

How Many VLJs Are Coming?

The Very Light Jet story unwinding before us is history in the making. There was a statement made not long ago that so many VLJ s were on the way that they might very well "darken the skies." (If you are my age this may have called up a vision of Hitchcock's 1963 movie "The Birds.")

Right now the Eclipse fleet stands at around 50 aircraft.

Today these Eclipses and the Mustangs delivered, combined with all of the flying test aircraft from all the manufacturers, might cast a shadow over some small schoolyard.

Fear Factor aside, here are some highly credible and current speculations of how many VLJs might enrich our view from our polarized or shaded airline windows over time:

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ISASI comments in their August 2007 report: "as of mid-June 2007, Airclaims, which defines orders rather conservatively, identified nearly 1,500 orders from 19 countries for VLJs. Less demanding definitions produce much higher estimates; from 5000 units to 15,000 units by 2020. Typical estimates also suggest 1,000 to 1,500 VLJs will enter the fleet annually within several years."

I have had the great fortune to study this Very Light Jet phenomenon for nearly seven years. During that time I have traveled to over 40 countries in my work as a pilot. I have discussed VLJs with many FBO operators and airport managers in the process and the level of awareness and interest is remarkable. This is the real deal and it is global.

My company, VLJ Group, tracks the interest in VLJs around the world on a daily basis.

Here are some interesting analytics from a recent 30 day window:

There were 9922 entrants from 113 countries. The #1 city interested in VLJs was London, followed by New York, then Beverly Hills. Beverly Hills? Some of us thought it was just a cool song and video by the band Weezer filmed at the Playboy Mansion in 2005.

I'm in Honolulu now and going to Sydney and Hong Kong in two weeks and of course I will be making and taking impressions of the incredible world of Very Light Jets.

How many VLJs are on the way? Enough to hold our undivided attention.

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