



Australian Government

Australian Transport Safety Bureau

Near collision between an unknown object and a De Havilland DHC-8, VH-XFX

23 km NNE Perth Airport, Western Australia, 19 March 2014

ATSB Transport Safety Report
Aviation Occurrence Investigation
AO-2014-052
Final – 26 May 2014

Released in accordance with section 25 of the *Transport Safety Investigation Act 2003*

Publishing information

Published by: Australian Transport Safety Bureau
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Addendum

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Near collision between an unknown object and a De Havilland DHC-8

What happened

On 19 March 2014, at about 0913 Western Standard Time (WST), a De Havilland DHC-8, registered VH-XFX, was on approach to Perth Airport from Kambalda, Western Australia. When about 23 km north-northeast of Perth, at about 3,800 ft above mean sea level (AMSL), the crew sighted a bright strobe light directly in front of the aircraft.

The light appeared to track towards the aircraft and the crew realised that the light was on an unknown object, possibly an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV). The pilot took evasive action turning towards the west to avoid a collision with the object. The object passed about 20 m horizontally and 100 ft vertically from the aircraft.

The pilot reported that the object was cylindrical in shape and grey in colour. It was at about 3,700 ft AMSL and in controlled airspace. The crew did not receive a traffic collision avoidance system (TCAS) alert. The airspace below 3,500 ft AMSL was military restricted airspace and the Australian Defence Force was not operating UAVs and was not aware of any UAV operations in the area at the time of the incident. The ATSB was not able to confirm the details of the object or identify any UAV operator in the area at that time.

General details

Occurrence details

Date and time:	19 March 2014 – 0913 WST	
Occurrence category:	Serious incident	
Primary occurrence type:	Interference from the ground	
Location:	23 km NNE Perth Airport, Western Australia	
	Latitude: 31° 44.62' S	Longitude: 116° 02.60' E

Aircraft details

Manufacturer and model:	De Havilland Canada DHC-8-314	
Registration:	VH-XFX	
Serial number:	313	
Type of operation:	Charter – passenger	
Persons on board:	Crew – 4	Passengers – Unknown
Injuries:	Crew – Nil	Passengers – Nil
Damage:	Nil	

About the ATSB

The Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB) is an independent Commonwealth Government statutory agency. The ATSB is governed by a Commission and is entirely separate from transport regulators, policy makers and service providers. The ATSB's function is to improve safety and public confidence in the aviation, marine and rail modes of transport through excellence in: independent investigation of transport accidents and other safety occurrences; safety data recording, analysis and research; and fostering safety awareness, knowledge and action.

The ATSB is responsible for investigating accidents and other transport safety matters involving civil aviation, marine and rail operations in Australia that fall within Commonwealth jurisdiction, as well as participating in overseas investigations involving Australian registered aircraft and ships. A primary concern is the safety of commercial transport, with particular regard to fare-paying passenger operations.

The ATSB performs its functions in accordance with the provisions of the *Transport Safety Investigation Act 2003* and Regulations and, where applicable, relevant international agreements.

The object of a safety investigation is to identify and reduce safety-related risk. ATSB investigations determine and communicate the safety factors related to the transport safety matter being investigated.

It is not a function of the ATSB to apportion blame or determine liability. At the same time, an investigation report must include factual material of sufficient weight to support the analysis and findings. At all times the ATSB endeavours to balance the use of material that could imply adverse comment with the need to properly explain what happened, and why, in a fair and unbiased manner.

About this report

Decisions regarding whether to conduct an investigation, and the scope of an investigation, are based on many factors, including the level of safety benefit likely to be obtained from an investigation. For this occurrence, a limited-scope, fact-gathering investigation was conducted in order to produce a short summary report, and allow for greater industry awareness of potential safety issues and possible safety actions.