

Bird strike indent 2/06/2022 ~14:45 ET

Airplane: Skyhawk 172RG N9382D

Planned Flight Route: KLHZ – KRWI - KLHZ

Pilot in Command: Jeffery Clay Thornton

Certificate Number: [REDACTED]

Passengers: Caroline Thornton, Daniel Collie

Incident Description: I was currently at pattern altitude, ~1100 ft, and turning to the left downwind for runway 4. Upon turning to the downwind, I saw 5-6 large birds (buzzards) ~ 200 ft ahead on the downwind. They appeared to be moving mostly downward and to the left of my heading. I attempted to gain altitude and turn to the right to avoid contact, however one of the birds forcibly struck the left wing. The flying characteristics of the plane were impacted by the strike. I immediately made the call to KRWI to inform them that I had incurred a bird strike, and was making an emergency landing. Unaware of the extent of the damage, but understanding that the plane was handling differently after impact. I turned immediately to base and final while maintaining ~85-90 kts. Upon making the turn to final I started working flaps in once I knew the runway was made. I landed with 20 degrees of flaps, and exited runway 4. We were able to land safely, and no injuries were sustained by those onboard. FBO communicated with me after I made the initial call for the bird strike, and were waiting to guide me to the parking area to assist with the inspection. Gary Hodges met FBO personnel at the plane, and assisted us in the initial evaluation. He and I both took pictures of the damage. I reported incident to TFS via receptionist, and later to Tim once he contacted me after speaking with receptionist. Mr. Hodges took me and my passengers to my house, and I later returned to KLHZ to pick up my truck and speak to TFS personnel.