



AVIATION



HIGHWAY



MARINE



RAILROAD



PIPELINE

Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Kodiak, Alaska	Accident Number:	ANC16LA062
Date & Time:	September 9, 2016, 11:30 Local	Registration:	N91AK
Aircraft:	DEHAVILLAND DHC-2	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Loss of control in flight	Injuries:	3 Serious
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 135: Air taxi & commuter - Scheduled		

Analysis

The airline transport pilot was conducting a scheduled commuter flight between remote villages in a float-equipped airplane. After making an intermediate stop to drop off a company maintenance technician at a remote lake, the pilot back-taxied the airplane to the east in preparation for a westerly departure. He estimated the wind at 15 knots with increasing gusts to 25 knots from the west. Ground witnesses and passengers on board the airplane reported that the pilot initiated a takeoff to the west, toward an area of rising, tree-covered terrain. After becoming airborne, the airplane entered a left turn to avoid the terrain. The left turn steepened, and the airplane then entered a steep nose-down descent into the terrain. The pilot reported that he did not recall any preaccident mechanical problems with the airplane. Due to his injuries, he was unable to recall the events of the accident.

Postaccident examination revealed no mechanical malfunctions or anomalies of the airplane. Given the witness accounts of the accident, it is likely that the pilot exceeded the airplane's critical angle of attack during the initial climb toward and subsequent turn away from rising terrain, which resulted in an aerodynamic stall and loss of control at an altitude too low for recovery.

Probable Cause and Findings

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

The pilot's failure to maintain adequate airspeed during the initial climb and turn after takeoff, which resulted in an exceedance of the airplane's critical angle of attack and an aerodynamic stall.

Findings

Personnel issues	Aircraft control - Pilot
Aircraft	Airspeed - Not attained/maintained
Aircraft	Angle of attack - Not attained/maintained
Environmental issues	Mountainous/hilly terrain - Contributed to outcome

Factual Information

History of Flight

Initial climb	Loss of control in flight (Defining event)
Uncontrolled descent	Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT)

On September 9, 2016, about 1130 Alaska daylight time, a float-equipped, de Havilland DHC-2 (Beaver) airplane, N91AK, sustained substantial damage during a collision with water, following a loss of control shortly after takeoff from Uganik Lake, about 35 miles west-southwest of Kodiak, Alaska. The airplane was registered to Redemption, Inc., and operated as Flight 43 by Island Air, as a visual flight rules (VFR) scheduled commuter flight under the provisions of *14 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 135*. Of the three occupants onboard, the airline transport pilot and two passengers all sustained serious injuries. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed, and company flight following procedures were in effect. Flight 43 originated in Kodiak about 1100, with a preplanned, intermediate stop at Uganik Lake, before continuing to the flights scheduled stops in Amook Bay and Zachar Bay, Alaska.

According to the operator's director of maintenance the purpose for the intermediate stop at Uganik Lake was to drop off a maintenance technician. He added that another company owned a Cessna 185 that had landed at Uganik Lake earlier in the day and damaged a float, and the maintenance technician was called in to inspect the float prior to the airplane returning to Kodiak. He said that after landing, the accident pilot met the crew of the Cessna 185 on the western shore of Uganik Lake, where he dropped off the maintenance technician, and then he departed for Amook Bay.

Witnesses reported seeing the accident airplane back-taxi to the east before it eventually turned around to start the takeoff run to the west, and towards an area of rising, tree-covered terrain. The witnesses consistently reported that after the airplane became airborne, it began a left turn to avoid the rising terrain ahead. As the airplane flew closer to the rising terrain, the left turn steepened, and the airplane began a steep nose down descent. The airplane subsequently struck the shallow waters on the western end of Uganik Lake, and it came to rest partially submerged. The airplane sustained substantial damage to the wings and fuselage.

The witnesses to the accident reported gusty wind conditions, from the west, estimated to be between 15 to 25 knots.

Due to injuries sustained in the accident, the pilot did not recall the accident sequence; however, he did remember back-taxiing the airplane to the east for a westerly departure. He also recalled variable wind conditions, estimated to be 15 knots, with increasing gusts to 25 knots from the west. The pilot stated that to the best of his knowledge there were no preimpact mechanical anomalies with the airplane.

One of the two passengers reported that he was seated in the right front seat, and his wife was seated just behind the pilot on the left side of the airplane. He added that water conditions consisted of 8 to 12

inches of chop on the surface of the water as the pilot started his westerly takeoff run. He said that just after takeoff, the airplane climbed slower than what he was accustomed to from previous flights. He added that as the airplane continued to climb, he could see an area of rising terrain ahead of them. As the airplane approached the area of rising terrain, he said that the pilot turned the airplane very steeply to the left, and then the airplane nosed down abruptly and then began a nosed down, uncontrolled descent into the shallow water below.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

At the time of the accident, the pilot was using a Garmin GPSMAP 496 portable global positioning system (GPS) receiver, capable of storing route-of-flight data. The GPS data logs for September 9, 2016 supported the pilots, passengers, and witness accounts of the accident.

A flight track map overlay, and tabular data corresponding to the accident flight are available in the public docket for this accident.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Airline transport	Age:	31, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Single-engine sea; Multi-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	4-point
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	Airplane single-engine	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 1 Without waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	May 6, 2016
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	April 4, 2016
Flight Time:	3262 hours (Total, all aircraft), 364 hours (Total, this make and model), 243 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 82 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 4 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	DEHAVILLAND	Registration:	N91AK
Model/Series:	DHC-2	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:	1954	Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	737
Landing Gear Type:	N/A; Float	Seats:	
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	August 24, 2016 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	26114 Hrs as of last inspection	Engine Manufacturer:	Pratt & Whitney
ELT:	C126 installed, activated, did not aid in locating accident	Engine Model/Series:	R985
Registered Owner:	REDEMPTION INC DBA	Rated Power:	450 Horsepower
Operator:	Island Air	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	On-demand air taxi (135)

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	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	15 knots / 25 knots	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	270°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:		Temperature/Dew Point:	
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Kodiak, AK	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	Company VFR
Destination:	AMOOK BAY, AK (AK81)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:		Type of Airspace:	

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Serious	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	2 Serious	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	3 Serious	Latitude, Longitude:	57.660556,-153.318893

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Johnson, Clinton
Additional Participating Persons:	Thomas Tilson ; Federal Aviation Administration; Juneau, AK
Original Publish Date:	December 3, 2020
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class 3
Note:	The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=93982

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](#).