



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

Location:	Ketchikan, AK	Accident Number:	ANC12LA026
Date & Time:	03/13/2012, 1040 AKD	Registration:	N82SF
Aircraft:	DEHAVILLAND BEAVER DHC-2	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Controlled flight into terr/obj (CFIT)	Injuries:	1 Serious, 1 Minor
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 135: Air Taxi & Commuter - Non-scheduled		

Analysis

The pilot departed from an off-airport site in marginal visual flight rules conditions. Shortly after departure, the weather worsened, and flight visibility dropped to near zero in heavy snow. He attempted to follow the shoreline at a low altitude but was unable to maintain visual contact with the ground. He stated that he saw trees immediately in front of the airplane and attempted a right turn toward what he thought was an open bay. During the turn, the right float contacted a rock outcrop, and the airplane impacted the water. The pilot did not report any mechanical anomalies 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 pilot's decision to depart in marginal visual meteorological conditions, and his continued visual flight into instrument meteorological conditions.

Findings

Personnel issues	Decision making/judgment - Pilot (Cause)
Environmental issues	Below VFR minima - Contributed to outcome

Factual Information

On March 13, 2012, about 1040 Alaska daylight time, a float-equipped de Havilland DHC-2 (Beaver) airplane, N82SF, collided with water and terrain approximately 23 miles southwest of Ketchikan, Alaska. The airplane was being operated by Southeast Aviation, Ketchikan, as a visual flight rules on-demand charter flight under 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 135. The pilot sustained serious injuries and the sole passenger sustained minor injuries. Marginal visual meteorological conditions were reported at the time of departure, and company flight following procedures were in effect. The airplane departed the Niblack mine site, bound for Ketchikan, about 1033.

After the airplane failed to arrive in Ketchikan, company personnel initiated a search to see if the airplane had diverted due to weather. A worker stationed at the mine where the airplane departed from initiated a search by boat to try and locate the airplane. He found the airplane partially submerged in a cove, approximately 1.5 miles from the departure point, and picked up the pilot and passenger, who had evacuated the airplane.

During a telephone conversation with the NTSB investigator-in-charge on March 22, the pilot reported that he was departing from the Niblack mine site in marginal weather conditions. Shortly after departure, the weather worsened, and flight visibility dropped to near zero in heavy snow. He attempted to follow the shoreline at low altitude, but was unable to maintain visual contact with the ground. He then stated that he saw trees immediately in front of the airplane, and attempted a right turn toward what he thought was an open bay. During the turn, the right float contacted a rock outcrop, and the airplane impacted the water. The airplane sustained substantial damage to the wings, fuselage, and the horizontal stabilizer.

The closest weather reporting facility is the Ketchikan International Airport (PAKT), approximately 23 miles northeast of the accident site. At 1042, approximately the same time as the accident, a special Aviation Routine Weather Report (METAR) was reporting, in part: Wind 150 degrees (true) at 9 knots; visibility 2.5 statute miles; light snow; sky condition, few clouds at 1,600 feet, broken clouds at 2,800 feet, overcast at 3,700 feet; temperature, 36 degrees F; dew point, 27 degrees F; altimeter, 29.21 in Hg.

About 16 minutes after the accident, at 1056, another special METAR reported conditions at Ketchikan as; Wind, 140 degrees at 15 knots, gusting to 21 knots; visibility, 1.5 statute miles; light snow; sky condition, broken 2,000 feet, overcast 2,800 feet.

History of Flight

Enroute	VFR encounter with IMC
Maneuvering	Controlled flight into terr/obj (CFIT) (Defining event)

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Airline Transport	Age:	64, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land; Single-engine Sea	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	Seatbelt, Shoulder harness
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	
Medical Certification:	Class 2 With Waivers/Limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	03/09/2012
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	05/05/2011
Flight Time:	23000 hours (Total, all aircraft), 12000 hours (Total, this make and model)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	DEHAVILLAND	Registration:	N82SF
Model/Series:	BEAVER DHC-2	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	No
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	839
Landing Gear Type:	Float	Seats:	8
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	01/30/2012, Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	17574 Hours as of last inspection	Engine Manufacturer:	P&W
ELT:	C91A installed, activated, aided in locating accident	Engine Model/Series:	R-985 SERIES
Registered Owner:	SNOW MOUNTAIN ENTERPRISES LLC	Rated Power:	450 hp
Operator:	Southeast Aviation, LLC	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	On-demand Air Taxi (135)

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Instrument Conditions	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	PAKT	Distance from Accident Site:	23 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	1042 ADT	Direction from Accident Site:	30°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Few / 1600 ft agl	Visibility	2 Miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Broken / 2800 ft agl	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	9 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	150°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	29.21 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	2° C / -3° C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	Light - Snow		
Departure Point:	Ketchikan, AK	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	VFR
Destination:	Ketchikan, AK (PAKT)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	1035 ADT	Type of Airspace:	

Airport Information

Airport:		Runway Surface Type:	
Airport Elevation:		Runway Surface Condition:	
Runway Used:	N/A	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:		VFR Approach/Landing:	None

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Serious	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 Minor	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	
Total Injuries:	1 Serious, 1 Minor	Latitude, Longitude:	55.055556, -132.103333 (est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Christopher R Shaver	Report Date:	10/09/2012
Additional Participating Persons:	Troy McClanahan; FAA Juneau FSDO; Juneau, AK		
Publish Date:	10/09/2012		
Investigation Docket:	http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/search/dockList.cfm?mKey=83129		

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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](#).