Biologically Inspired Wing Planform Optimization

by

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Abstract

The goal of this project is to use inspiration acquired from bird flight to optimize the wing planform of micro-air vehicle wings. Micro-air vehicles are used by the military for surveillance and for search and rescue missions by civilian firstresponders. These vehicles fly in the same low Reynolds number regime as birds, and have low aspect ratios similar to the pheasants and grouse of the order Galliformes. Conventional analysis is difficult for low Reynolds numbers, prompting use of biologically inspired methods of optimization. Genetic algorithms, which mimic the process of evolution in nature, were used to define wing shapes that were tested in wind tunnel experiments. In these experiments, lift-drag ratios at various angles of attack were measured on scale model micro-air vehicle wings (with variable length feathers) similar in shape to a bird wing. The planform shape of the scale model wing evolved in the wind tunnel flow over successive generations to ultimately produce superior wings with higher lift-drag ratios. The low angle of attack wings were easily optimized into a wing shape different from and potentially more efficient than the oft-used Zimmerman planform. The process was repeated for a higher angle of attack, near stall conditions, which yielded a different wing planform shape. Chord distributions of the optimized low angle of attack wings were found to closely match the same distributions of birds from the order Galliformes. Results from flow visualization studies meant to illuminate possible physics responsible for the higher lift-drag ratios were also investigated.

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I would also like to thank Andrew Day, who established the process in which to use the genetic algorithm, laying the foundation for future work such as mine.

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The beautiful pictures of bird wings found throughout this project is the work of the Slater Museum of the University of Puget Sound, who thoughtfully gave me permission to use them.

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Table of Contents

List of Figures

Figure 88 Null Hypothesis Test Results ... 121

Nomenclature

1.1 Introduction

Micro-air Vehicles (hereafter also referred to as MAV's) less than 15 cm in size are being developed for use in military and civilian applications such as surveillance and search and rescue. MAV's operate in a low Reynolds number (also referred to as Re) flight regime of approximately 10^5 to $5x10^5$. In this low Re regime, an open question is: what is the wing planform shape that maximizes the lift-drag (L/D) ratio for the aircraft? Increasing the L/D ratio would increase MAV range. Conventional analysis using theory or computer simulations is difficult in the Re range of MAV's leaving experimental study a desirable approach.

Gliding birds fly in a similar Re range raising the question of whether biologically inspired methods, such as genetic algorithms (GA), can be used to optimize wing planform shape. Genetic algorithms mimic the biological process of natural selection and mutation through successive generations to optimize designs. Previous work by Day¹ has shown that genetic algorithms, combined with wind tunnel testing of candidate wing shapes to measure lift-drag ratios, can yield improved designs with higher aerodynamic efficiency. The present study extends the work of Day¹ in the following ways;

1. Certain detailed aspects of the work of Day¹ are studied and verified including confirming that the optimized wing shapes are independent of the

initial wing population. Modifications to the genetic algorithm to reduce human influence were also made.

- 2. Genetic algorithms are applied to develop improved wing shapes at high angles of attack near stall for the first time.
- 3. Chord distributions of optimized wing shapes are found and compared to the chord distributions measured on order Galliformes bird wings (pheasants, etc.) with low aspect ratios and high wing loadings.
- 4. Flow visualization, with tuft studies and oil film techniques, is performed on the optimized wing designs to gain physical insight into why these planforms yield higher lift-drag ratios.

This thesis is organized as follows.

- Chapter one provides literature review and background information on MAV's, low Re air flow, genetic algorithms, and flow visualization.
- Chapter two details the project objectives.
- Chapter three includes the methodology and equipment used to perform the studies.
- Chapter four contains the results and analysis of the results.
- Chapter five summarizes the conclusions
- Chapter six provides examples of future work to extend and improve this project.

1.2 Micro-Air Vehicles

Recent advances in battery and electric motor technology have enabled the production of small (on the order of 15cm) flying vehicles known as micro-air vehicles. The small size of these vehicles opens up many new applications impossible for larger aircraft. Uses for MAV's include: military surveillance, search and rescue, mapping, and even exploration on other planets². MAV's have a variety of flight methods, such as rotary wings (helicopters), flapping wings (ornithopters), and fixed wings. In this work the focus is on fixed wing MAV's such as in Figure 1.

Figure 1 WPI 2007 Micro Air Vehicle, Approx. 15cm wide3

Due to their small size, micro-air vehicles fly in a different Re regime than larger aircraft, and therefore require a new method of study. Since birds, bats, and insects already operate in similar airflows, studying them may yield useful information about how to improve MAV's.

MAV's that fly in cluttered environments, such as urban or forested areas, require short wings. Longer wings are delicate and likely to hit obstacles, and are also harder to store. Historically, broad winged MAV's are usually equipped with the Zimmerman wing planform, seen in Figure 2. This planform is created by joining two ellipses and has been extensively studied at low speeds⁴.

Figure 2 Zimmerman Planform

Because MAV's are instruments of data gathering, having high endurance and range are very important, both of which are proportional to lift divided by drag. MAV's with increased L/D values will perform better than those with lower values as seen in Equations 1 and 2.

$$
R = \frac{L}{D} \frac{V_{\infty}}{c} \ln \left(\frac{W_i}{W_f} \right) \tag{1}
$$

$$
E = \frac{L}{D} \frac{1}{c} \ln \left(\frac{W_i}{W_f} \right) \tag{2}
$$

In Equations 1 and 2, R is range, E is endurance, L is lift, D is drag, W_i is takeoff weight, W_f is final weight, V_{∞} is the freestream velocity, and c is chord length. The higher the L/D value, the higher the range and endurance⁵.

Previous investigations have studied the effect of wing planform on L/D. Mueller and Torres⁶ studied various wing planforms, including the Zimmerman planform, and their effects on L/D . Day¹ created a genetic algorithm to find wing planforms with high L/D values.

1.3 Aerodynamics

Production of Lift and Drag

Before investigating specific aspects of flight and aerodynamics it is important to reiterate some of the fundamentals. This project primarily concerns lift and drag. Lift is a force directed perpendicular to the freestream fluid velocity. Airfoils and other shapes can produce lift when they move through a fluid. There are three main mechanisms involved in the production of the lift force on MAV's. Some lift is generated as the wing produces an area of low pressure above the wing. The curvature of the wing forces the air to accelerate over the upper surface of the wing (the Bernoulli Effect) creating an area of lower pressure compared to the lower surface of the wing. Lift is also generated by the angle of attack (AoA); the angle of the wing deflects air downwards to produce a counterforce, which also pushes the wing up. In low aspect ratio wings wingtip vortices also create lift by forming lowpressure areas on the upper surface of the wing7.

Figure 3 Path of Streamlines (Blue) Around an Airfoil

The plastic feathered wing in the wind tunnel tests in this study is essentially a flat plate airfoil. As a result the angle of attack and tip vortices are the primary means of lift production.

Measuring lift and drag is just one way of characterizing the forces on a wing. Normal and axial forces are usually easier to measure. Lift and drag can be easily calculated from the normal and axial forces, and vice versa. The directions of the forces and the equations used to convert them are shown below. The normal force is perpendicular to the wing chord, while the axial force is parallel to the chord. Lift is perpendicular to the direction of the oncoming airflow, and drag is parallel to the oncoming airflow. Equations 3 and 4 can be used to convert normal and axial forces to lift and drag8.

Figure 4 Various Forces on an Airfoil

$$
L = N\cos(\alpha) - F_A \sin(\alpha) \tag{3}
$$

$$
D = N\sin(\alpha) + F_A \cos(\alpha) \tag{4}
$$

In Equations 3 and 4, L is lift, N is the normal force, α is the angle of attack, F_A is the axial force, and D is the drag.

It is difficult to determine the angle of attack for flapping birds because the airflow around the wing is the sum of both the wing's flapping movement and the forward motion of the bird. However, it is easier to determine the angle of attack of MAV's, many of which have fixed wings. A common angle of attack for a cruising MAV is around four degrees.

Flight Regime

The Reynolds number characterizes the ratio of inertial forces to viscous forces. The Re determines the flow regime, as turbulent, laminar, or transitional. Similar shapes in different regimes will behave differently, and a proper analysis demands understanding the Reynolds number of the flow, given by Equation 5

$$
Re = \frac{\rho V_{\infty} c}{\mu} \tag{5}
$$

Here, ρ is the density of the fluid, c is the characteristic length (usually the chord), V_{∞} is the freestream velocity of the fluid, and μ is the viscosity of the fluid.

Laminar flows tend to follow the contours of objects and have predictable streamlines. Laminar flow around an airfoil is usually considered to have Reynolds numbers of less than 500,000, though near 500,000 the flow can be transitional and have properties of laminar and turbulent flow.

Turbulent flow occurs for higher Reynolds numbers, greater than 500,000. Turbulent flows contain many eddies and vortices and are unpredictable and chaotic.

Boundary layers are layers of air surrounding solid surfaces in a fluid flow where both viscous and inertial effects are important. Due to the no slip condition flow velocity must go to zero at a surface, above the surface the velocity increases to the freestream velocity. The boundary layer is generally considered to end when the velocity reaches 99% of the freestream velocity9.

Separated flow occurs when flow moves upstream, against the free stream velocity. This is caused by an adverse pressure gradient, where pressure increases in the downstream direction and opposes the motion of the flow. Even in otherwise laminar conditions, once a flow becomes separated is usually also becomes turbulent and chaotic. Separated flows cause severe drag and are generally undesirable on airfoils. Figure 5 shows the velocity profile of a separated flow. The dotted line indicates the edge of the boundary layer⁸.

Figure 5 Separated Flow in a Boundary Layer

Laminar boundary layers are susceptible to flow separation, while turbulent boundary layers go from the no slip condition to higher velocities in a relatively shorter distance, as seen in Figures 6 and $7⁹$, giving them higher momentum and allowing them to resist flow separation more than laminar flows. However, as long as the flow is attached laminar boundary layers impart less drag on a surface than turbulent boundary layers do, because of their gradual velocity change8.

Figure 6 Laminar (a) and Turbulent (b) Boundary Layers

The plastic feathered wings in this study have Reynolds numbers of approximately 1.8·105, similar to the Reynolds numbers of medium sized birds and MAV's. For a wing with a Reynolds number of $1.8 \cdot 10^5$, the leading edge flow is likely laminar, then possibly becoming transitional and turbulent as it travels toward the trailing edge, depending on disturbances in the flow. These transition points are hard to predict, although flow visualization, which is conducted in this study can help determine these points.

Separation bubbles occur in transitional flow. A separation bubble occurs when laminar air separates from the wing; at very low Reynolds numbers the flow will then become completely separated. If the flow then becomes turbulent enough (that is, has enough momentum in the boundary layer) it can reattach to the wing, creating a vortex obstructing the surface airflow and drastically increasing drag, as seen in Figure 710. When the adverse pressure gradient is too great the bubble can burst again, causing the flow to become completely separated and increasing drag. In previous studies by Bannasch¹¹ flow visualization with smoke revealed that separated flow over low Reynolds number wings often consists of an attached separation vortex preceding the separated airflow, shown in Figure 8.

Figure 7 Attached Laminar Separation Bubble on Airfoil

Figure 8 Separated Flow Following Attached Separation Bubble

Wingtip vortices can energize the flow over the wing, causing the flow to remain attached near the wingtips¹². For this reason separation bubbles tend to occur near the wing root and not the wing tips.

