



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Groveland, California	Accident Number:	LAX02LA048
Date & Time:	December 13, 2001, 17:55 Local	Registration:	N4328B
Aircraft:	Piper PA-32R-301T	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	3 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

During the pilot's dark nighttime landing flare on runway 09 at the uncontrolled airport, an unobserved deer crossed the active runway in front of the approaching airplane. The airplane's undercarriage impacted the deer, and the landing gear collapsed. Thereafter, the pilot lost control of the airplane as it veered off the runway coming to rest oriented 180 degrees from the landing direction. The Federal Aviation Administration's "Airport/Facility Directory" contained the following remark for the airport: "Be alert deer on and in vicinity of arpt...."

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's collision with an unobserved animal that entered the active runway during the dark nighttime when the pilot's visibility was diminished.

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH OBJECT
Phase of Operation: LANDING - FLARE/TOUCHDOWN

Findings

1. (C) OBJECT - ANIMAL(S)
 2. (F) LIGHT CONDITION - DARK NIGHT
 3. (C) VISUAL LOOKOUT - DIMINISHED - PILOT IN COMMAND
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Occurrence #2: LOSS OF CONTROL - ON GROUND/WATER
Phase of Operation: LANDING - FLARE/TOUCHDOWN

Findings

- 4. AIRCRAFT CONTROL - NOT POSSIBLE - PILOT IN COMMAND
- 5. GROUND LOOP/SWERVE - UNCONTROLLED - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #3: GEAR COLLAPSED
Phase of Operation: LANDING - FLARE/TOUCHDOWN

Findings

- 6. LANDING GEAR,MAIN GEAR - OVERLOAD

Factual Information

On December 13, 2001, about 1755 hours Pacific standard time, a Piper PA-32R-301T, N4328B, collided with a deer during landing flare at the Pine Mountain Lake (uncontrolled) Airport, Groveland, California. The airplane was substantially damaged. Neither the commercial certificated pilot nor the two passengers were injured during the nighttime flight. The airplane was operated by the pilot under 14 CFR Part 91. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed, and an instrument flight rules flight plan was filed. The personal flight originated from San Jose, California, about 1700.

The pilot indicated to the National Transportation Safety Board investigator that the runway lights were operating upon his arrival at Groveland. It was a dark night, and he did not observe any animals on or in the vicinity of runway 09. During landing flare, a deer crossed the runway in front of the airplane. The airplane's undercarriage impacted the deer, and the left main landing gear collapsed. Thereafter, the pilot lost control of the airplane. The airplane came to rest in an upright attitude on airport property, oriented 180 degrees from the landing direction. There was no fire.

The Federal Aviation Administration's "Airport/Facility Directory" contains the following remarks regarding the presence of animals at the airport: "Be alert deer on and in vicinity of arpt...."

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	44, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	Yes
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 3 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	May 16, 2001
Occupational Pilot:	UNK	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	April 1, 2001
Flight Time:	544 hours (Total, all aircraft), 113 hours (Total, this make and model), 398 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 37 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 5 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N4328B
Model/Series:	PA-32R-301T	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	32R-8429003
Landing Gear Type:	Tricycle	Seats:	6
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	September 6, 2001 100 hour	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	3600 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	27 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	3808 Hrs at time of accident	Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
ELT:	Installed, activated, did not aid in locating accident	Engine Model/Series:	TIO-540-S1AD
Registered Owner:	TAT Aviation, Inc.	Rated Power:	300 Horsepower
Operator:	Silvano Gai	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Night/dark
Observation Facility, Elevation:	MOD,97 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	39 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	17:53 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	230°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	4 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	/	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:		Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30.15 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	9°C / 4°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	San Jose, CA (SJC)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	IFR
Destination:	(Q68)	Type of Clearance:	IFR
Departure Time:	17:00 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:	Pine Mountain Lake Q68	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:	2930 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	09	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	3625 ft / 50 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	Full stop

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	2 None	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	3 None	Latitude, Longitude:	37.861667,-120.17778

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Pollack, Wayne
Additional Participating Persons:	Douglas Kredit; WP-FSDO; Fresno, CA
Original Publish Date:	October 23, 2002
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=53922

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](#).