



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Atmautluak, Alaska	Accident Number:	GAA19CA174
Date & Time:	March 21, 2019, 09:45 Local	Registration:	N5544F
Aircraft:	Piper PA32R	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT)	Injuries:	5 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 135: Air taxi & commuter - Scheduled		

Analysis

The pilot reported that, while taxiing to the runway for departure, he felt a "large bump." The pilot immediately shut down the engine and inspected the airplane. He identified damage to the right wing and landing gear.

The pilot further reported that he inspected the taxiway after he saw the airplane's damage and noted that the large bump he felt was due to the right landing gear's encounter with a snow-covered pothole.

The airplane sustained substantial damage to the right wing.

The pilot reported that there were no preaccident mechanical failures or malfunctions with the airplane 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 airplane's encounter with a snow-covered pothole during taxi.

Findings

Environmental issues	Hidden/submerged object - Effect on operation
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Factual Information

History of Flight

Taxi-to runway	Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT) (Defining event)
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Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	47,Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	3-point
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Without waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	June 13, 2018
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	October 13, 2018
Flight Time:	(Estimated) 1183.9 hours (Total, all aircraft), 458.8 hours (Total, this make and model), 1153.9 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 250 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 125 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 6 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N5544F
Model/Series:	PA32R 300	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:	1976	Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	32R-7780014
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	Seats:	6
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	February 28, 2019 100 hour	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	3600 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	2421.8 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
ELT:	Not installed	Engine Model/Series:	TIO-540-SER
Registered Owner:		Rated Power:	300 Horsepower
Operator:		Operating Certificate(s) Held:	On-demand air taxi (135)

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Unknown	Condition of Light:	Not reported
Observation Facility, Elevation:	PABE,102 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	14 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	17:53 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	110°
Lowest Cloud Condition:		Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Broken / 5000 ft AGL	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	6 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	30°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	29.29 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	-2°C / -3°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Bethel, AK (BET)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	Unknown
Destination:	Atmautluak, AK (4A2)	Type of Clearance:	Unknown
Departure Time:		Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:	Atmautluak 4A2	Runway Surface Type:	Gravel
Airport Elevation:	19 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Holes;Rough;Snow
Runway Used:	33	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	3000 ft / 75 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	None

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	4 None	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	5 None	Latitude, Longitude:	60.863887,-162.273895(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Gutierrez, Eric
Additional Participating Persons:	James Watson; FAA; Fairbanks, AK
Original Publish Date:	November 6, 2019
Note:	This accident report documents the factual circumstances of this accident as described to the NTSB.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=99150

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), established in 1967, is an independent federal agency mandated by Congress through the Independent Safety Board Act of 1974 to investigate transportation accidents, determine the probable causes of the accidents, issue safety recommendations, study transportation safety issues, and evaluate the safety effectiveness of government agencies involved in transportation. The NTSB makes public its actions and decisions through accident reports, safety studies, special investigation reports, safety recommendations, and statistical reviews.

The Independent Safety Board Act, as codified at 49 U.S.C. Section 1154(b), precludes the admission into evidence or use of any part of an NTSB report related to an incident or accident in a civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report. A factual report that may be admissible under 49 U.S.C. § 1154(b) is available [here](#).