Three Dimensional Effects

The wing aspect ratio is defined as the ratio of the wingspan to the chord length. Most MAV's have low aspect ratios, less than two, while gliders can have aspect ratios of nearly 20. In non-rectangular wings the aspect ratio is found with Equation 6

$$
AR = \frac{b^2}{A} \tag{6}
$$

In Equation 6, AR is the aspect ratio, b is wingspan and A is total wing area.

Given the low aspect ratio of the wings; three-dimensional effects will play a strong role in the airflow about the wing, with the most prominent effect being wing tip vortices. Wing tip vortices are formed by high-pressure air from the lower wing surface moving into the low-pressure area on the upper surface of the wing, creating a long cylindrical vortex trailing behind each wing tip. As seen in Figure 9, the vortices accelerate the air around the wingtips downwards. Since the local airflow is moving downwards, the effective angle of attack is less than the actual angle of attack. Since lift is perpendicular to the local airflow, it re-orients the direction of lift in the aft direction, creating induced drag8.

Figure 9 Wingtip Vortex

However, this can be advantageous. The fast rotation of the vortices gives them a lower pressure, and as they travel over the wing's upper surface they produce lift near the wingtips, this is most prominent at moderate to high angles of attack12. Wingtip vortices also increase the angle a wing can fly at before stalling. Since they decrease the angle of attack experienced by the wingtip it can fly at higher angles before the airflow separates.

Biologically inspired methods for reducing induced drag have been investigated by Tucker¹³, where the slotted wingtips of a Harris' hawk were found to decrease induced drag by spreading out the wing tip vortices.

1.6 Flow Visualization

Visualizing the flow of air around an object is essential to understanding it. Therefore, many forms of flow visualization depend on showing the effects of airflow with fluids, strings, or other light materials. One potential problem with these techniques is that if the airflow is affecting a material in addition to the wing, the extra material is in turn affecting the airflow. This modified airflow is not necessarily the same airflow as before, and must be monitored to make sure it is not changing too much.

Tuft Flow Visualization

Small strings on the surface of a wing will orient themselves in the direction of the local airflow. Rows of strings (tufts) can be used to show the airflow over the surface of an object. This type of flow visualization has been used to great effect, though the tufts can interfere with the airflow14.

Oil Film Visualization

Another method of flow visualization is with oil film technique. Oil or some low viscosity liquid with low surface tension is mixed with a pigment and painted on the surface of the object to be studied. As the air flows over the base fluid, it naturally forms streaks that follow the local air velocity. The higher the air velocity at the height of the oil film, as in turbulent flow, the greater the effect on the film. The pigment makes these streaks visible and they can be used to qualitatively study the flow field on the surface of the object. Oil film techniques are used for determining areas of flow separation, laminar to turbulent transition, and the locations of vortices. Provided the fluid is much thinner than the boundary layer, it produces negligible effects on the air flow, so it can be assumed the flow field around the model painted with fluid is very similar to the flow field around the bare model¹⁵.

Oil films are usually made of a medium, solid pigment, and/or a dye. Mediums should have low surface tension and dry quickly. The lower the freestream velocity, the less viscous the medium should be. Kerosene is a commonly used medium, but alcohol can be used for slower velocities. To make the pigment visible it should be in high contrast to the color of the model. For instance, white kaolin pigment on a black model, or lampblack pigment on a white model will show up well. In very low speed flows dyes should be used instead of pigments.

There are several disadvantages to oil film techniques that must be acknowledged. One is that the model cannot change positions, another is that the fully developed flow must be assumed to be similar to the transient flow at the beginning, or that the transient flow does not last long enough to significantly move the pigment. Once the test is complete the model should be photographed to record the final patterns. Afterwards, if the pigment is not permanent the model can be washed off and repainted again¹⁵.

If the flow becomes separated, the pressure change can create a suction that collects the fluid. The fluid will form a ridge that can affect the air flow around it¹⁵.

Gravity can also affect the pigment if it is placed on vertical or inclined surface. The effect of gravity also depends on the viscosity of the pigment medium and the inclination of the surface. Observing whether or not the pigment moves without any airflow can indicate whether or not there is a problem. If the pigment flows quickly in still air, it will interfere with the data¹⁶.

It is important to remember, when analyzing the resulting data, that the pigment only records the flow on the surface of the object, within the boundary layer. Here the flow can be very different from what is happening outside the boundary layer. Still, the pigments can reveal very important phenomena, such as areas of flow separation and local streamlines.

1.4 Bird Wings

Classification of life forms is central to the study of biology. The modern classification system was developed by Carolus Linneaus and uses physical attributes to distinguish different groups.

Animals are organized into the following ranks, from largest and least specific to smallest and more specific: kingdom, phylum, class, subclass, superorder, order, suborder, family, genus, and species.

Animalia is the kingdom consisting of animals. Chordata is the phylum that contains vertebrate animals, or at least animals with notochords. Aves is the class that distinguishes birds. Neornithes is the subclass of modern toothless birds. Neognathae is the superorder that contains most modern birds, distinguished by their jaw anatomy. Galliformes is the order that is of the most relevance to this $investigation¹⁷$.

Order Galliformes includes turkey, grouse, quail, and pheasant, as well as other land fowl. Most galliforms live in heavily forested areas. These birds commonly have heavy round bodies that require high wing loadings, short wings with low aspect ratios to navigate between closely packed trees, and well developed legs. Having evolved to carry heavy masses with short wings makes these birds of particular relevance to MAV's, which also have high wing loadings. The wing loading can be found by Equation 7

$$
Wing\;loading = \frac{W}{A} \tag{7}
$$

In Equation 7, W is the weight and A is the wing area.

If galliform birds have been evolving for millions of years to optimize low aspect ratio wings with high wing loadings, it is likely that we can learn from them.

The wings of galliform birds often display a particular shape not commonly seen in other birds. They have a curved leading edge, and a rounded trailing edge with a conspicuous indentation or notch, as shown in Figures 10 through 13. Trailing edge notches have been previously investigated and found to decrease drag for low aspect ratio galliform wings by Drovetski 18 . However, triangular notches on MAV wings were found to produce little beneficial effect by Cubin³. Figures 10 through 13 show several galliform wings with the notch indicated by a red arrow. The pictures were generously provided by the Slater Museum¹⁹ and will be useful in analyzing the wing chord distribution as a function of the distance along the wing span in Section 4.3.

Mountain Quail, Mar, adult, male

Figure 10 Mountain Quail Oreortyx pictus

Chukar, Mar, adult, male

Figure 11 Chukar Alectoris chukar

Helmeted Guineafowl, May, adult, male

Figure 12 Helmeted Guineafowl Numida meleagris

Figure 13 Ring Necked Pheasant Phasianus colchius

In contrast to the shorter, notched galliform wings, the wings of other birds tend to have higher aspect ratios and more tapered wings. Figures 14 through 16 show typical bird wings apart from galliforms.

Large birds that soar on thermals, such as hawks and eagles, have larger and longer wings in comparison to their body size. Their wings have a nearly elliptical planform, as seen in Figure 14.

Figure 14 Bald Eagle Haliaeetus leucocephalus

Soaring birds that cannot rely on thermals have even longer and thinner wings, shown in Figure 15. The albatross and sea gull are examples of long ultraefficient wings.

Black-footed Albatross, female

Figure 15 Black Footed Albatross Phoebastria nigripes

Small seed and insect eating birds, such as the goldfinch in Figure 16, have short elliptical wings.

American Goldfinch, Jun, adult, female

Figure 16 American Goldfinch Carduelis tristis

There are some cases where non-galliforms show a small galliform-like notch in their wings. Small indentations can be seen in Figures 17 and 18. Not surprisingly this occurs in owls and woodpeckers, both forest birds with short wings, lending credence to the possibility that this is convergent evolution, where different species evolve similar traits. However, neither wing shows the size notch that galliform wings do.

Figure 17 Barred Owl Strix varia

Acorn Woodpecker, Oct, adult, female

Figure 18 Acorn Woodpecker Melanerpes formicivorus

1.5 Genetic Algorithms

Natural selection is the process behind evolution. Due to mutation, no two individuals have the same genes, the units of information that determine physical characteristics. Individuals with beneficial genes for their environment are more likely to survive and pass on these genes to their descendents. Detrimental genes will be disadvantageous and are less likely to be passed on. Over time the population of individuals will generally have the beneficial genes, while the detrimental genes will become less likely and may eventually disappear²⁰.

Genetic algorithms are an artificial process designed to mimic natural selection. A generation of random chromosomes (sets of genes) is generated. The genes and their position in the chromosome determine the characteristics of the candidate solutions. These solutions are then tested against each other. The solutions judged superior will be more likely to pass their genes onto a new

generation, where they will again be judged on fitness. This process repeats each generation. Every generation should be better than the last in terms of fitness, and if done correctly the later generations will converge to an optimal solution²¹. In this study individuals are judged superior or inferior based on their L/D values. High L/D values are desired while low L/D values are judged inferior. Figure 19 shows an outline of the process.

Figure 19 Genetic Algorithm Process

There are many different ways chromosomes can be selected for later generations. The genetic algorithm in this experiment employed a fitness function paired with roulette selection. The fitness function is a method of transforming the value of the desired trait into a number suitable to use in selecting the
chromosomes. In this case the fitness function took the L/D value of each tested wing and subtracted from it the lowest L/D value from the same generation. This increases the proportional difference between the fitness of each wing and ensures to worst wing is never selected (as its fitness function is zero). To select the wings for the next generation a selection roulette is employed. The roulette method assigns different selection probabilities to each wing based on the fitness function. Wings with higher fitness functions are more likely to be selected, while wings with lower fitness functions are less likely. This ensures that even poorly performing wings can still be selected for the next generation, giving more variety to the gene pool and helping to avoid convergence at only a local optimum21.

The techniques used to create gene variety in this experiment included sexual reproduction (also known as crossover) and mutation. Twelve wings were selected by the roulette for each new generation. The other twelve wings were created from the parent's genes by crossover and mutation. Crossover involves two of the selected individuals swapping their genes to create a 'child' with genes that come from both parents. In this case the genes of the child were picked randomly from either parent, shown in Figure 20, as opposed to neatly splitting the parent chromosomes in half and joining them21.

Figure 20 Parent Chromosomes Splicing Genes to Create New Chromosome

Mutation is the random alteration of a gene. This algorithm had few mutations, but their existence allowed for more variety than otherwise could have been22.

5234222 5734222

Figure 21 Random Mutation

It is interesting to note that while mutation always exists in natural selection, simply due to the imperfections of reproduction, sexual reproduction does not always occur. Most single celled organisms and some lizards reproduce via cloning. In fact, there is some evidence that sexual reproduction is optimal for promoting flexible genes that work well with others, instead of finding an optimized chromosome23. In genetic algorithms crossover has been compared to macromutations, and the mixing it provides may not be necessary 22 .

Termination of the genetic algorithm often occurs when the population consists of one type of chromosome (mutation will always ensure that the population is never entirely uniform) and an optimum is reached. Genetic algorithms can also be terminated due to time constraints. Generally the experimenter must make the decision of when to terminate while trying to balance issues of time and success at optimization.

Genetic Algorithms are exceptionally good at finding solutions in large solution spaces when no immediate intuitive solution exists. For this reason they are often used in aeronautical design, where there are many possible solutions. Mueller and Torres created a genetic algorithm to optimize the stability, range/endurance, and payload of a MAV, altering aspect ratio, wing planform, and tail placement⁶. Obayashi, Oyama, and Nakamura studied the use of Adaptive Range Genetic Algorithms (ARGAs) to optimize transonic wings for high L/D values²⁴. Quagliarella and Cioppa applied genetic algorithms to the optimization of transonic airfoils25. Jones, Crossley, and Lyrintzis used a genetic algorithm to optimize rotorcraft airfoils for low drag and low noise within certain constraints²⁶.

