



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	La Paloma, Texas	Accident Number:	GAA18CA034
Date & Time:	October 26, 2017, 08:40 Local	Registration:	N22TZ
Aircraft:	Airbus Helicopters EC 130	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Miscellaneous/other	Injuries:	3 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Air drop		

Analysis

According to the pilot in the public helicopter, he was conducting a wildlife antipredation flight and maneuvering at a low altitude with two net gunners located on the left and right in the aft cabin. The pilot reported that he entered a left bank to pursue a deer. The deer was located "between our 8 and 9 o'clock position, and the net gunner made the net shot at the deer." The pilot observed the net miss the deer and simultaneously heard an unusual "whooshing noise" coming from the helicopter. He made a precautionary landing, and during the shutdown, he noticed what he described as an unusual discoloration of the main rotor disc.

Examination of the main rotor blades revealed that one of the blades had a large hole in it, about 5 ft from the blade tip. The net that was fired at the deer was recovered and was found to be missing one of the weights that are normally attached to the net's corners.

The helicopter sustained substantial damage to a main rotor blade.

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:

The separation of a weight from the gunner's net, which struck the helicopter's main rotor blade during flight.

Findings

Environmental issues

Debris/dirt/foreign object - Effect on operation

Environmental issues

Positioning/available space - Contributed to outcome

Factual Information

History of Flight

Maneuvering-low-alt flying	Miscellaneous/other (Defining event)
Maneuvering-low-alt flying	Part(s) separation from AC

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Airline transport; Commercial; Flight instructor	Age:	51, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Multi-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Helicopter	Restraint Used:	4-point
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane; Helicopter	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	Airplane multi-engine; Airplane single-engine; Helicopter; Instrument airplane; Instrument helicopter	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 1 With waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	June 20, 2017
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	July 20, 2017
Flight Time:	(Estimated) 8411 hours (Total, all aircraft), 344 hours (Total, this make and model), 8243 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 75 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 9 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

Passenger Information

Certificate:	Age:	Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Seat Occupied:	Right
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Restraint Used:	4-point
Instrument Rating(s):	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Last FAA Medical Exam:	
Occupational Pilot:	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:		

Passenger Information

Certificate:	Age:	Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Restraint Used:	4-point
Instrument Rating(s):	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Last FAA Medical Exam:	
Occupational Pilot:	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Airbus Helicopters	Registration:	N22TZ
Model/Series:	EC 130 T2	Aircraft Category:	Helicopter
Year of Manufacture:	2014	Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal; Restricted (Special)	Serial Number:	8016
Landing Gear Type:	Skid	Seats:	3
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	October 11, 2017 Unknown	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	5351 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Turbo shaft
Airframe Total Time:	585.1 Hrs as of last inspection	Engine Manufacturer:	Safran Helicopter Engines
ELT:	C126 installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	Arriel 2D
Registered Owner:	KESTREL HOLDINGS LLC	Rated Power:	952
Operator:	Richardson Aviation	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	KNQI, 58 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	24 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	01:56 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	20°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	11 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/ None
Wind Direction:	150°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/ N/A
Altimeter Setting:	29.8 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	22°C / 17°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Riviera, TX	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Riviera, TX	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	08:10 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	3 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	3 None	Latitude, Longitude:	27.129999,-97.970001(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Hicks, Michael
Additional Participating Persons:	Jeffrey Burns; FAA; San Antonio, TX
Original Publish Date:	May 14, 2018
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	This accident report documents the factual circumstances of this accident as described to the NTSB.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=96271

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](#).