



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Fort Morgan, Colorado	Accident Number:	CEN24LA129
Date & Time:	March 5, 2024, 15:00 Local	Registration:	N853MB
Aircraft:	AMERICAN EUROCOPTER CORP AS350B3	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Birdstrike	Injuries:	
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 135: Air taxi & commuter - Non-scheduled - Air Medical (Discretionary)		

Analysis

The pilot reported that during approach to a hospital helipad, two red-tail hawks flew into the path of the helicopter and his evasive actions were unsuccessful in avoiding the birds. The birds struck the windscreen and fragments of the windscreen impacted the rotor blades. The pilot made an uneventful landing in a nearby open field. The rotor blades were substantially damaged.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be:

An inflight collision with a bird while on approach.

Findings

Environmental issues	Animal(s)/bird(s) - Effect on equipment
Environmental issues	Animal(s)/bird(s) - Ability to respond/compensate

Factual Information

History of Flight

Approach	Birdstrike (Defining event)
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Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	35, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Right
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Helicopter	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	Helicopter	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	Helicopter	Toxicology Performed:	
Medical Certification:	Class 1 With waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	November 28, 2023
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	November 28, 2023
Flight Time:	3165 hours (Total, all aircraft), 463 hours (Total, this make and model), 3052 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 31 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 6 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	AMERICAN EUROCOPTER CORP	Registration:	N853MB
Model/Series:	AS350B3	Aircraft Category:	Helicopter
Year of Manufacture:	2012	Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	7294
Landing Gear Type:	High skid	Seats:	5
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	December 23, 2023 AAIP	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	5225 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Turbo shaft
Airframe Total Time:	3731.5 Hrs as of last inspection	Engine Manufacturer:	Sarfran
ELT:	C126 installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	Arriel 2D
Registered Owner:	MED-TRANS CORP	Rated Power:	802 Horsepower
Operator:	MED-TRANS CORP	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	On-demand air taxi (135)
Operator Does Business As:		Operator Designator Code:	M3XA

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	KFMM	Distance from Accident Site:	5 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	14:35 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Few / 9000 ft AGL	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:		Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	14 knots / 20 knots	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	150°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	29.95 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	10°C / -5°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	Greeley, CO (98CO)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	Company VFR
Destination:	Fort Morgan, CO (0CD1)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	14:42 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:		Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	N/A	Latitude, Longitude:	40.249703,-103.79596(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Finne, Andrew
Additional Participating Persons:	Hosker, Richard; FAA-FSDO; Denver, CO
Original Publish Date:	July 11, 2024
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class 4
Note:	The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=193909

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The NTSB does not assign fault or blame for an accident or incident; rather, as specified by NTSB regulation, “accident/incident investigations are fact-finding proceedings with no formal issues and no adverse parties ... and are not conducted for the purpose of determining the rights or liabilities of any person” (Title 49 *Code of Federal Regulations* section 831.4). Assignment of fault or legal liability is not relevant to the NTSB’s statutory mission to improve transportation safety by investigating accidents and incidents and issuing safety recommendations. In addition, statutory language prohibits the admission into evidence or use of any part of an NTSB report related to an accident in a civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report (Title 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b)). A factual report that may be admissible under 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b) is available [here](#).