As a note on the language used in this report, it is important to remember that genetic algorithms are not intelligent. The computer is not exercising any creativity or decision-making prowess. A simple code is producing the results. Despite this, the results and process can often appear creative or intelligent, and due to the limitations of English, which tends to anthropomorphize things, the words

used may sometimes make it appear as though the code is acting intelligently. This will be avoided when possible, but may still occur.

1.7 First Genetic Algorithm Low Angle of Attack Test

A goal of this project is to confirm the 2007 work of Andrew Day, for that reason his genetic algorithm methodology is repeated, with a few differences. Chromosomes that are similar (having more than four identical genes) to the original best chromosome are removed from the initial generation. If the process is repeated and still produces similar results, it will strengthen the original conclusions and show the optimized wing is independent of the initial population.

In Day¹, each generation in the first use of the genetic algorithm showed a general progression from lower L/D values to higher values and a final wing was produced with an L/D value of about 3.3, as shown in Figure 221.

Figure 22 First GA Application L/D Values1

The final, best performing wing had chromosome 7732100 seen in Figure 23. The optimized wing planform sports a notch in the trailing edge, also seen in the wings of galliforms and the low aspect ratio wings with the highest L/D values found by Drovetski¹⁸.

Figure 23 First Iteration Low AoA Optimized Wing

The overarching goal of this thesis is to perform wing planform optimization using biologically inspired methods such as genetic algorithms, and conducted with low aspect ratio bird wings in mind. Flow visualization will then be used to study the airflow of particularly interesting wings. The following bullets list the specific objectives.

- Verify the results of Day's 2007 genetic algorithm to optimize the low angle of attack wing planform by performing a second application of the genetic algorithm under the same conditions. This study will confirm that the final optimized wing shape is independent of the chosen initial population.
- Apply the genetic algorithm with the wing at a higher angle of attack, to obtain optimized planforms with maximum lift-drag ratios for wing conditions near stall. High angle of attack flight is also important to MAV design and allows for low speed flight.
- Analyze and compare the wing chord versus span distribution for the best wings from the genetic algorithm with order Galliformes bird wings characterized by low aspect ratio and high wing loadings.
- Perform flow visualization using various methods, including tuft studies and oil film techniques, to observe and record flow. The flow visualization should

give insight on why some wing planforms yield higher lift to drag ratios by detailing flow separation, and laminar to turbulent transition.

3. Equipment and Methods

3.1 Wind Tunnel

The WPI recirculating wind tunnel was used to obtain the data for this experiment. The wind tunnel has a test section with a width and height of .61 meters and a length of 2.4 meters in the flow direction with transparent walls and a variety of ports to insert equipment. Upstream of the test section a wind tunnel contraction with a contraction ratio of 6:1 accelerates the flow. The air flows through turbulence suppression screens, reducing large scale eddies. All tests were conducted at a freestream tunnel velocity of 18 m/s. At these speeds the air has a freestream turbulence level of less than .73%²⁷.

3.2 Feathered Wing

The present study uses the same experimental apparatus as $Day¹$, a flat wing with variable length feathers, shown in Figure 24 and 25. With the feathers fully extended, the test wing is shaped like the Zimmerman planform. The length of the seven feathers can be changed to alter the shape of the wing. Each wing shape is identified by a chromosome, which consists of seven numbers. The chromosome of the Zimmerman approximation is 7766543, each number referring to the amount of visible lines shown on each feather, marking distances of about 1 cm as shown in Figure 24. The wing can take on nearly 400,000 different combinations of feather lengths.

Figure 24 Wing with Feathers Fully Extended

Figure 25 Wing with Feathers Retracted

The leading edge of the wing is rounded and the sides of the feathers are tapered to a point to reduce flow disturbances since the feathers overlap. Eight equally spaced .5 cm diameter holes with screws fasten the wing securely to the wing base. The wing span from the center of the holes (wing root) to wing tip is 14.2 cm. The maximum chord length is 15.5 cm with the feathers fully extended. The wing root has a length of 10.4 cm. When inserted into the wind tunnel, all feathers must be entirely visible. To allow the wing to fit into the wind tunnel, the trailing edge of the wing lacks a feather near the wing root, as a result it is not a perfect Zimmerman planform.

With a chord length of .155 m, a freestream velocity of 18 m/s, air density of 1.21 kg/m³, and air viscosity of 1.81 x 10^{-5} Ns/m² the Reynolds number for the feathered wing at test conditions is 186,5139.

3.3 Force Balance and Calibration

The feathered wing (see Figure 26) is mounted on an aluminum frame designed and constructed by a team of WPI students²⁸. The frame consists of two parts, an immobile base and a floating island that holds the wing. The island was designed to preclude vertical movement, while still being flexible in the axial direction. Two thin aluminum strips allow the wing to move back and forth when different axial forces are applied.

Figure 26 Feathered Test Wing and Frame

3.4 Drag Measurement

An Indikon AP-1297 proximity probe (Figure 27) mounted at the front of the base generates a magnetic flux field that varies with the distance between the proximeter and steel plate attached to the island. As the wing moves in the axial direction, the plate moves with it.

Figure 27 Indikon AP-1297 Proximeter

The proximeter converts the change in the magnetic field into a voltage that varies linearly with the distance to the plate. The voltage is then displayed by a multimeter with a precision of one millivolt. The voltage readout can then be used to measure the movement of the wing in the axial direction. The drag force can then be determined after the setup is calibrated. Calibrating is done by attaching weighted strings to the wing and wind tunnel, as shown in Figure 28, and then using simple trigonometry to determine the drag force applied to the wing. The horizontal force applied to the wing by the weights is determined by Equation 8.

$$
D = \frac{M}{\cos(\alpha)} (\tan(\theta_1) + \tan(\theta_2)) \cos(\beta)
$$
 (8)

In Equation 8, $θ_1$ and $θ_2$ are the angles of the string, $α$ is the angle of attack, $β$ is the angle the string makes with the wind tunnel wall as seen from above, and M is the mass in grams. All forces in this test are measured in gram-weights, the force one gram produces with an acceleration of 9.8m/s2.

Figure 28 Calibration Setup

At least four weights were used (from zero to thirty grams) in the calibration process. A least squares fit line was applied to the drag and voltage data, the slope yields the mV to grams conversion. To ensure accuracy, R^2 values of more than .995 were desired, if the R^2 value was less the setup was checked and the calibration was repeated.

Figure 29 Sample Calibration Graph

The horizontal component of the axial force can then be found by Equation 9,

$$
D_1 = S_1(V - V_0)
$$
\n(9)

In Equation 9, D_1 is the horizontal component of the axial force, S_1 is the slope of the calibration line, V_0 is the voltage with no applied force, and V is the voltage during the test.

The calibration only determines the horizontal component of the axial force; however the lift also exerts a force in the axial direction, counter to the axial force. Therefore the drag equation must include this effect in Equation 10¹.

$$
D = D_1 + L\sin(\alpha) \tag{10}
$$

If the normal force is measured instead of the lift, the horizontal component of the normal force must be included in the drag. The normal force is perpendicular to the axial direction and cannot be measured by the proximeter, so its contribution to drag must be included in the drag equation.

$$
D = D_1 + N\sin(\alpha) \tag{11}
$$

The frame and equipment were placed outside of the wind tunnel so as not to interfere with the airflow, while the wing fit through a small hole in the test section wall seen in Figure 30. A sheet of clear transparency plastic was used to limit any airflow through the open area of the hole. The sheet still needed to allow the wing and island to move freely to take accurate measurements, so there were gaps around the transparency that allowed some air to pass through. This was unfortunate as it produced flow different from what a real MAV wing would experience, but was necessary to record accurate data.

Figure 30 Close-up of Wing and Wind Tunnel Setup

3.5 Lift Measurement

Depending on the setup of the wing apparatus, either the normal force or the lift force is measured. Both are measured with two Acculab VI-2400 digital scales, each with an precision of ± 0.1 grams. Before each test the scales are set to zero. As the lift reduces the weight of the wing on the scales they display a negative weight. The sum of the negative weight measured by the two scales is the lift or normal force, depending on the orientation of the scales.

The lift force is measured when the scales are horizontal and the wing is placed on them at an angle, and the normal force is measured when the scales and wing are at the same angle. Figure 31 shows the general setup for a lift reading. The stacks of paper allow for quick adjustments of the height and angle of the wing.

Figure 31 Equipment Setup for Lift Measurements

Figure 32 shows a setup that measures the normal force. The lift can be found from the normal and axial forces. Where F_A is the axial force, D_1 (also called Drag 1 in the appendices) is the horizontal component of the axial force, L_L is the weight measured by the left scale, and L_R is the weight measured by the right scale. The weights are initially displayed as negative values, though they indicate positive lift.

$$
F_A = \frac{D_1}{\sin(\vec{\xi}\alpha)}\tag{12}
$$

$$
L = N\cos(\alpha) - F_A \sin(\alpha) \tag{13}
$$

Figure 32 Equipment Setup for Normal Force Measurements

3.5 Testing Process

Once the wing was inserted and set to the desired shape, the wing was checked for any interference with the wind tunnel wall. This was done by pushing the wing island and checking that it moved freely and oscillated without quickly damping out. The scales were set to zero and the voltage readout from the proximeter was recorded as V_0 . Then, the wind tunnel was set to the 18 m/s. After the air reached full speed, which took approximately three minutes, the voltage was again recorded, along with both of the weights from the scales.

These values were input into an Excel spreadsheet that applied the appropriate equations, depending on whether or not the scales were set to measure the normal or lift force. The spreadsheet then returned the L/D values. See Appendix A for spreadsheet examples.

Whenever a wing was repeated, either by chance or because it was reproduced in a later generation, it was retested completely. It would be easy to simply rewrite the data, but that would potentially allow errors to occur more than once. Therefore each test was performed anew.

3.6 Genetic Algorithm Process

The calculations for the genetic algorithm were done using Matlab codes. The first generation needed a large set of randomly generated wing planform shapes, 72 for this experiment, to provide good coverage of the solution space. The chromosomes were produced by the Initial Population Matlab code, seen in Appendix B. The code produces an Excel spreadsheet with the name of populations.xls that contains the chromosomes. These chromosomes were then tested, and the spreadsheet returned the L/D and fitness function values from the test data.

Each generation is contained on a new sheet in the populations.xls spreadsheet. The first generation's sheet is named '1,' the second '2,' and so on.

The Genetic Algorithm Matlab code asks the user to input the number of the last completed generation, and then uses the L/D values in the populations.xls spreadsheet to select and produce the next generation on a new sheet in the same spreadsheet, calling up the selection roulette routine in the process. The selection roulette made it more likely for the better performing wings to be picked for the new generation. All generations after the first had 24 chromosomes, the first twelve were taken directly from the previous generations and the last twelve were created by crossover and mutation from two 'parents' in the first twelve chromosomes.

This process repeats each successive generation until the user is satisfied with the optimized wing, or otherwise decides to end the process. Between each generation wind tunnel testing is conducted to measure the L/D values for the wing shapes for the previously created generation.

