Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	STEPHENVILLE, Texas	**Accident Number:**	FTW00LA213
Date & Time:	July 14, 2000, 11:30 Local	**Registration:**	N99236
Aircraft:	Ercoupe 415-C	**Aircraft Damage:**	Substantial
Defining Event:		**Injuries:**	1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The pilot reported the airplane's right wing was struck by a 'buzzard' while in cruise flight. The 'buzzard' impacted the top of the leading edge on the outboard section of the wing damaging six wing ribs. The pilot reported that the damage affected the flight characteristics of the airplane. He was able to maintain control and landed the aircraft without further incident.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The collision with a bird while in cruise flight.

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH OBJECT
Phase of Operation: CRUISE

Findings
1. (C) OBJECT - BIRD(S)
2. EVASIVE MANEUVER - NOT POSSIBLE - PILOT IN COMMAND

Factual Information

On July 14, 2000, at 1130 central daylight time, an Ercoupe 415-C single-engine airplane, N99236, was substantially damaged as a result of a bird strike while in cruise flight near Stephenville, Texas. The airline transport pilot, sole occupant of the airplane, was uninjured. The airplane was owned and operated by the pilot and another private individual. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed for the 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 91 personal flight. The flight originated from Longview, Texas, at 0830, and was destined for Stephenville, Texas.

According to the pilot, approximately 20 miles east of Stephenville's Clark Field Municipal Airport, the airplane's right wing was struck by a "buzzard." The pilot reported that he observed the "buzzard" slightly above and to the right of his flight path. The "buzzard" dove into the airplane and the pilot was unable to avoid the collision. The "buzzard" impacted the top of the leading edge on the outboard section of the wing substantially damaging six consecutive wing ribs. The pilot added that the damage affected the flight characteristics of the airplane. The pilot was able to maintain control and landed the aircraft without further incident.

The pilot reported the sky was clear, the wind was from the southwest at 12-18 knots, and the temperature was approximately 87 degrees Fahrenheit.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Airline transport; Flight instructor	**Age:**	59,Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Multi-engine land	**Seat Occupied:**	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Helicopter	**Restraint Used:**	
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	**Second Pilot Present:**	No
Instructor Rating(s):	Airplane multi-engine; Airplane single-engine; Instrument airplane	**Toxicology Performed:**	No
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Valid Medical--w/ waivers/lim	**Last FAA Medical Exam:**	April 6, 2000
Occupational Pilot:	UNK	**Last Flight Review or Equivalent:**	
Flight Time:	5220 hours (Total, all aircraft), 52 hours (Total, this make and model), 4246 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 47 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 32 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 10 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Ercoupe	**Registration:**	N99236
Model/Series:	415-C 415-C	**Aircraft Category:**	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		**Amateur Built:**	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	**Serial Number:**	1859
Landing Gear Type:	Tricycle	**Seats:**	
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	April 17, 2000 Annual	**Certified Max Gross Wt.:**	
Time Since Last Inspection:		**Engines:**	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:		**Engine Manufacturer:**	Continental
ELT:	Installed, not activated	**Engine Model/Series:**	C-85-12
Registered Owner:	WILLIAM K. JOHNSON	**Rated Power:**	85 Horsepower
Operator:		**Operating Certificate(s) Held:**	None
Operator Does Business As:		**Operator Designator Code:**	

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	**Condition of Light:**	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:		**Distance from Accident Site:**	
Observation Time:		**Direction from Accident Site:**	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	**Visibility**	15 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	**Visibility (RVR):**	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	12 knots /	**Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:**	/
Wind Direction:	280°	**Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:**	/
Altimeter Setting:		**Temperature/Dew Point:**	31°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	LONGVIEW , TX (GGG)	**Type of Flight Plan Filed:**	None
Destination:	STEPHENVILLE , TX (SEP)	**Type of Clearance:**	None
Departure Time:	08:30 Local	**Type of Airspace:**	Class E

Airport Information

Airport:		**Runway Surface Type:**	
Airport Elevation:		**Runway Surface Condition:**	
Runway Used:	0	**IFR Approach:**	
Runway Length/Width:		**VFR Approach/Landing:**	

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	**Aircraft Damage:**	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:		**Aircraft Fire:**	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	**Aircraft Explosion:**	None
Total Injuries:	1 None	**Latitude, Longitude:**	32.20922,-98.209671(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Ragogna, Jason
Additional Participating Persons:	ARNOLD THORMEYER; FORT WORTH , TX
Original Publish Date:	March 2, 2001
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	The NTSB traveled to the scene of this accident.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=49731

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