



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Yuba City, California	Accident Number:	WPR23LA066
Date & Time:	December 12, 2022, 17:35 Local	Registration:	N415RX
Aircraft:	Airbus Helicopters EC 130 T2	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Birdstrike	Injuries:	3 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 135: Air taxi & commuter - Non-scheduled - Air Medical (Medical emergency)		

Analysis

The pilot in the helicopter reported that, during cruise flight at dusk with night vision goggles on, he encountered a flock of birds at 1,500 ft above ground level. As the pilot initiated a climbing left turn to avoid the birds, he heard a loud bang accompanied by a pain in his left leg. The helicopter then began to vibrate, and the pilot initiated a precautionary landing in a nearby field without further incident. Bird remains were located throughout the pilot side of the cockpit. The helicopter sustained substantial damage to the windshield. The pilot reported that there were no preaccident mechanical malfunctions or failures with the helicopter that would have precluded normal operation.

Probable Cause and Findings

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

An in-flight collision with a bird while in cruise flight.

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

Enroute-cruise	Birdstrike (Defining event)
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Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial; Flight instructor	Age:	49, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	None	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Helicopter	Restraint Used:	3-point
Instrument Rating(s):	Helicopter	Second Pilot Present:	
Instructor Rating(s):	Helicopter; Instrument helicopter	Toxicology Performed:	
Medical Certification:	Class 2 With waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	December 1, 2021
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	September 30, 2022
Flight Time:	2671 hours (Total, all aircraft), 1627 hours (Total, this make and model), 2671 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 58 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 25 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 2 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Passenger Information

Certificate:		Age:	Male
Airplane Rating(s):		Seat Occupied:	Right
Other Aircraft Rating(s):		Restraint Used:	3-point
Instrument Rating(s):		Second Pilot Present:	
Instructor Rating(s):		Toxicology Performed:	
Medical Certification:		Last FAA Medical Exam:	
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:			

Passenger Information

Certificate:		Age:	Female
Airplane Rating(s):		Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):		Restraint Used:	3-point
Instrument Rating(s):		Second Pilot Present:	
Instructor Rating(s):		Toxicology Performed:	
Medical Certification:		Last FAA Medical Exam:	
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:			

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Airbus Helicopters	Registration:	N415RX
Model/Series:	EC 130 T2	Aircraft Category:	Helicopter
Year of Manufacture:	2021	Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	9130
Landing Gear Type:	Skid	Seats:	5
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	December 8, 2022 Continuous airworthiness	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	5512 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Turbo shaft
Airframe Total Time:	223.2 Hrs as of last inspection	Engine Manufacturer:	SAFRAN
ELT:	C126 installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	ARRIEL 2D
Registered Owner:	REACH AIR MEDICAL SERVICES LLC	Rated Power:	802 Horsepower
Operator:	REACH AIR MEDICAL SERVICES LLC	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	Commuter air carrier (135)

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Dusk
Observation Facility, Elevation:	KBAB,113 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	13 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:		Direction from Accident Site:	104°
Lowest Cloud Condition:		Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Overcast / 6000 ft AGL	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	7 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	None / None
Wind Direction:	130°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	N/A / N/A
Altimeter Setting:	29.77 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	9°C / 5°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Sacramento, CA (KMCC)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Redding, CA (KRDD)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	17:05 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class E

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	2 None	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:		Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	3 None	Latitude, Longitude:	39.176333,-121.69066

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Johnson, Scott
Additional Participating Persons:	Richard Scully; Federal Aviation Administration; Oakland, CA Matthew DeSeelhorst; Federal Aviation Administration; CA
Original Publish Date:	February 9, 2023
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class 4
Note:	The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=106456

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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](#).