The genetic algorithm is detailed in $Day¹$. The codes used in this study were very similar, with a few small changes for the sake of efficiency. The new Matlab code was altered to automatically produce 'random' numbers seeded from the clock time, using the twister algorithm provided by Matlab. Random numbers determine which wings are picked for each generation (however the likelihood of each wing being chosen depends on the fitness function), where crossover occurs in the chromosome, and when mutation occurs. This meant that a human was no longer required to roll dice as in the first experiment.

In keeping with the desire to remove human interference from the algorithm, the fitness function was changed for the high AoA tests. In Day¹ and the low AoA genetic algorithm of the present study the fitness function was chosen by the operator, it was a number always slightly higher or equal to the lowest L/D value of an individual in that generation. In the high AoA genetic algorithm the lowest L/D value of the generation was subtracted from all L/D values from the same generation. This increased their relative differences and makes the selection routine more likely to pick superior chromosomes.

3.7 Low Angle of Attack Genetic Algorithm Tests

The results of Day¹ needed to be verified before any further work was done. Only one run of the genetic algorithm was completed in the original work. To substantiate the results, a similar experiment was run, repeating the genetic algorithm at the same angle of attack. A different initial population was used in the present study to confirm that the resulting optimized wings are independent of the initial population.

The genetic algorithm was modified to remove certain chromosomes from the initial population. An issue with genetic algorithms is that a particularly high performing individual in an early generation can force the later generations to adopt their genes, not allowing different chromosomes to be explored. Since the previous work already proved the 7732100 chromosome effective at producing a high L/D, individuals with similar chromosomes were removed in generation one. If indeed 7732100 is the optimized chromosome, then random mutation and interbreeding should produce it again, otherwise different options will be explored by the algorithm. Chromosomes with more than four genes with the same values and position as 7732100 were considered similar enough to be removed.

The wing was held at 4.6 degrees angle of attack for this study.

3.8 High Angle of Attack Genetic Algorithm Tests

Flight at high angles of attack are useful for MAV's flying at slow speeds, furthermore high angles of attack generally yield flow visualizations with more distinct flow phenomena, such as boundary layer separation. To optimize for this flight condition another genetic algorithm study was conducted at an angle near stall.

Setup and data recording were very similar to the low angle tests, though normal force measurements instead of lift were taken. Because of this, Equations 13 and 10 were used to find lift and drag, respectively.

3.9 Flow Visualization

In order to gain insight into possible reasons that the higher performing wings yielded high L/D values, flow visualization studies (tufts and oil films) were conducted in order to observe and characterize flow phenomena on various wings.

Flat Plate Wings

Tuft studies were initially conducted on the original feathered wings, but due to their overlapping feathers the wings have ridges and gaps that would not necessarily appear on an MAV wing. Furthermore, the focus of this thesis is wing planforms, and not modifications to the wing airfoil or surface. Flat aluminum wings were created to test the wing planforms without any surface or curvature effects.

Three wing planforms were chosen for the flat plate tests. These were an approximate Zimmerman planform based on the fully extended feathered wing, the best high angle of attack planform, and a ring necked pheasant planform. The Zimmerman planform is a standard wing for MAV's. The best high angle of attack wing was selected to investigate why it yields high L/D values. The pheasant wing was selected as a representative galliform wing. The low angle of attack planform was not selected to be made into an aluminum wing because of uncertainty about whether or not interesting flow patterns would be visible at such a low angle of attack, as few phenomena of interest had appeared on the low angle tuft studies.

Photos of the feathered wing set to the Zimmerman approximation (Figure 24) and best performing high AoA shapes were taken with a digital camera and used to create three-dimensional models in Solidworks 2008. A photograph of a ring necked pheasant provided by the Slater museum was also used (Figure 13). These models were the same size as the original feathered wings and had the same eight holes to attach them to the frame. The Solidworks models were then turned into a set of drilling instructions for a CNC mill using GibbsCAM. Using the program, the three wings were then machined out of $1/8th$ inch aluminum plate as seen in Figure 33. See Appendix C for the Solidworks drawings of all three wings.

Figure 33 Machining the Wings in a CNC Mill

To create a high contrast surface for flow visualization, the wing surfaces were spray-painted matte black. Spray paint was used because it has a smoother finish than brushed paint.

Figure 34 Flat Plate Aluminum Wings

Tuft Studies

To find why the various chromosomes of the original feathered wing produced differing L/D values flow visualization was needed. To this end a tuft study was completed.

Polyester strings were taped to the wing with their free ends able to move. The strings were 1.5 cm in length with approximately .2 cm under the tape, giving 1.3 cm of free string. The strings were spaced 1.3 cm apart in both the direction of the flow and perpendicular to the flow, to avoid them getting tangled with each other (see Figure 35). Neon yellow strings were used so they would show up well against the dark maroon of the wing14.

Figure 35 Tuft Placement for Feathered (Left) and Aluminum (Right) Wings

For the feathered wings, with mobile overlapping feathers, the trailing end of the wing could not have as consistent placement of the tufts as the leading edge. They were still placed as consistently as possible however.

A Panasonic camera was used to take 8-megabyte pictures of the wing. Videos of the wings in the wind tunnel were also created, each one lasting at least twelve seconds.

Lift and drag measurements from the tuft studies of the feathered scale model wings revealed that they had much less lift and drag than wings without tufts.

This raised concerns about the tufts affecting the airflow. To mitigate this for the aluminum wing tuft studies only three rows of tufts were added to the leading edge and four tufts were added to the trailing edge, as shown in Figure 35.

Oil Film Techniques

An oil film technique commonly known as china clay technique was used in the present study. China clay (also known as kaolin) is mixed with a liquid medium and painted on the wing in a thin film. When air flows over the wing, the flow produces patterns in the film that reveals aspects of the surface flow. Kaolin is a common ingredient in stomach medications and makeup, and poses little threat of combustion. It also is relatively inexpensive.

Kerosene is commonly used as the medium, and is readily available. Important requirements for any base fluid are transparency, low surface tension, and rapid vaporization.

Kaolin and kerosene were mixed in a 1:6 ratio, other pigments could be added but were never necessary for this experiment. When mixing, the kaolin generally settles at the bottom of the container. Before the mixture is applied to the wing, it must be mixed first, and then applied to the wing.

When mixed with kerosene, the kaolin is nearly clear and slightly brown. It will change to white when it dries in the airflow. The mixture was brushed onto the wing surface lightly and perpendicular to the airflow so any streaks from brushing are obviously not produced by the flow. Only a very light coat is required.

The flat plate wings were placed in the wind tunnel at an 11.8° and 4.6° angle of attack. To test whether or not gravity would affect the flow, the wings were painted with the kaolin mixture and allowed to dry in still air at the two angles of attack. It was confirmed that gravity had no effect on the flow visualization results by painting the wings and letting them dry in still air. They were then painted with the kaolin and kerosene paint. As soon as the wings were painted the wind tunnel was sealed and set to 18 m/s.

There is the possibility that during wind tunnel startup, the changing airflow is affecting the paint and rendering an inaccurate pattern. Since the paint was observed to dry only after the full speed was reached this seems unlikely. If higher airspeeds were tested it would take longer to reach the final speed and drying would be more likely, however it was not an issue for this experiment.

As the paint dries the kaolin becomes highly visible. Where the paint dries first is an early indicator of the flow, the rate of drying is directly related to the amount of convection to remove the kerosene. Therefore, the areas that dry first are probably experiencing the fastest airflow near the wing surface, while the areas that dry last have the slowest airflow. Video of the drying paint can also be a form of flow visualization.

After the paint has dried, a white pattern appeared and the kaolin will only be dislodged by contact, not low velocity airflow, so the airflow was halted and the wing was photographed.

3.10 Effect of Flow Visualization Tests

The types of flow visualization used in this study have the potential to affect the airflow. To check that this is not the case, lift and drag of the flat plates with and without flow visualization were measured and compared to each other. Five tests of each flat plate wing were conducted, with tufts, with oil film, and with no flow visualization at all. If the results are similar the flow visualization could be considered to have negligible effect on the airflow. The L/D values of the flat plate wings at 11.8° AoA were also compared to the L/D values of the feathered wings at 11.80 AoA.

3.11 Chord Distribution Study

To compare the shape of the best wings from the genetic algorithms to bird wings of order Galliformes, the chord distribution along the wing span was measured. X and Y coordinates of approximately fifty points following the outline of the wing were recorded. A Matlab code then organized the points and estimated the chord length throughout the entire span of the wing. Given a set of coordinates the program first normalizes them, which resizes the wings shapes to allow for direct comparison between them. Then, the program locates the leading and trailing edges and finds two trailing edge points directly behind each leading edge point. The program interpolates the space between trailing edge points as a line, and the slope of the line connecting them is the found by Equation 14. The location of the interpolated point is found by Equation 15, and the chord length is found with Equation 16.

$$
S_2 = \frac{Y_3 - Y_2}{X_3 - X_2} \tag{14}
$$

$$
Y_i = (X_2 - X_1)S_2 + Y_2 \tag{15}
$$

$$
C = Y_1 - Y_i \tag{16}
$$

In Equations 14 through 16, X_2 , Y_2 and X_3 , Y_3 are two trailing edge points behind the leading edge point, X_i , Y_i is the location of the interpolated point, and X_1 , Y_1 is the position of the leading edge point.

The program doesn't necessarily find the points to the left and right of the leading edge point, so it is capable of properly locating the interpolated point based on the two closest trailing edge points even when both are to the left or right of the leading edge point.

A detailed account of the process can be found in Appendix D.

3.12 Null Hypothesis

It has been assumed that the genetic algorithm will eventually reach a steady state where a locally or globally optimal chromosome takes up most, and eventually all, of the population. To prove this, the inverse must also be tested. If the results from a test with severe noise and no actual data are similar to the actual results, then the tests are flawed. The process and results are located in Appendix E.

4. Results

4.1 Low Angle of Attack Genetic Algorithm

As discussed in Section 2, a genetic algorithm study was undertaken to confirm the results of Day¹ at low AoA. A different initial population was used in order to verify that the resulting best wing is independent of the initial population in the first generation.

The initial generation, created by the twister algorithm and input to an excel spreadsheet by Matlab consisted of 72 individuals of a wide variety of shapes. Two of the generated chromosomes were very similar to the 7732100 chromosome, so they were removed and substituted with two chromosomes from a second spreadsheet created in the same way as the first.

All other variables were kept as similar as possible to the process as Day¹. This included a 4.6⁰ angle of attack. However, the lift at the same recorded angle of attack was consistently higher than the lift recorded by Day1 by approximately 10%. This is believed to be due to variations in the orientation and placement of the floating island in the force balance structure.

Results of Low Angle of Attack Tests

Figure 37 shows the variation of the average, minimum, and maximum L/D values as the genetic algorithm proceeds.

The L/D values generally increased as the generation number increased. The first generation had an average below 3.3 while the final generations rose to an average of around 3.6.

The error bars on the average L/D ratios indicate repeatability errors. These were found by taking the standard deviation of the wing shape with the most separate tests, the 6611110 shape. The standard deviation for the low AoA genetic algorithm was .07808.

Figure 37 Low AoA Genetic Algorithm L/D Values, Present Study

Some of the generations had lower average L/D values than the previous generations. Because genetic algorithms are based on random numbers this can happen, however the general trend is upwards.

Due to its consistent high L/D values and ubiquity in the final generations, the wing shape defined by chromosome 6611110 is considered the 'best' wing from the present study.

Figure 38 Low AoA Best Wing, Present Study

When comparing the shape of chromosome 6611110 from the present study to the shape of chromosome 7732100 from Day¹ in Figure 39, some interesting similarities emerge.

