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Wednesday, 09/01/10

## >>General Business

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### Airlines pull jumbo jets out of storage as traffic rises

BLOOMBERG NEWS

NEW YORK - Jumbo jets built by Boeing Co. are being brought out of desert storage as surging bookings spur carriers including British Airways Plc and Cathay Pacific Airways Ltd. to return 747s, their biggest planes, to traffic.

British Airways will recall a 747-400 for flights to Dallas in its winter schedule starting in October, freeing a Boeing 777 for an extra New York trip, and Cathay Pacific has reinstated five freighters. United Airlines took a jumbo out of storage in California in June for use as a spare during the summer months.

Wide-body planes accounted for about 25 percent of the 200 aircraft retrieved from storage in May and June as carriers sought to tap rising demand for long-haul trips and a leap in cargo shipments.

The number of 747s recalled in June exceeded those mothballed for the first time since January, 2009, statistics compiled by aviation consultant Ascend Worldwide Ltd. show.

Of the 112 jumbos mothballed since the start of last year, 40 are still in storage, according to figures from Ascend.

"Wide-bodies have lagged behind the overall market but they're showing signs of health," said Andy Golub, an analyst at Ascend in New York who describes the high-capacity 747 as a "bellwether" for airline confidence.

"If people are paying for that high-priced seat or moving expedited products in the belly of an aircraft that's a very good sign," he said.

"Everybody is getting very excited about passenger and cargo volumes coming back, but there's a great temptation to add too much capacity," said Chris Tarry, an independent airline analyst and strategy consultant in London who has followed the industry for almost three decades.

"What may be rational fleet decisions for individual airlines can add up to a problem for the industry when taken together."

British Airways and Hong Kong's Cathay Pacific have idled planes near Victorville on the southern edge of the Mojave Desert in California. Hot, dry conditions are favored for storage because they hamper corrosion.

International passenger traffic rose 12 percent in June, the most recent month for which figures are available, according to the International Air Transport Association.

That prompted a jump in second-quarter yields at carriers including Deutsche Lufthansa AG, Europe's second-biggest airline, and British Airways. Cargo traffic rose 27 percent in the month.

Lufthansa is looking to reactive a single jumbo stored in Germany after returning about a dozen short-haul planes and smaller wide-bodies to service, spokesman Peter Schneckenleitner said.

London-based British Airways is increasing winter capacity about 7 percent from a year earlier, spokesman Euan Fordyce said.

Air France-KLM Group, Europe's biggest carrier, is phasing out 747s from

 

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its Paris-based Air France unit with the entry into service of Airbus SAS A380 superjumbos and Boeing 777-300ERs, spokesman Marina Tymen said.

Cathay Pacific will transfer four 747-400 cargo aircraft to Air China Cargo, in which it has a 49 percent stake, by the end of 2011. The departures will be balanced by deliveries of Boeing's new 747-8 freighter, spokesman Elin Wong said.

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