



Aviation Investigation Preliminary Report

Location:	Kaparuk, AK	Accident Number:	ANC25FA044
Date & Time:	June 4, 2025, 10:55 Local	Registration:	N962MD
Aircraft:	ROBINSON HELICOPTER CO R66	Injuries:	2 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 135: Air taxi & commuter - Scheduled		

On June 4, 2025 about 1055 Alaska daylight time, a Robinson R66 turbine-powered helicopter, N962MD, was substantially damaged when it was involved in an accident near Kaparuk, Alaska. The pilot and passenger were fatally injured. The helicopter was operated as a Title 14 *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 135 on-demand charter flight.

The helicopter was operated by Pollux Aviation, Wasilla, Alaska, and according to the director of operations, the flight was part of a contract conducting bird research. The purpose of the flight was to scout conditions in the local area, and the next day they planned to relocate to a remote work camp within the North Slope region for three weeks. The pilot was new to the company and flew from Wasilla to Deadhorse Airport (PASC), Deadhorse, Alaska, the day before the accident. The accident flight was his first flight on the North Slope with a passenger.

The Alaskan North Slope is bounded on the north by the Beaufort Sea and runs from the Canadian border to the maritime boundary with Russia in the west. The North Slope region includes a portion of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) and National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska (NPRA).

Weather conditions at PASC when the accident helicopter departed were reported to be, in part: wind 080° at 6 knots; visibility 10 statute miles; overcast ceiling of 500 feet. The pilot received a weather briefing prior to departure.

According to archived Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) communication data, prior to departure, the accident pilot contacted the Deadhorse Flight Service Station (SCC FSS) specialist on-duty to request a special visual flight rules (SVFR) clearance to depart to the west. The specialist on duty issued the pilot a SVFR clearance and instructed him to report clear of the Class E airspace to the west. The helicopter then departed to the west.

When the helicopter was about 15 miles west of PASC, the pilot informed the SCC FSS specialist that the helicopter was clear of the airport environment to the west.

No further radio contact was received from the accident helicopter.

According to archived automatic dependent surveillance-broadcast (ADS-B) data, after the helicopter departed PASC, it proceeded west to an area about 25 miles away, and the altitude ranged from about 300 to 600 ft mean sea level (msl). The data ends at an altitude of 575 ft msl, and during a left turn to the southwest.

After an emergency locator transmitter (ELT) signal was received and attempts to reach the crew were unsuccessful, a North Slope Borough (NSB) Search and Rescue Sikorsky S-92 helicopter was dispatched from Utqiagvik (formerly Barrow), Alaska to search for the helicopter. NSB search and rescue crews found the helicopter wreckage about 25 miles west of Deadhorse in an area of flat, snow-covered, featureless terrain. See figure 1.

