



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) |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|

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 |

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is an independent federal agency charged by Congress with investigating every civil aviation accident in the United States and significant events in other modes of transportation—railroad, transit, highway, marine, pipeline, and commercial space. We determine the probable causes of the accidents and events we investigate, and issue safety recommendations aimed at preventing future occurrences. In addition, we conduct transportation safety research studies and offer information and other assistance to family members and survivors for each accident or event we investigate. We also serve as the appellate authority for enforcement actions involving aviation and mariner certificates issued by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and US Coast Guard, and we adjudicate appeals of civil penalty actions taken by the FAA.

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](#).