



# Aviation Investigation Final Report

<b>Location:</b>	Dodge Center, Minnesota	<b>Accident Number:</b>	CEN24LA053
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	November 21, 2023, 21:00 Local	<b>Registration:</b>	N423NM
<b>Aircraft:</b>	AIRBUS HELICOPTERS DEUTSCHLAND EC135T3	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Defining Event:</b>	Birdstrike	<b>Injuries:</b>	2 Minor, 1 None
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	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 windshield 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

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



## Factual Information

### History of Flight

<b>Enroute</b>	Birdstrike (Defining event)
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### Pilot Information

<b>Certificate:</b>	Commercial; Flight instructor	<b>Age:</b>	28, Male
<b>Airplane Rating(s):</b>	Single-engine sea	<b>Seat Occupied:</b>	Right
<b>Other Aircraft Rating(s):</b>	Helicopter	<b>Restraint Used:</b>	5-point
<b>Instrument Rating(s):</b>	Helicopter	<b>Second Pilot Present:</b>	No
<b>Instructor Rating(s):</b>	Instrument helicopter	<b>Toxicology Performed:</b>	
<b>Medical Certification:</b>	Class 1 None	<b>Last FAA Medical Exam:</b>	March 12, 2023
<b>Occupational Pilot:</b>	Yes	<b>Last Flight Review or Equivalent:</b>	May 18, 2023
<b>Flight Time:</b>	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

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

## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

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

## Wreckage and Impact Information

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

## Administrative Information

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

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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](#).