pet."

"What?" I asked. "You're going to charge an additional \$80 because he's alive? Are you serious? I suppose you're going to tell me that you will forego the charge if he's dead?"

"Yes sir," the lady answered. "That is our policy. There is no need to be sarcastic."

"That is ridiculous," I replied. "Are you trying to tell me that my bird, who weighs slightly more than one ounce, is the reason for \$80 in costs to the airline? I don't think his weight would be the cause for a dramatic difference in fuel consumption."

I also suggested that they allow him to continually fly around the cabin for the duration of the flight so his extra ounce would not weigh down the plane and strain it to the breaking point.

I went on to tell her that Baxter wouldn't have a seat of his own; he doesn't require beverage service and has no desire to consume their inedible snacks. "He wouldn't even use a seat belt," I noted. "If he were in first class, the last thing he would want is your allegedly "free" cocktail. He's not even extra luggage," I said. "He's in one of my carry-on bags."

The woman was not amused. She said, "That is airline policy sir, not mine."

"Please understand my frustrations," I argued. "I believe charging \$80 an ounce to fly anything to anywhere is a little steep. Baxter only wants to go 1,200 miles."

The woman would not bend. Imagine what the cost would be if Baxter were a 30-pound condor or worse yet, a pterodactyl weighing hundreds of pounds flying at bird rates. The cost of flying an Abrams tank to Afghanistan would be less. I suppose airline policy is just another of many things that make up a system we can't understand.

## SCOTT A. LUTES

ATTORNEY AT LAW

"Achieving outstanding results for clients for 20 years"

Criminal Defense, Domestic Assault,  
Driving While Intoxicated, Juvenile Offenses

[www.scottluteslaw.com](http://www.scottluteslaw.com)

One Turks Head Place  
Suite 1440  
Providence, RI 02903

(401) 861-1142 Office  
(401) 741-7525 Cellular  
(401) 861-1141 Fax

GRANITE & STONE

Naturally Elegant and Affordable!

DIRECT FROM THE SOURCE

Custom Cutting is Our Specialty!

**Now Open!**

3 ft. Steps From **\$85.**

Lamp Posts From **\$159.**

Steps, Posts, Hearths, Mantels, Pavers, Edging, Curbing, Flagstone, Cobblestone, Fieldstone, Wallstone, Bluestone, Unilock Pavers & Wall Block, Pool Coping, Wall Cap, Veneers, Flagging, Granite Signs, and Custom Fabrication

www.swensongranite.com

Mailbox Posts From **\$177.**  
Includes Bracket

SWENSON GRANITE WORKS

22 Austin Rd., Rt. 1, N. Kingstown, RI 02852 401-402-1844

A Location Near You In New England

We can design

Business cards • Brochures • Flyers • Memos  
Whatever your design needs! call 423-3200

Jamestown's Only Complete  
Automotive Service

Art's Complete One STOP  
Automotive Service

Body Shop & Mechanical Garage

34 Southwest Ave. **423-1897**  
Jamestown, RI 02835

RI BODY SHOP LICENSE #525

VALUNA

an American Taverna

New Tapas-style Menu

Come Enjoy Our Outdoor Deck!

Full Bar

\$1.50 Draft Beer on Sunday

Open 5:00pm for Dinner

Tuesday through Sunday

We cater in-house and off-site private parties

1814 Boston Neck Road • Saunterstown, RI 02874

www.valunari.com • 401.667.4999

ARE YOU THE OWNER OF

5 OR MORE ACRES OF JAMESTOWN FARMLAND

OR

10 OR MORE ACRES OF JAMESTOWN FOREST

OR OTHER OPEN SPACE?

Consider enrolling your land in the Rhode Island Farm, Forest and Open Space Program.

BENEFITS

Saving you money by reducing your property taxes, since your land is assessed at the value of its current use, not its value for development.

You are helping to maintain the island's beauty and unique character, which benefits all Jamestown citizens.

To find out if you qualify, go to "A Citizen's Guide to the Farm, Forest and Open Space Act" at [www.dem.ri.gov/programs/bnatres/forest/pdf/citgui03.pdf](http://www.dem.ri.gov/programs/bnatres/forest/pdf/citgui03.pdf) or contact Chris Powell, Chairman, Jamestown Conservation Commission, at 423-1492.

Advertisement sponsored by the Jamestown Conservation Commission.