



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Data Summary

Location:	Laurel, MT	Accident Number:	SEA04LA077
Date & Time:	05/01/2004, 1245 MDT	Registration:	N5483H
Aircraft:	Piper PA-18-105	Injuries:	2 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The pilot reported that he and his wife were sightseeing along the Yellowstone River just south of Laurel, Montana, when he spotted what he described as unusual animal tracks on a gravel sand bar adjacent to the river. He applied one notch of flaps and executed a 180 degree course reversal for a "low and slow look." The aircraft subsequently struck the water and nosed over. The pilot reported that there was no mechanical malfunction or failure with the aircraft or its powerplant/systems.

Probable Cause

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's failure to maintain adequate clearance/altitude while maneuvering resulting in the inadvertent in-flight collision with water/terrain.

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: MANEUVERING

Findings

1. TERRAIN CONDITION - WATER
2. (C) ALTITUDE/CLEARANCE - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	48
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine Land	Instrument Rating(s):	None
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Instructor Rating(s):	None
Flight Time:	903 hours (Total, all aircraft), 13 hours (Total, this make and model), 903 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 76 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 26 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N5483H
Model/Series:	PA-18-105	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Operator:	Harmon, Thomas M.	Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None	Engine Model/Series:	O-360-C2A
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual Conditions	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	BIL, 3649 ft msl	Weather Information Source:	Weather Observation Facility
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	3 knots / , Variable
Temperature:	16 °C	Visibility	10 Miles
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	Billings, MT (BIL)	Destination:	

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Latitude, Longitude:	45.635833, -108.791667		

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Steven A McCreary	Adopted Date:	09/29/2004
Investigation Docket:	NTSB accident and incident dockets serve as permanent archival information for the NTSB's investigations. Dockets released prior to June 1, 2009 are publicly available from the NTSB's Record Management Division at pubinq@ntsb.gov , or at 800-877-6799. Dockets released after this date are available at http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/ .		

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.