Figure 39 Wing 7732100 from Day1 (Left) Versus Wing 6611110 from Present Study (Right)

Both wings have the first two feathers extended to close to the wing tip, while the middle feathers are much shorter and the final feather completely retracted to near the wing root. Similar to galliform wings, there is a notch located at the center of the span, where the chord suddenly shortens. This wing notch is more prominent in wing 6611110.

To further compare the shapes of wing 7732100 and 6611110 the chord distribution versus wing span location is presented in Figure 40. The most visible difference between the wings is the where the chord remains at a constant length near the middle of the span for wing 6611110, the 7732100 wing has a much smaller area of constant chord.

Figure 40 Wing Chords Versus Span Location for Best Low AoA Wings

These wings were then tested in the wind tunnel at a variety of angles of attack, shown in Figure 41. Except for very high angles of attack both 'best' wings had higher L/D values than the Zimmerman approximation wing. The Zimmerman approximation had particularly low L/D values at 40 degrees angle of attack. Chromosome 6611110 of the present study performed slightly better than chromosome 7732100 of Day1. The original data can be found in Appendix F.

Figure 41 L/D Versus AoA for 'Best' Low AoA and Zimmerman Approximation Wings

The following section details the evolution of the wing shapes throughout the generations. The raw data from the low AoA genetic algorithm is located in Appendix G.

Generation One

The first generation had a wide range of performance. Of all the wings the highest L/D values belonged to individuals 7620111 and 2711102, with values of 3.5 and 3.6 respectively. Figure 42 shows the highest performing wing of generation one.

Figure 42 Wing 2711102 of Generation One

Generation Two

The 7620111 chromosome was reproduced for generation two, but 2711102 was not. Chromosome 6631321, a decent performer was also selected for generation two, and many of its offspring, also with good but not exceptional L/D values, were carried over into the next couple of generations. 7620111 performed well in generation two but was outperformed by one of the new offspring chromosomes 4633121 with the highest L/D of 3.6. Figure 43 shows the highest performing wing of generation two.

Figure 43 Wing 4633121 of Generation Two

Generation Three

Chromosome 7620111 was then selected for generation three, as well as 4633121. In generation three 7620111 was again the best performer, with an L/D of 3.6, while 4633121 followed closely with and L/D of 3.5. Figure 44 shows the highest performing wing of generation three.

Figure 44 Wing 7620111 of Generation Three

Generation Four

Chromosome 7620111 was selected for generation four by the genetic algorithm, while 4633121 was not. Chromosome 7620111 performed well, but proved inferior to the offspring individual 6610120 with an L/D value of 3.6. Figure 45 shows the highest performing wing of generation four.

Figure 45 Wing 6610120 of Generation Four

Generation Five

The 6610120 chromosome and its siblings became dominant, having a slightly higher L/D value than chromosome 7620111 and its offspring. However, the highest L/D value for generation five belonged to individual 2311220, with a very high L/D value of 3.9. Considering that that later testing never reproduced this very high value for chromosome 2311220, it is likely that was an error not recognized at the time. Aside from that, the best two L/D's for generation five were 7611222 and 6611220 with values of 3.7 and 3.7 respectively. Figure 46 shows the highest performing wing of generation five.

Figure 46 Wing 6611220 of Generation Five

Generation Six

When chromosome 2311220 was retested it failed to reproduce its previous high result, with the highest value instead belonging to individual 7612210 with a value of 3.8. Figure 47 shows the highest performing wing of generation six.

Figure 47 Wing 7612210 of Generation Six

Generation Seven

The best performing individual in generation seven was 7611110 with an L/D of 3.9, an offspring chromosome from generation six. Individual 7612210 performed second best, with a value of 3.8. Figure 48 shows the highest performing wing of generation seven.

Figure 48 Wing 7611110

Generation Eight

Individual 6611110 performed best, with an L/D of 3.7. Individual 7611110 performed second best, with an L/D value of 3.7. At this point the generation is almost completely composed of chromosomes similar to 7611110 and 6611110. Figure 49 shows the highest performing wing of generation eight.

Figure 49 Wing 6611110 of Generation Eight

Generation Nine

Individual 7611110 turned out to have the highest L/D value ever of every tested shape of 4.0. The second best performance belonged to the similar wing 6611110, with an L/D value of 3.8. Figure 50 shows the highest performing wing of generation nine.

Figure 50 Wing 7611110 of Generation Nine

Generation Ten

The highest L/D of 4.0 was never again reproduced by chromosome 7611110, though it still performed well. This time the two best performing wings both had the 6611110 chromosome. The best performing wing had an L/D of 3.8 and the second best had an L/D of 3.8. Figure 51 shows the highest performing wing of generation ten.

Figure 51 Wing 6611110 of Generation Ten

Generation Eleven

The highest L/D of 3.7 belonged to individual 6611110. The second best L/D was 6.7; which was achieved by two wings, individual 6611110 and individual 6611101. Figure 52 shows the highest performing wing of generation eleven.

Figure 52 Wing 6611110 of Generation Eleven

The results of the present low AoA genetic algorithm study show that the resultant 'best' wings are largely independent of the initial population in the first generation. However, the differences between the wings suggest that the 'best' wing from $Day¹$ is not a global optimum.

4.**2 High Angle of Attack Genetic Algorithm**

Controlled landings, loitering, and low speed flight are all important to potential MAV missions. As discussed in Section 2, another genetic algorithm was conducted to find wings with higher L/D values at high angles of attack.

To determine the stall angle the best low AoA wings and Zimmerman wings were tested at angles of attack from $0⁰$ to $16⁰$ as seen in Figure 53. The stall angle is difficult to determine, not unexpected given that low aspect ratio wings delay stall to

high AoA, but analysis of drag and lift measurements place it after 14⁰ and before $16⁰$. As a result the high angle tests were conducted at an angle of attack of 11.8 $⁰$.</sup> The original data can be found in Appendix F.

Figure 53 Coefficient of Lift Versus AoA for Best Low AoA and Zimmerman Approximation Wings

The same process as the low AoA tests was used; however no chromosomes were removed from the first generation.

Results of High Angle of Attack Genetic Algorithm

Generally, the wings had lower L/D values at the higher angle of attack. This was not very surprising considering that drag drastically increases at higher angles. Figure 54 shows an upwards trend of the L/D values as the generations increase, though it is less visible than the trend for the low angle of attack tests. Two generations showed severe decreases in average L/D from the generation before, again due to the actions of random chance that genetic algorithms require.

The error bars on the average L/D ratios indicate repeatability errors. These were found by taking the standard deviation of the wing shape with the most separate tests, the 4143120 shape. The error for the high AoA genetic algorithm tests was .07022. This was slightly smaller than the error in the low AoA tests; however the differences in the L/D ratios of the high AoA tests were much smaller, making the error much larger in comparison.

Figure 54 High AoA Genetic Algorithm L/D Values

Despite the error, chromosome 4143120 was common in later generations and had consistently high L/D values, as a result it was considered the 'best' wing of the high AoA genetic algorithm.

Figure 55 'Best' High AoA Wing

Figure 56 Low AoA Best Wing (Left) and High AoA Best Wing (Right)

The shape of the best wing from the high AoA tests is very different from the best wing of the low AoA tests, as shown in Figure 56. It does have a notch where the second feather recedes, but not in the same place as galliforms do and it only consists of one feather. The retracted second feather divided the trailing edge and creates two protuberances on either side.

Figure 57 Wing Chords with Span of Best Low AoA and Best High AoA Wings (Present Study)

The chord of the best high AoA wing proved difficult to analyze because of the protruding feathers. Figure 57 shows the chord distribution of the high AoA wing compared with the low AoA wing. While both wings have a notch at the middle of the wing span, there are few other similarities.

The result that different conditions produce different 'best' shapes may prove important for MAV's with variable geometry wings, where MAV designers may wish to change the shape of the wing planform for different flight conditions.

The application of the genetic algorithm technique at high AoA also led to the development of a non conventional planform shape that would generally not be considered as a design alternative for MAV's prior to this study. This highlights one

of the advantageous features of genetic algorithms, their ability to find unconventional design solutions.

The following section details the evolution of the wing shapes throughout the generations as the high AoA genetic algorithm proceeded. The original data is located in Appendix

Generation One

A wide variety of wings were produced for the initial generation. Of these the best performing wing was individual 2720312 with an L/D of 3.0. The second best performing wing was individual 6014310 with and L/D of 3.0. Figure 58 shows the highest performing wing of generation one.

Figure 58 Wing 6014310 of Generation One

Generation Two

The 2720312 chromosome was reproduced in generation two, but was one of the worst performers, its earlier performance could have been an error. Unfortunately incorrect data is difficult to determine in the early generations, as the general performance of the wings is unknown. Meanwhile chromosome 6014310

was not carried over. The best performing wing belonged to individual 7643120 with an L/D value of 2.9. Figure 59 shows the highest performing wing of generation two.

Figure 59 Wing 7643120 of Generation Two

Generation Three

The best performing wing was a child 2603120 chromosome, with an L/D value of 2.8. The next highest L/D belonged to chromosome 1515030 with an L/D of 2.8. Chromosome 7643120 was transferred to generation three and still performed well. Figure 60 shows the highest performing wing of generation three.

Figure 60 Wing 2603120 of Generation Three

Generation Four

4025120, a child individual, performed best with an L/D of 2.9. Chromosome 7643120 also was transferred to generation four and performed well. Individual 7655022 performed second best with an L/D value of 2.9. Also of note, there were several individuals with a chromosome of 1035232, which performed notably well. Figure 61 shows the highest performing wing of generation four.

Figure 61 Wing 4025120 of Generation Four

Generation Five

In the later generations error became more prominent. Even with calibration, wing shapes did not always have the same L/D ratio when they were retested. As the wings evolve and poorly performing wings are selected out of the gene pool there is narrower range of L/D values. If this range becomes comparable to the level of noise in the system the ability of the genetic algorithm to select better wings is greatly reduced. This appeared to become an issue around generation five, though it is hard to determine when the noise and range became similar. The highest recorded score belonged to individual 4122120 with an L/D of 2.9, however the

generation was dominated by chromosome 1035232 and its children. Figure 62 shows the highest performing wing of generation five.

Figure 62 Wing 4122120 of Generation Five

Generation Six

Individual 4123120 performed best with an impressive L/D of 3.0. The next best performing wing was individual 4312122 with an L/D value of 2.9. These chromosomes and their children would later dominate the following generations. Figure 63 shows the highest performing wing of generation six.

Figure 63 Wing 4123120 of Generation Six

Generation Seven

The best performing individual was 7143122 with and L/D of 2.9. Individual 4342122 was the second best performer with an L/D of 2.8. Figure 64 shows the highest performing wing of generation seven.

Figure 64 Wing 7143122 of Generation Seven

Generation Eight

Individual 4322122 had the highest L/D value of 2.9. The second highest L/D belonged to 5342121 with an L/D of 2.9. This generation was also heavily populated by the 4143120 chromosome, which performed consistently well. Figure 65 shows the highest performing wing of generation eight.

Figure 65 Wing 4322122 of Generation Eight

Generation Nine

The best performing individual in generation nine was individual 7343121 with an L/D of 2.9. The second best performing individual was 4342122 with an L/D of 2.9.

There were worrisome differences between the L/D values of the same chromosomes though, so the relative superiority between the wings is hard to determine. However, most of the ninth generation consisted of the 4322122, 4143120, and 4342122 chromosomes so these are likely the best performing chromosome types. Figure 66 shows the highest performing wing of generation nine.

