



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Dodge Center, Minnesota	Accident Number:	CEN24LA053
Date & Time:	November 21, 2023, 21:00 Local	Registration:	N423NM
Aircraft:	AIRBUS HELICOPTERS DEUTSCHLAND EC135T3	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Birdstrike	Injuries:	2 Minor, 1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Positioning		

Analysis

During a dark night flight in visual meteorological conditions, an emergency medical services helicopter collided with a flock of birds about 1,100 ft above ground level. The impact shattered the windscreen and caused what the pilot described as an explosion. Despite the damage, the pilot was able to stabilize the helicopter and head towards the nearest airport, about 7.5 miles away. The helicopter landed without further incident. A post-accident examination revealed substantial damage to the main rotor blades in the pitch control cuff area and the monocoque structure of the fantail.

Probable Cause and Findings

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

An in-flight collision with a flock of birds.

Findings

Environmental issues	Animal(s)/bird(s) - Ability to respond/compensate
Environmental issues	Animal(s)/bird(s) - Effect on equipment

Factual Information

History of Flight

Enroute	Birdstrike (Defining event)
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Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial; Flight instructor	Age:	28,Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine sea	Seat Occupied:	Right
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Helicopter	Restraint Used:	5-point
Instrument Rating(s):	Helicopter	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	Instrument helicopter	Toxicology Performed:	
Medical Certification:	Class 1 None	Last FAA Medical Exam:	March 12, 2023
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	May 18, 2023
Flight Time:	2124 hours (Total, all aircraft), 80 hours (Total, this make and model), 37 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 12 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 1 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	AIRBUS HELICOPTERS DEUTSCHLAND	Registration:	N423NM
Model/Series:	EC135T3	Aircraft Category:	Helicopter
Year of Manufacture:	2022	Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	2193
Landing Gear Type:	High skid	Seats:	6
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	October 10, 2023 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	6570 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	23 Hrs	Engines:	2 Turbo shaft
Airframe Total Time:	420 Hrs at time of accident	Engine Manufacturer:	SAFRAN
ELT:	C126 installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	Arrius 2B2
Registered Owner:	On file	Rated Power:	643 Horsepower
Operator:	On file	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	On-demand air taxi (135)

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Night
Observation Facility, Elevation:	KTOB, 1317 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	4 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	20:55 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	327°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	11 knots / 16 knots	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	None / None
Wind Direction:	310°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	N/A / N/A
Altimeter Setting:	30.1 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	-2°C / -4°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Rochester, MN (99MN)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	Company VFR
Destination:	Fairbault, MN (FBL)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	20:51 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class E

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	2 Minor, 1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:		Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 Minor, 1 None	Latitude, Longitude:	44.009,-92.734(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Lemishko, Alexander
Additional Participating Persons:	Jason Dunn; FAA FSDO; Minneapolis, MN
Original Publish Date:	April 12, 2024
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class 4
Note:	The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=193462

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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](#).