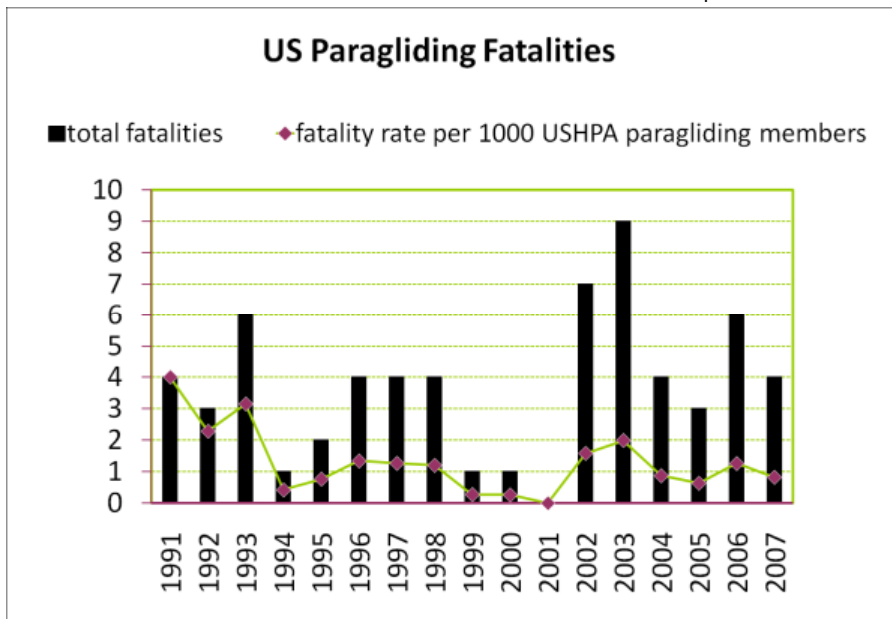


2007 Paragliding Accident Summary

Mike Steed

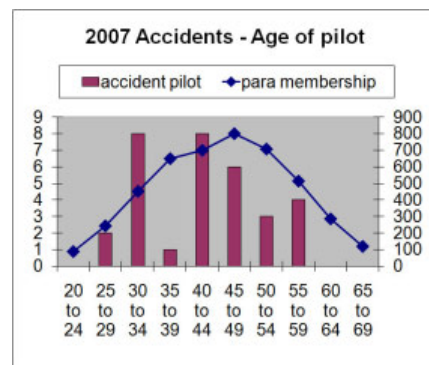
Paragliding accident reports and fatalities were both down a bit from 2006 to 2007. There were eight reports with no injury. These entertaining and enlightening reports are covered in the quarterly column. In this annual statistical summary we stick to the facts about injuries and fatalities. So here are the facts as you report 'em.

In the US in 2007 there were reports of 4 paragliding fatalities, 3 injured tandem passengers, and 37 injured pilots. We are confident about the fatality count, even though one of them was not reported on the USHPA system. Three of the fatalities this year were relatively inexperienced P2 pilots; the other was a P3 (intermediate) pilot. Ideally the fatality history would be compared to flight hours or some measure of activity, but such numbers are not available. Our only reliable base is the number of association members, where we include paragliding-only members as well as the few hang+para members. (There are undoubtedly a few active pilots who are not association members, but none showed up in accident statistics.)



Many injuries go unreported and therefore are not included in this summary, though we found enough information about a few unreported accidents to include them as well. About half (18) of the reported injuries were serious enough to merit at least one night in a hospital. But minor injuries almost certainly outnumber serious injuries – so again, our reports are incomplete.

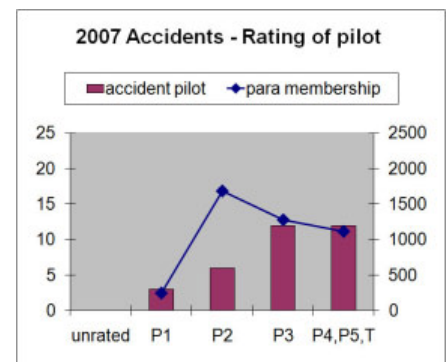
free to speculate about which pilots are more active and which are more foolish.