Figure 66 Wing 7343121 of Generation Nine

Generation Ten

Genetic algorithms are inherently based on random number generation, which can carry the risk of unexpected behavior. Larger populations reduce this risk, but 24 individuals per generation may not be large enough to completely eliminate this risk. After appearing that the 4143120 chromosome was the most optimized, the 7323101 chromosome became more common. Unfortunately due to time constraints the genetic algorithm needed to end soon, and while the new shape performed well, it was not very common throughout generation ten. Generally the 'optimized' solutions for a genetic algorithm are decided when the value of the desired trait reaches a plateau and no longer increases for new generations, or a single chromosome becomes very common in new generations. In generation ten the lift to drag ratio decreased drastically and there was a large variety of chromosomes. While it was possible that new generations could see the new shape become more widespread, experience with the low AoA genetic algorithm suggested it would take at least a few more generations. For the sake of working with a chromosome that had already been heavily observed, the 4143120 chromosome was picked to be studied as the 'best' chromosome.

4.3 Chord Distribution

In this section we study whether the best wings of the of the low AoA study are similar in shape to bird wings from the order Galliformes by measuring their chord length distribution as a function of the location of the wing span. Galliform birds have high wing loadings and low aspect ratios, making them similar in function to MAV wings.

The chord distribution was found for all 'best' wings from the genetic algorithm studies, the Zimmerman wing, bird wings of order Galliformes, and bird wings of a variety of orders. All these can be found in Appendix I.

Comparing the chord distribution of the Zimmerman approximation wing with the two best wings from the low AoA genetic algorithms in Figure 67 shows their differences and similarities. The chords at the wing tip are all similar, while the best low AoA wing of the present study has a region of nearly constant chord length for the region of .5≤ $Z/(b/2)$ ≤.8. This region on the best wing of Day¹ exists for .7≤ $Z/(b/2) \leq 8$, where Z is the distance from the wing root and b is the full wingspan. Also, both high performing wings have shorter chord lengths than the Zimmerman wing near the wing root.

Figure 67 Feathered Wing Chords with Span

Figure 68 'Best' Low AoA Wings and Galliform Wings

The chord distributions of galliforms compared with the best low AoA wing distributions are shown in Figure 68. All wings have a region of nearly constant chord length from .5≤ $Z/(b/2)$ ≤.8, except for the best wing of Day¹ which has a smaller region of constant chord length.

Next, we show how the specific features of the 'best' wings, including the trailing edge notch, result in a constant chord length region. Figure 69 shows a simplified schematic of the best low AoA (6611110) and galliform wings divided into four regions.

- **Region 1:** Leading edge swept backwards, trailing edge swept back more steeply, chord length increases as Z/(b/2) increases.
- **Region 2:** Leading edge swept back, trailing edge swept forwards, chord length decreases as Z/(b/2) increases.
- **Region 3:** Leading edge swept back, trailing edge sweeps back at the same angle, chord length remains constant with Z/(b/2).
- **Region 4:** Leading edge swept back, trailing edge swept forwards, chord length decreases as Z/(b/2) increases.

Figure 69 General Structure of Best Low AoA and Galliform Wings

Figure 69 shows how variations in the leading and trailing edge sweep angles in different regions of wing span lead to the chord distribution of Figure 67. In region three, at the trailing edge notch the chord length remains constant since both leading and trailing edges are swept back at the same angle.

The feathered test wing is limited in the shapes it can produce. The feathers can only extend or retract certain amounts. Figure 71 shows the chord distribution of the feathered test wing with all its feathers fully retracted (Figure 70) compared with the best performing wings and the Zimmerman approximation wing. Both high performing low AoA wings had their last feather fully retracted, and the feathers preceding it were either fully retracted, or only extended by one centimeter. Even if the galliform wings were the optimized wing shape for the tested conditions, the feathered test wings could not approach their shape near the wing root.

Figure 70 Wing with Fully Retracted Feathers

Figure 71 'Best' Low AoA Wings, Zimmerman Approx. Wing, and Fully Retracted Wing

To show whether or not the wings of non-galliform birds had any similarities to the highest performing low AoA wings, the wing chord distributions of nongalliforms were found. Figure 72 shows several example non-galliform wings (Canada goose, goldfinch, and red-tailed hawk) compared to the highest performing low AoA wings. None of the bird wings show any evidence of the constant chord length section seen in certain galliform wings and the high performing low AoA wings.

Figure 72 'Best' Low AoA wings and Non-Galliform Wings

The chord distribution of the best high AoA wing was also computed and can be seen in Figure 73, compared with the best low AoA chord distribution. The chord distribution was more difficult to find for this wing because of the two large protuberances on the trailing edge made by the feathers. The chord length is defined as the length from the leading edge to the trailing edge of the wing. Because of the protuberances, there are two leading and trailing edges making the chord length difficult to calculate. There is little similarity between the best high AoA wing and best low AoA wing chord distributions.

Figure 73 Wing Chord Distributions

4.4 High Angle of Attack Flow Visualization

To study the flow over the aluminum wings at high AoA, the kaolin and kerosene mixture was applied to the flat plate wings, which were then tested at 11.80 AoA. Lift and drag were also measured to test whether or not the film significantly disrupted the airflow.

Figures 74 and 75 show that all three wings exhibit the same attached airflow near the leading edge. Behind this, they all exhibit probable separation bubbles (see Figures 7 and 8) near the wing root revealed by circular markings. At the wing tip, another formation was observed, which may be related to wingtip vortices. Between the separation bubble and wing tip there is a line of white kaolin, marking a line where the pressure gradient rapidly changed. This marks the boundary of attached and separated flow. Behind the separation bubbles, the flow is completely separated, evidenced by the textured patterns and tuft studies. Because of its greater velocity gradient near the surface, turbulent flow affects the oil film more than laminar flow¹⁵. The location of the separation bubble does not vary significantly between wings, although the attached flow region appears larger at the leading edge of the 'best' high AoA wing.

The main difference between the Zimmerman approximation planform and the best high AoA wing was that the high AoA had a second area of attached flow where the oil film is without texture, shown in Figure 74. This could be the effect that gave the feathered best high AoA wing better L/D values, though the aluminum wing L/D tests show the best high AoA aluminum wing as being inferior to the aluminum Zimmerman approximation wing (Figure 79).

Figure 74 High AoA Film Test with Zimmerman Approximation (Left) and 'Best' High AoA (Right) Wings

Figure 75 High AoA Film Test with 'Best' High AoA (Left) and Pheasant (Right) Wings

High Angle of Attack Tuft Studies

Figure 76 shows the averaged L/D values of three tests for the tufted and untufted configurations of the feathered test wing at 11.80 AoA set to the Zimmerman planform. There is a large difference in coefficients of lift and drag, presumably caused by the tufts. The original data can be found in Appendix J.

Figure 76 Cl and Cd with and without Tufts

This shows the tuft studies must be conducted with care, as there is always concern that the tufts are disrupting the flow over the wings. Nevertheless, the tuft studies are very valuable in complementing the data from other methods of visualization and were used again on the aluminum wings at $11.8⁰$ angle of attack.

Due to the concerns about the tufts disrupting the flow, fewer tufts were used for the aluminum wings. Three rows of tufts were used on the leading edge of the wing, and four individual tufts were placed on the trailing edge to monitor flow as it came off the wing.

Figures 77 and 78 show heavily separated airflow; where many of the tufts show local velocities towards the wing tip or even in the opposite direction of the freestream velocity, suggesting separated flow. The leading edge tufts indicate that the leading edge region of the wings does not experience separated flow.

Figure 77 High AoA Tuft Study of Zimmerman Approximation (Left) and 'Best' High AoA (Right) Wings

Figure 78 High AoA Tuft Study of 'Best' High AoA (Left) and Pheasant (Right) Wings

Shown in Figure 79, the aluminum Zimmerman wing had the highest average L/D value, followed by the best high AoA wing and then the pheasant wing. This was somewhat unexpected as the Zimmerman approximation wing performed better than the best high AoA configuration, which is the opposite of the results from the feathered wing tests. The aluminum Zimmerman approximation wing also performed much better than the feathered version. It is possible that the ridges and gaps of the feathers affected the airflow over the feathered wings. Appendix K contains the original data.

Figure 79 Aluminum Plate L/D Values at High AoA

L/D values were also compared for the aluminum wings with and without oil films and tufts, shown in Figures 80 through 82. The wings showed little change in lift and drag with and without flow visualization confirming that the oil films and tufts do not significantly affect disrupt the airflow over the aluminum wings at low AoA values. Original data can be found in Appendix K.

Figure 80 Lift and Drag for Zimmerman Approx. Configurations

Figure 81 Lift and Drag for 'Best' High AoA Configurations

Figure 82 Lift and Drag for Pheasant Configurations

Low Angle of Attack Flow Visualization

Oil film visualization was also performed at 4.60 AoA on all three aluminum wings, to view flow patterns for wings at low AoA, shown in Figures 83 and 84.

The most prominent effect on the oil film was the formation of small 'bubbles' on the leading edge of the wings. The tuft studies on the feathered wings and the relatively undisturbed oil film behind the bubbles indicate that the flow was still attached at this AoA. Given the position of the bubbles and the attached airflow, the bubbles are likely separation bubbles.

Most of the streaks oriented from the wing root to tip that were applied by the brushstrokes were not altered by the airflow over the wing. The movement of the oil is related to the boundary layer velocity profile. Laminar flow, with a gradual change from zero to freestream velocity in the boundary layer has a lower velocity near the wing surface, moving it less. Turbulent flow has a more abrubt change from

zero to freestream velocity in the boundary layer with higher velocities near the surface, so it will likely move the oil more. As a result turbulent flow is expected to have a greater effect on the oil film¹⁵. Near the trailing edge of each wing and behind the separation bubbles the brushstrokes are replaced with a different, more textured pattern. This likely shows a turbulent region near on the trailing edge as a result of the transition from laminar to turbulent flow, and behind the separation bubbles because of the obstruction posed by either the oil or the air bubble itself.

Interestingly, the pheasant wing in Figure 84 shows a distinct turbulent region near the trailing edge notch. The turbulent areas on the Zimmerman approximation wing and best high AoA wing are spread out on the trailing edge. What this means is unclear, but the notched pheasant wing seems to be limiting the turbulence to one area around the midspan of the wing. Previous investigations into trailing edge notches have shown that they can decrease drag at low angles of attack^{17,29}. The mechanism by which this works is thought to be through inducing small vortices that energize the trailing edge boundary flow. This presents a contradiction. The tuft studies showed that the birdlike low AoA high performing wings had less trailing edge vortices than the Zimmerman approximation. However, the oil film studies show increased turbulence on the pheasant wing thought to be the result of trailing edge vortices. Due to time constraints further investigation was not conducted on this issue, but is an area for future work.

The best high AoA wing showed much evidence of turbulent flow, possibly the result of its odd shape. However, it had very poor L/D values so it is unlikely the turbulence is improving its performance. There is a more distinct separation bubble which possibly increases drag resulting in a lower L/D value.

Each wing exhibits a flow near the wing root that is oriented along the freestream flow direction. The reason for this structure is unknown but could be a result of a disturbance from the interaction between the wing and the wall.