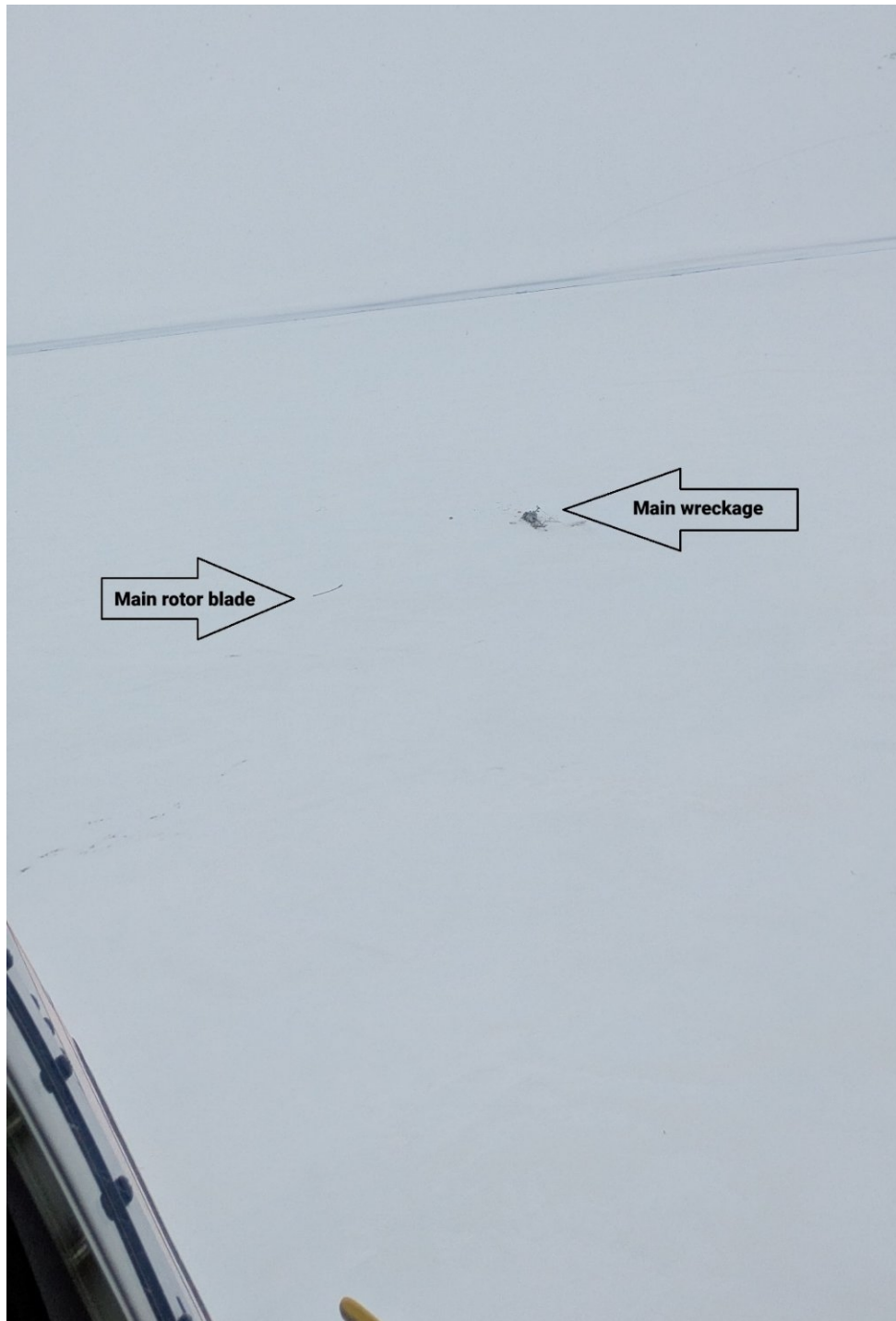


Figure 1. View of the wreckage from the search and rescue helicopter.

A review of preliminary weather data revealed conditions, about two miles from the accident site were 500 ft overcast, and 10 statute miles visibility.

On June 5, an investigator from the National Transportation Safety Board's (NTSB) Alaska Regional Office traveled to Deadhorse, but travel to the accident site by helicopter was delayed

due to poor weather conditions until June 7. Once on scene, the NTSB investigator documented the helicopter wreckage before recovery efforts began.

An initial examination of the helicopter wreckage revealed that all the helicopter's components were found at the accident site. The main wreckage came to rest about 11 feet from the initial impact point, and it showed significant down-stroking impact damage. One main rotor blade was found about 140 ft to the left of the main wreckage, and the other main rotor blade remained attached to the helicopter's main rotor hub. See figure 2



Figure 2. View of the wreckage at the accident site.

Continuous poor weather conditions delayed the wreckage recovery until June 9. The wreckage was initially slung by helicopter to PASC, then transported to Anchorage for further examination and testing. A detailed wreckage examination is pending.

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	ROBINSON HELICOPTER CO	Registration:	N962MD
Model/Series:	R66	Aircraft Category:	Helicopter
Amateur Built:			
Operator:	Pollux Aviation	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	On-demand air taxi (135)
Operator Designator Code:			

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	IMC	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	AKU,67 ft msl	Observation Time:	10:45 Local
Distance from Accident Site:	9 Nautical Miles	Temperature/Dew Point:	-6°C /-7°C
Lowest Cloud Condition:		Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	7 knots / None, 70°
Lowest Ceiling:	Overcast / 500 ft AGL	Visibility:	10 miles
Altimeter Setting:	29.91 inches Hg	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	CVFR
Departure Point:	Deadhorse, AK (SCC)	Destination:	Deadhorse, AK (SCC)

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:		Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 Fatal	Latitude, Longitude:	70.1855,-149.53866 (est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Hill, Millicent
Additional Participating Persons:	Christopher Farnell; FAA/FSDO; Fairbanks, AK Thom Webster; Robinson; Torrance, CA Nicholas Shepler; Rolls Royce
Investigation Class:	Class 3
Note:	