The age of pilots in reported accidents spans most of the membership spectrum, but was a bit younger than the membership as a whole. Since we know little about pilot activity by age, feel

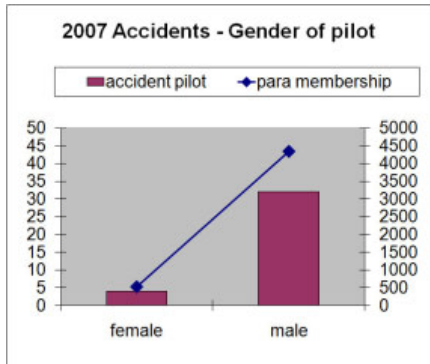
The ratings of accident pilots were more in line with membership demographics than last year. While P2's had relatively few

accidents, remember that three were fatal.

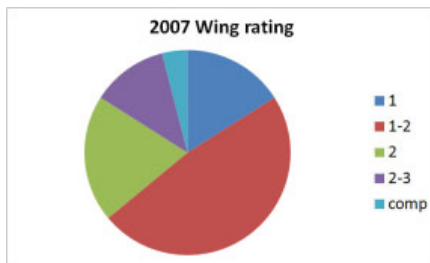


Given the small base of female pilots, gender statistics vary widely from year to year. Female injuries were rare in 2006. In 2007 male injuries were down and female injuries were up, especially if you

add two female tandem passengers to the pilot numbers in the chart.



The wings flown by injured pilots run the gamut of ratings, though we don't have good numbers about how many of which wings are in service.

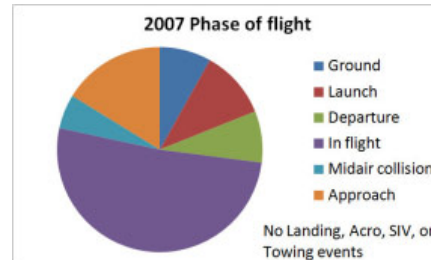


Accidents for the past 2 years tend to follow the seasons, though appear to be a bit skewed toward the spring season of instability and rusty pilot skills. January looks safe, but only because we do not include accidents by US pilots while in Mexico or Brazil.

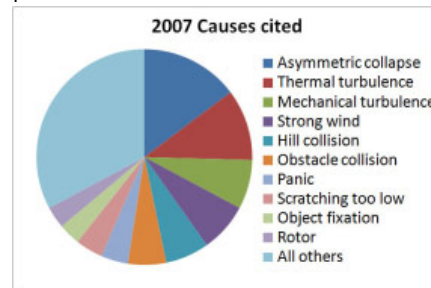


Over half the accidents could be traced to something that happened in mid-flight. No accidents were attributed to landing, since in all cases mistakes were made well before the landing proper. While two of the accidents occurred at SIV clinics,

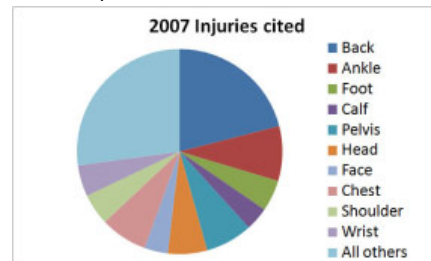
they were not attributed directly to the SIV training. No accidents were attributed to towing or acro this year.



Asymmetric collapses are the most commonly cited cause of an accident -- an event that should be recoverable. In a few cases the pilot may not have had the necessary skills to handle such events, but in most cases the pilot was simply flying too low to recover. In many cases the pilot had been flying this low for long periods of time.



Back injuries continue to be reported most often, by an even wider margin than usual. This may say something about modern equipment, or may say more about pilot fitness and PLF training.



Please report accidents with the handy USHPA online system -- we on the accident review committee thank you, and we hope readers learn from your report!