Figure 83 Low AoA Film Test with Zimmerman Approximation (Left) and Best High AoA (Right) Wings

Figure 84 Low AoA Film Test with 'Best' High AoA (Left) and Pheasant (Right) Wings

All three aluminum wings were tested for lift and drag without the application of the oil film in order to find their L/D values. Five tests were done for each wing, and the average L/D values can be seen in Figure 85. The individual test results can be found in Appendix K. For the aluminum wings, the pheasant wing performed best, followed by the Zimmerman approximation wing. The best wing from the high AoA genetic algorithm performed poorly in comparison. The feathered wings showed similar L/D ranges.

Figure 85 L/D Values at Low AoA

Low Angle of Attack Tuft Studies

Figure 86 shows the tufted Zimmerman approximation wing and best low AoA wing with an AoA of 4.60 and a freestream velocity of 18 m/s. Nearly all the tufts are lined up parallel to the freestream velocity, except for a few on the leading edge. These leading edge tufts appear to be oriented towards the wingtip, as though air were sliding from the root of the wing to the tip. It is difficult to see in photographs, but the trailing edge tufts near the middle of the span of the Zimmerman wing are rotating. The rotating tufts can be seen more clearly in video recordings. This rotation is likely due to the formation of wingtip vortices, which are surprisingly more prominent on the middle of the wingspan rather than at the wingtips, a possibility for low aspect ratio wings⁶. No such motion is seen on the best low AoA wing. Aside from the vortices and leading edge flow, the tufts show very little flow patterns.

Figure 86 Zimmerman Approximation (Left) and 'Best' Low AoA (Right) Wings of Present Study with Tufts

Figure 87 shows the best wing of the present study compared with the best wing of Day¹. On both the videos and pictures there was no evidence of wingtip vortices on either wing. However there was a similar wing root to wing tip orientation on some tufts at the leading edge. There also appeared to be more chaotic flow and possible vortices at the trailing edge near the root from video studies.

Figure 87 'Best' Low AoA Wings from Present Study (Left) and Day1 (Right) with Tufts

Unfortunately due to the low speed and low angle of attack there was very little reorientation of the tufts. In the low AoA tests it is also possible that some tufts, once reoriented into a position due to the transient flow during wind tunnel start up were unable to reorient themselves during the steady flow, since the freestream air velocity was too low to reorient them.

However, the Zimmerman approximation wing showed strong vortices near its midspan. In contrast, neither other the highest performing wings from the genetic algorithms showed any evidence of these vortices. Both of these wing planforms have a very different chord length compare to the Zimmerman approximation near the middle of the wingspan, near the location of these vortices. It seems likely that this is not coincidence and that the planforms of the best performing wings from the genetic algorithm are manipulating the formation of these vortices.

A summary of the results of this study is provided here.

- A genetic algorithm study was conducted to confirm if the 'best' wing from $Day¹$ from the low AoA genetic algorithm is independent of the initial wing population in the first generation. This was largely confirmed, however, the 'best' low AoA wing from the present study proved slightly different and gave a slightly better L/D performance than Day's¹ 'best' wing showing that the low AoA wing from Day1 was not a global optimum.
- The genetic algorithm study conducted at a high AoA near the stall condition resulted in a significantly different wing planform shape than the 'best' low AoA wings. This high AoA wing yielded higher L/D values than the 'best' low AoA wings as expected, but its performance was only slightly above that of the Zimmerman approximation wing. Noise in the data measurements also created some problems for the high AoA genetic algorithm.
- Wing chord length distributions of the 'best' low AoA wings from the present study were compared to bird wings of the order Galliformes. There was close agreement between the wing planform, shapes of galliform wings and wings from the genetic algorithm study. Both types of wings showed a region of constant chord length from the middle of the wing span to nearly the wing tip associated with a trailing edge notch feature.
- Flow visualization consisting of oil film and tuft studies were conducted on high AoA wing shapes from the genetic algorithm study in addition to a representative galliform wing (ring necked pheasant) and the approximate Zimmerman wing. The high AoA flow visualization showed separated flow for all wings at 11.80 AoA. A steady separation bubble preceded the separated flow. The best high AoA wing had two areas of attached flow, one of the leading edge, and one on the leading edge of its extended 'feather.' This is thought to be a reason for the feathered wing's superior performance for the high AoA wing, but this is not conclusive since the aluminum wing used for the flow visualization had lower L/D values than the Zimmerman approximation wing, the opposite of the feathered wing tests. While the flow visualization results were not conclusive in ascertaining why the wings from the genetic algorithm yield higher L/D values, the oil film technique was established as a flow visualization method at WPI to be used in future studies.
- The low AoA flow visualization tests on wings from the genetic algorithm wings, a ring necked pheasant wing, and the approximate Zimmerman wing showed some evidence of vortex manipulation by the best low AoA feathered wings and the pheasant wing. The oil film flow visualization also revealed the location of separation bubbles.

6. Future Work

6.1 Genetic Algorithm

Using cloning with mutation instead of crossover in the genetic algorithms applied in this study could be very useful. In trying to find a purely optimized shape, cloning may be superior in speed. Crossover also tends to optimize for genes that work well with a variety of other genes (given that they will be mixed often) so it is possible that with a wide variety of alleles in a generation the most common and best performing 'children' will not necessarily be the best performing alleles, but alleles that combine well with others while still performing decently. In theory, with enough time sexual selection algorithms would still find the optimal solution, but it may take a longer time. The actual usefulness of crossover in this type of problem is debatable. Focusing instead on mutation may be useful while avoiding the disadvantages of crossover. No crossover at all, or having fewer children produced via crossover are possible solutions, or creating an algorithm that decreases the rate of crossover as the population becomes more uniform. Either tactic would require greater amounts of mutation.

Additionally, a more discerning fitness function would be desirable. Even though removing the difference between the lift/drag of the poorest performing wing and all the other wings allowed for a greater difference between them (and thus more likelihood of the algorithm choosing the better performing wing) it often wasn't enough. An elitist fitness function, where the best wing is always selected for the next generation could be useful.

6.2 Wind Tunnel Testing

Experimental noise was a primary issue in the high AoA test in particular. Though the noise was small enough to merely be a nuisance in the low angle of attack tests, it became a major issue in the high angle tests. There were several issues that came up. Instability due to presumably unsteady airflow patterns over the high AoA wing caused the proximeter readout to vary forcing the average to be estimated. Use of a data acquisition system along with Labview with a time average could mitigate this issue. Varying drag calibration values caused further issues. Even when the test setup was recalibrated every twelve tests, different values would be found that greatly affected the wing's lift/drag ratio. Because the feathers had to be readjusted each test it seems likely that the force in moving them in and out bent the aluminum springs, changing the position and spring constant slightly. Even small changes could cause problems, as the drag values were small. Any future high AoA genetic algorithms would benefit from more accurate drag measurement.

6.3 Flow Visualization

The high AoA flow visualization tests showed flow patterns very clearly. The low AoA tests did not. Personal communications with Jack Ross of the University of Washington suggested that low AoA low airspeed oil film techniques would likely require use of a dye instead of a pigment. Unfortunately there was not enough time to test for that in this project. The best wings from the low AoA genetic algorithms were not tested with oil film flow visualization because there was not enough time apply this to the current study. Better low AoA flow visualization and the high performing planforms made out of aluminum wings would allow more research into why these wings outperformed the others.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Sample Data Spreadsheets

Sample Spreadsheet with Lift Measurements

Sample Table with Normal Force Measurements

Appendix B: Genetic Algorithm Codes

Initial Population Code

popsize=72; rand('twister',sum(100*clock)) POP=rand(popsize,7); A=[8, 8, 6, 6, 5, 4, 3]; for $i=1:7$ POP(:,i)=A(i)*POP(:,i); end InitPopulation=floor(POP); xlswrite('InitialPopulation.xls', InitPopulation)

Selection Roulette Code

```
function parents = selectionroulette(expectation,nParents)
rand('twister',sum(100*clock))
wheel = cumsum(expectation)/sum(expectation);
parents = zeros(1,nParents);
for i = 1:nParents
  r = rand;for j = 1: length (wheel)
     if(r < \text{wheel}(j))parents(i) = j;
        break;
      end
   end
end
```
Genetic Algorithm Code

```
close all
clear all
PopNum=24;
rand('twister',sum(100*clock))
nParents=PopNum/2;
A=[8, 8, 6, 6, 5, 4, 3];
numgen=input('Enter the generation worksheet number for you current population\n')
expectation = xlsread('Populations.xls', numgen, 'I3:I74');%reads fitness values
parents = selectionroulette(expectation,nParents) %function determines which
                                %individuals are chosen
                                %to become parents
OldPop=xlsread('Populations.xls', numgen, 'B2:H74')
NewPop=zeros(PopNum,7);<br>for i = 1:nParents
                                     %this for loop places the
  n=parents(i); \gamma<br>NewPop(i,:)=OldPop(n,:); % 9eneration of individuals
  NewPop(i,:)=OldPop(n,:);end
for k = 1:nParents/2 %loop for each pair of parents
for i = 1:2 %each parent set makes two children
  for j = 1:7 r=rand;
      if(r < .5) %if statement decideds which parent
       NewPop(nParents+2*(k-1)+i,j) = NewPop(2*(k-1)+1,j); % contributes each gene
      else
       NewPop(nParents+2*(k-1)+i,j) = NewPop(2*(k-1)+2,j); end
%Below is the mutation function, if the random value is less than the mutation fraction,
%the value is mutated to a new random number. 
r=rand; 
     if(r<.2) r=floor(rand*A(j));
        NewPop(nParents+2*(k-1)+i,j) =r;
      end
   end
end
end
numnewgen=numgen+1
xlswrite('Populations.xls', NewPop, numnewgen, 'B2:H25');
```
Appendix C: Flat Plate Wing Models

Zimmerman Approximation Wing

Best High AoA Wing

Ring Necked Pheasant Wing

Appendix D: Finding the Wing Chord Distribution

- Take an undistorted (that is, taken directly above the wing) picture of the desired wing and upload it onto a computer. The root should be located on the left of the picture.
- Make an outline of the wing (not including the root) with fifty or more evenly spaced points and record their X and Y positions in two columns. There are some programs (such as in Labview) where this can be done. To achieve consistency take points only at the outer tips of closely packed feathers. This does simplify the wings somewhat, but is required to keep the shapes from becoming too complicated. If the wing has large slots, these may need to be omitted or watched carefully. The Matlab program should not have two potential solutions for the trailing edge of the wing, otherwise it may run into errors. There can also be no duplicate points, that is, no exact same X or Y values.
- Take the coordinate data; make sure it is in a plain text .txt file with only tabs separating the X and Y columns. Save this file in the same directory as the following Matlab programs.
- Run wingshapesinterp.m Make sure there are no errors. If there are errors, check that the wing root is on the left, that the wing outline does not have large slots, and there are no duplicate coordinates. It should work fine it all this is done. If the wing has its root on the right, run wingflip.m. Wingflip.m will ask for the name of your coordinate file and return a version with the wing root on the left.
- If successful the wingshapesinterp.m program will show a preview of the wing chord distribution. Copy the matrix labeled 'chord' to get the chord distribution data.
- Paste the chord matrix into Excel (you may need to specify tab delimiters) and plot. You can now compare different chord distributions on the same graph, they have already been normalized by wingshapesinterp.m so you do not need to worry about scaling.

