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Date: October 28, 2022 - May 26, 2023

Subject: ERA23LA044

Contact: Bill Collier - Pilot/Owner

In a telephone conversation, Mr. Collier stated the following:

- There was a vibration in the helicopter.
- I was flying along at 700 ft mean sea level, I reduced the power, moved the collective up and down to see where the vibration was coming from.
- I decided to do an autorotation and put it down in the marsh right there.
- My passenger and I were talking about thermals in the area. There were birds, and I dove to miss a bird, and then we got the vibration in the helicopter.
- We put new blades on it 60-70 hours ago. I spent 6-7 hours tuning the blades in.
- I went flying in the helicopter the previous Saturday - I spent a good amount of time flying.
- During the autorotation, I flared a little too soon - bled off speed.
- The helicopter got into the reeds and turned it on the side.
- The purpose of the flight was two old men flying up to Wintergarden. We had a great meal, got a prop from the prop shop there. Had lunch, topped off fuel, got some oil, then departed back to X36.

- When we flew over to Wintergarden the helicopter was fine. I did the walk around, and everything looked fine for the preflight.
- Everything looked good. I didn't see anything out of normal.
- The vibration came in - it all happened so rapidly. I don't know if the vibration was engine or rotor related.
- The passenger was talking about thermals - we saw birds so I moved to the right for a couple of them, not long after that was when the vibration.
- I don't know if I hit a bird, but the vibration happened right after that.
- When the helicopter rolled on the ground, the blades became wrinkled and damaged.
- I was thinking it was drive train vibration issue - not engine.
- I went into a full auto, when I pulled the engine power back it.
- The maintenance logs are in Maryland - I flew the helicopter down to Florida a couple weeks ago.

In an email on December 2, 2022, Mr. Collier stated the following:

When asked if he saw any organic bird material on the tail rotor, he stated: *"Just thinking about it it may not have much on it as it was laying in about 2 feet of water. But one tail blade has a pretty good dent in it."*

In an email on May 26, 2023, Mr. Collier stated the following:

When asked if there were any other issues with the helicopter noted with the repairs, he stated *"The mechanic did not find any other issues, looks like it was a bird strike to the tail rotor blades."*