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Aviation Accident Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: 10/29/2024
Subject: ERA25LA027 Pilot Interview
Contact: Hesham Ghali

Mr. Ghali was contacted via telephone on October 29, 2024, to discuss the accident of N54AE. The following is a summary of that conversation.

The written pilot statement was reviewed with Mr. Ghali, and he agreed that nothing had changed from that statement.

Mr. Ghali was asked how many people were onboard. He replied that there were three people onboard, including himself, and that the other two were medical personnel. Mr. Ghali was asked what the purpose of the flight was, and he replied that they were going to Lancaster, Ohio to refuel the helicopter.

Mr. Ghali was asked how far into the flight they were when the bird strike occurred, and he was asked to describe the event sequence. He replied that they were about 22 miles from the departure part, about halfway, and approximately 10 minutes into the flight when the bird strike occurred. Mr. Ghali was asked if he saw the bird, and he replied that he very briefly saw what he thought was a large white bird go above the windscreen before he heard the impact and felt a vibration. When the impact occurred, he looked at the engine instruments and stated that the engine did not appear to fail, so he felt that the vibration was coming from a damaged rotor system, and he elected to land immediately. One of the medical personnel noted a field to their right and Mr. Ghali elected to land in it. The field was less than a mile away from where he believes the bird was struck.

Mr. Ghali was asked for his email address. He replied [REDACTED].

-End of conversation