Wing Chord Distribution Code (wingshapesinterp.m)

% Sarah Taylor % WPI Master's Thesis: Biologically Inspired Wing Planform Optimization % A program to find the normalized chord length versus the normalized span % in Matlab % Last update: Jan 2009 %%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%%% % NOTES % The wing must have it's root on the left. If it is facing in the opposite % direction it will not work. Use flipwing.m to flip. clear all clc % Find out which files to get % Files must consist of the x and y coordinates arranged in a two column % array (X in column one, and y in column two). The file format must be a % tab delimited .txt file. filename=input('What is the name of the desired data set? $\langle n'|s'\rangle$; filenamevar=strcat(filename,'.txt'); wingarray=dlmread(filenamevar, '\t'); wingdatax=wingarray(:,1); wingdatay=wingarray(:,2); % Maximum and minimum x and y values maxwing=max(wingarray); minwing=min(wingarray); maxx=maxwing(1,1); maxy=maxwing(1,2); $minx = minwing(1,1);$ $miny = minwing(1,2);$ % b=span of one wing (half of total) b=maxx-minx; % Leading edge y value at the root lroot=wingarray(1,2); % Number of rows in coordinate array points=length(wingarray); % trailing edge y value at root troot=wingarray(points,2); % Chord at root croot=lroot-troot; % Normalizing all coordinates (w.r.t. root chord and b) normx=(wingdatax-minx)/b; normy=(wingdatay-troot)/croot; norm=[normx,normy]; % Finding the wingtip [tipval, tippointarray]=max(norm); tippoint=tippointarray(1,1); tippoint1=tippoint+1; % Making an array for the leading edge and trailing edge normtop=norm(1:tippoint,1:2); normbottom=norm(tippoint1:points,1:2); % k will be the increment value $k=1$: for $k=1:1$:tippoint-1, % Getting the coordinates of the top point xtop=normtop(k,1);

```
 ytop=normtop(k,2);
   % Finding the closest x value on the trailing edge
 diffarray=normbottom(:,1) 
- xtop;
   absdiffarray=abs(diffarray);
   [lownum, closestm]=min(absdiffarray);
   ybottom1=normbottom(closestm,2);
   xbottom1=normbottom(closestm,1);
   % Finding the second point for interpolation
   absdiffarray2=absdiffarray;
   absdiffarray2(closestm,:)=100;
   [lownum2, closestm2]=min(absdiffarray2);
   ybottom2=normbottom(closestm2,2);
   xbottom2=normbottom(closestm2,1);
   % Interpolation
   if xbottom1>xbottom2;
 dir=
-1;
   else
     dir=1;
   end
 xdiff=xtop
-xbottom1;
 slope=(ybottom2
-ybottom1)/(xbottom2
-xbottom1);
   ybottom=ybottom1+xdiff*dir*slope;
   % Finding and recording the chord
 ydiff=ytop
-ybottom;
   chord1(k,2)=xtop;
  chord1(k,3)=ydiff;
  k=k+1;
end
chord=chord1(:,2:3);
X=chord1(:,2);Y=chord1(:,3);scatter(X, Y)
```
Wingflip Code (wingflip.m)

% Sarah Taylor % WPI Master's Thesis: Biologically Inspired Wing Planform Optimization %A program to flip the wing if the root is located on the right side clear all clc % Find out which files to get % Files must consist of the x and y coordinates arranged in a two column % array (X in column one, and y in column two). The file format must be a % tab delimited .txt file. filename=input('What is the name of the desired data set? \n','s'); filenamevar=strcat(filename,'.txt'); wingarray=dlmread(filenamevar, '\t'); wingdatax=wingarray(:,1); points=length(wingarray); for i=1:points wingdataxnew(i)=(-1)*wingdatax(i); wingdataxnew(i)=wingdataxnew(i)+20; wingarray(i,1)=wingdataxnew(i); end

Appendix E: Null Hypothesis

It is known that genetic algorithms will slowly populate new generations with higher performance chromosome. However, the question of what happens when there are no higher performing chromosomes must be answered. Stated another way, how would a genetic algorithm perform if noise completely masked any actual data?

To investigate this idea, the genetic algorithm was run again, however this time the fitness function was produced by a random number generator, set to create values from 0 to .333, similar to the values of the fitness function of the real genetic algorithms. These values were then treated as the fitness function, even though they were not related to the chromosomes and were generated anew each generation.

In the first and second generation the chromosomes were varied as was expected, but in the third generation two chromosomes (one of which happened to be a child of the other) received higher fitness values. These two chromosomes were then duplicated many times over for the fourth generation. From that point on, the gene pool became less varied and more uniform. This continued until generation ten when the experiment was stopped. Generation ten had three instances of chromosome 7552431 and many related chromosomes. While the gene pool in the tenth generation was more varied than the final generations of both high and low AoA tests, to anyone unfamiliar with the process it would appear that the genetic algorithm had bred a 'superior' wing, even when the wing's performance was based entirely on random numbers.

Since this particular genetic algorithm relied heavily on the reshuffling of genes (crossover) to produce variety, it fails in creating diversity once the population is similar.

While neither high nor low AoA final populations looked quite like the randomized population, the high AoA tests do have some worrisome similarities. Primarily, the lack of consistency in later generations, was concerning. The noise was much more of a problem in the high angle of attack tests, perhaps due to instabilities that tend to occur at high angles, or due to the greater influence of the axial force, which historically has proven harder to measure.

To refute the null hypothesis, the most common chromosome from the randomized genetic algorithm was tested in the wind tunnel against several other wings at 11.8⁰ AoA. Each wing was tested ten times and their average L/D values were compared to each other.

The most common chromosome of the randomized genetic algorithm was 7552431. This chromosome was tested as a wing shape against several other important wings. The original data can be found at the end of this section.

When tested against the Zimmerman planform, and the most 'best' high AoA wing (4143120), the null hypothesis wing (7552431) performed surprisingly well. In fact, the average lift of the null hypothesis wing was the second highest out of all the tested wings, second only to the most common wing of the high AoA genetic algorithm, shown in Figure 88.

Figure 88 Null Hypothesis Test Results

There is some potential for confusion due to the similarity of the most common chromosome of the randomized algorithm, to the Zimmerman approximation planform. The 7552431 shape has almost all its feathers extended, like the Zimmerman planform, explaining why it performed similarly.

While it is possible that by chance alone, the randomized genetic algorithm found a good wing; it still puts the high angle of attack tests into doubt, especially considering the lack of uniformity in both their final generations. Primarily, this shows that the reduction of noise is of the utmost importance in genetic algorithms.

Randomized Genetic Algorithm

Generation One

Generation Two

Generation Three

Generation Four

Position Number **Fitness** Chromosome # $\begin{vmatrix} -1 & 2 & -3 \\ -2 & -3 & -4 \end{vmatrix}$ -5 -6 -7 Function 1 7 5 5 2 3 0 0 0.379 2 7 5 5 2 4 3 0 0.391 3 3 2 5 2 4 0 0 0 0.385 4 4 1 2 5 2 2 2 <mark>0.137</mark> 5 4 1 2 5 2 2 2 2 0.030 6 7 2 0 2 3 0 0 0 0.323 7 4 1 5 5 4 3 1 0.336 8 3 2 5 2 4 3 0 0.211 9 7 5 5 2 4 3 1 0.273 10 6 0 3 4 2 0 0 0 0.247 11 0 7 5 2 0 3 1 0.104 12 7 2 5 2 4 1 0 0.196 13 4 5 5 2 4 3 0 0.231 14 7 5 5 0 4 0 0 0 0.310 15 3 2 5 2 2 0 2 <mark> 0.212</mark> 16 6 2 3 5 4 2 0 0.271 17 6 2 2 2 3 3 2 0.367 18 4 1 0 2 2 0 2 <mark>0.322</mark> 19 5 2 5 5 4 3 0 0.476 20 4 1 5 5 2 0 2 0.186 21 6 5 5 4 4 0 2 0.064 22 6 0 5 4 4 3 1 <mark>0.428</mark> 23 7 7 5 2 0 1 1 0.358 24 6 2 5 2 4 1 <mark>0.478</mark>

Generation Five

Generation Six

Position Number Fitness Chromosome # $\begin{vmatrix} -1 & 2 & -3 & -4 & -5 & -6 & -7 \end{vmatrix}$ Function 1 7 5 5 2 4 3 0 0.081 2 2 1 2 2 1 2 1 0.219 3 7 5 5 0 4 0 0 0 0.117 4 6 0 5 4 4 3 1 0.299 5 0 2 0 2 4 0 0 0 0.115 6 2 1 2 2 1 2 1 0.400 7 6 2 5 2 4 1 1 <mark>0.464</mark> 8 6 0 5 4 4 3 1 0.156 9 4 1 2 5 2 2 2 <mark>0.462</mark> 10 7 5 5 2 4 3 0 0.287 11 6 2 5 2 4 1 1 0.300 12 2 1 2 2 1 2 1 <mark> 0.341</mark> 13 7 1 2 1 1 3 0 0.448 14 7 1 5 2 4 3 0 0.233 15 7 0 5 4 4 0 0 0 0.343 16 6 0 5 0 4 3 1 0.385 17 2 2 0 2 1 2 1 <mark> 0.323</mark> 18 0 5 2 5 1 2 0 0.454 19 6 0 5 4 3 1 1 0.239 20 6 0 5 4 4 3 1 0.379 21 7 1 5 1 2 3 0 0.395 22 7 5 2 5 2 3 0 0.118 23 5 4 2 2 4 1 1 0.188 24 3 2 0 2 4 1 1 <mark>0.102</mark>

Generation Seven

Generation Eight Generation Nine

Generation Ten

Null Hypothesis Tests

Appendix F: Angle of Attack Tests with Best Low AoA and Zimmerman Wings

Best Low AoA 7732100 (Day 2007)

	L/D	voltage	v0	Drag 1	Lscale	Rscale	Normal	Drag	Lift	CI	Date 2008
AoA		(volts)	(volts)	(g)	(g)	(g)	(g)	(g)	(g)		
	1.344	10.221	9.971	6.548	0.1	8.9	9.0	6.862	9.223	0.02985	27-Jan
4	2.823	1.153	10.821	8.696	9.2	20.7	29.9	10.782	30.435	0.098501	27-Jan
6	3.430	12.134	11.693	<u>11.551</u>	22.7	37.7	60.4	17.865	61.283	0.198338	27-Jan
8	2.845	13.11	12.526	15.297	30.8	38.8	69.6	24.983	71.072	0.23002	27-Jan
10	2.874	14.308	13.577	<u>19.147</u>	44.3	62.0	106.3	37.606	108.061	0.349732	27-Jan
12	2.633	15.236	14.368	22.736	54.8	73.0	127.8	49.307	129.840	0.420216	27-Jan
14	2.425	9.638	8.674	25.250	51.2	92.0	143.2	59.893	145.242	0.470064	27-Jan
16	1.348	10.568	9.641	24.281	21.3	22.4	43.7	36.326	48.970	0.158486	27-Jan

Best Low AoA 6611110 (Present Study)

Appendix G: Low AoA Genetic Algorithm

Generation #1

Generation #2

Appendix H: High AoA Genetic Algorithm

Appendix I: Chord Distribution Values

Ring Necked Pheasant

Guineafowl

Bobwhite

Chukar

Turkey

Spruce Grouse

Scaled Grouse

California Quail

Red Tailed Hawk

Goldfinch

Canada Goose

Mourning Dove

Chromosome 7732100 (Day 2007)

Chromosome 6611110 (Present Study)

Zimmerman Approximation

Chromosome 4143120 (High AoA Best Wing)

Feathers Retracted

Appendix J: Tuft Studies

Feathered Zimmerman Approximation Wing at 11.80 AoA

rho kg/m^3 V m/s Area m^2 1.2035 17.912 0.0157

Appendix K: Aluminum Wing Tests

