



HSAC-RP

No. 2010-3 REV 1

12 May 2010

HELICOPTER SAFETY ADVISORY CONFERENCE-RECOMMENDED PRACTICE

Bird Strike Avoidance

Background

Statistical data shows an increase in bird activity within North America. This increase cannot be fully explained, however this does increase the overall risk of possible helicopter and airplane bird strikes. Much the data listed below was obtained from Bird Strikes to Civil Helicopters in the US, Dolbeer, Wright and Cleary, US Dept of Agriculture, Wildlife Services – 2006.

Recommended Practice

1. Pilot awareness training is highly recommended for bird avoidance techniques and should be completed on initial training with re-currency annually.
2. Pilot incapacitation should be considered on all single pilot flight activities. Consideration should be given to adding additional pilots, or requiring the use of eye protection, or helmets with visors down.
3. For every 1000' of altitude a pilot climbs, there is a significant reduction in bird activity. Therefore, pilots should fly at the highest altitudes possible when environmental conditions allow.
4. Pilots and operators are encouraged to develop an active bird strike reporting system to assist in the development of improved statistical data. This data should also be reported to the FAA.
5. The majority of helicopter bird strikes occur on the windshield.
6. The majority of most bird strikes occur at altitudes between 1000'-2000'.
7. The bird population in the U.S appears to be increasing requiring greater diligence by pilots for avoidance.

Recommended Procedures (RP's) are published under the direction of the Helicopter Safety Advisory Conference (HSAC), P.O. Box 60220, Houston TX. 77205 as a medium for discussion of Gulf of Mexico aviation operational safety, pertinent to the energy exploration and production industry. RP's are not intended to replace individual engineering or corporate judgment nor to replace instructions in company manuals or government regulations. Suggestions for subject matter are cordially invited.

8. Altitude is your friend and an expeditious climb to cruising altitude should be completed at best rate of climb.
9. Departure from cruising altitude for landing should be completed as late as possible to avoid flying low level for any extended period of time.
10. While flying at lower altitudes an airspeed reduction should be considered to allow greater reaction time for the pilots and birds.
11. The use of pulse lights and or landing lights is recommended when operating in the vicinity of bird activity.

Note: Flights above 5000' AGL offer improved success rate for bird avoidance.