

ACCIDENT

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Reims Cessna FA152 Aerobat, G-MPBH	
No & Type of Engines:	1 Lycoming O-235-L2C piston engine	
Year of Manufacture:	1981	
Date & Time (UTC):	28 April 2012 at 0921 hrs	
Location:	11 nm south-west of RAF Kinloss	
Type of Flight:	Private	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1	Passengers - 1
Injuries:	Crew - None	Passengers - None
Nature of Damage:	Substantial damage to propeller, nose leg and left wing	
Commander's Licence:	National Private Pilot's Licence	
Commander's Age:	51 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	97 hours (of which 51 were on type) Last 90 days - 6 hours Last 28 days - 2 hours	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot	

Synopsis

The pilot carried out a bird avoidance manoeuvre, during which he closed the throttle. When the throttle was opened again the engine did not respond. Restart attempts were not successful and the pilot carried out a forced landing. Although the aircraft sustained damage, neither aircraft occupant was injured.

History of the flight

The pilot arrived at his RAF Kinloss-based flying club at about 0800 hrs and completed a daily inspection of the aircraft. An inspection of fuel samples revealed no abnormalities. The aircraft took off at 0835 hrs with the pilot and a passenger on board for a local flight. The pilot flew along the coast for a short while before turning inland and setting course for Aviemore, about

30 nm to the south-west. He contacted Inverness ATC to advise them of his intentions.

As the aircraft flew towards higher terrain, the pilot became concerned about cloud on the intended track, so decided to return to RAF Kinloss. Soon after turning back, he suddenly became aware of two birds in front of the aircraft. He pulled back sharply on the control wheel to avoid them, but then realised the aircraft was getting close to the cloud base. He reduced power and lowered the nose again to descend into clearer air.

When the pilot attempted to reapply power to level the aircraft, there was no engine response to throttle movement. A restart attempt was made without

success. He made a brief MAYDAY call to Inverness ATC and selected a field for an emergency landing, but it became apparent too late that the field had a steep downhill slope, with a steeper drop at its end. The pilot was unable to bring the aircraft to a stop before over-running the field and descending down the steep drop.

The aircraft sustained damage to the nose leg, propeller and engine area forward of the firewall. The left wing also sustained damage and there was a fuel leak. However, there was only minor damage to the cabin area and both occupants, who were wearing full harnesses and were uninjured, vacated the aircraft through the main doors.

Meteorological information

The pilot supplied a briefing sheet for RAF Kinloss, issued by the Met Office at RAF Lossiemouth on

the morning of the accident. This showed a general cloud base of about 2,000 ft early in the day, rising to about 3,000 ft by mid-afternoon, with moderate icing in cumuliform clouds. The surface temperature at RAF Kinloss (which is on the coast) at the time of the accident was 7°C, the dew point was 0°C and the 0°C level was forecast to climb from about 1,200 ft to about 2,000 ft during the course of the morning.

Comment

The pilot's report did not include an assessment of the cause of the accident. Given the temperatures of the day and the evidently moist conditions, carburettor icing would have been a serious risk. If the aircraft had been so affected, there was a risk of the engine stopping after the throttle was retarded to idle, as the pilot reported doing in response to the inadvertent climb which had taken him close to the cloud base.