Aircraft Accident Investigation Authority of the Bahamas

N555MH Preliminary Occurrence Report

Release Date 7th October 2024

Location	Occurrence Number
6.5 NM west of Lynden Pindling Int'l (MYNN), Nassau, Bahamas	OCC-2024/0044
Occurrence Date & Time 12th September 2024 2:35 pm local (1835 UTC)	**Registration** N555MH
Aircraft Make/Model	**Serial Number**
Piper PA-23-250	27-7304938
Flight Conducted Under Visual Flight Rules (VFR)	**Occurrence Category** Controlled Flight Into Terrain (C-FIT)

Information:

Narrative:

On Thursday 12th September 2024 at approximately 1:57 pm local (1757 UTC[1]), a Piper Aztec PA-23-250 with United States registration N555MH departed from the Lynden Pindling International Airport (MYNN[2]), Nassau, Bahamas with six (6) persons on board enroute to the San Andros Airport (MYAN), Andros, Bahamas.

Prior that morning, the pilot in command conducted a flight from the San Andros Airport (MYAN) to the Lynden Pindling Int'l Airport (MYNN), arriving MYNN at approximately 07:36 am (1136 UTC).

According to the pilot in command, the flight that morning was "typical" with nothing of significance observed during that time.

[1] UTC - UTC is the time standard commonly used across the world. The world's timing centers have agreed to keep their time scales closely synchronized - or coordinated - therefore the name Coordinated Universal Time

[2] A four-letter code used for the purposes of designating and identifying aerodromes around the world as defined by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)

The accident flight that afternoon was uneventful up to the point of the aircraft's approach into the San Andros Airport (MYAN).

According to Nassau air traffic control radar data, at approximately 2:09 pm (1809 UTC), N555MH was shown descending from an altitude of approximately 1,700 feet while north east of the field at a distance of just over 2 nautical miles.

Over the course of approximately 12 minutes from 2:12 pm (1812 UTC) – 2:24 pm (1824 UTC), the following was noted in relation to N555MH:

@18:12:38z N555MH disappeared off radar

@18:13:26 N555MH reappears on radar west of MYAN headed southerly direction

@18:14:02z N555MH made hard left turn headed northeast bound passing runway (rwy) 12 descending out of 1600 ft.

@18:16:37z N555MH made right orbit, appeared to turn to once again land rwy 12. Aircraft descended out of 1600 ft. to 1200 ft.

@18:17:56z N555MH disappeared off radar over MYAN descending out of 1300 ft.

@18:20:00z N555MH reappeared on radar NW of MYAN in a southeasterly direction at 1000 ft.

@18:23:14z N555MH starts decent from 1000 ft. to 600 ft. in an easterly direction

@ 18:24:21z N555MH advised Nassau Approach Control that he could not land at MYAN and is headed back to MYNN. Selected rwy 10 as preferred runway. Climbed to 2000ft.

The pilot in command attempted three (3) approaches into MYAN, but was unable to land due to poor visibility. During the period of attempting approaches into MYAN, the pilot requested for runway lights to be turned on. The request was communicated over the UNICOM[3] frequency 122.800 MHz. Documentation received indicates that the lights were on from 2:20 pm (1820 UTC) onward.

[3] UNICOM - stands for Universal Communications. It is defined as a non-government base station that offers ground to air and air to ground communication. A typical UNICOM station uses a single communication frequency and offers airport information at public-use airports.

N555MH Preliminary Occurrence Report

Release Date 7th October 2024

It would appear that the pilot was still unable to see the runway after the period that the runway lights were on.

A Cessna 208 aircraft operated by Makers Air as flight WMA125 was enroute to MYAN around the time of N555MH approach into MYAN.

The pilot in command of flight WMA125 advised that he observed visual meteorological conditions[4] (VMC) while at a distance in excess of 20 nautical miles northwest of the field as he cancelled his IFR[5] flight plan with Miami Air Route Traffic Control Center (ARTCC).

However, as he got closer, he observed a "wall of weather" at the edge of the runway and also noted that he overheard N555MH on UNICOM frequency indicating that he was returning to MYNN as he was unable to land at MYAN.

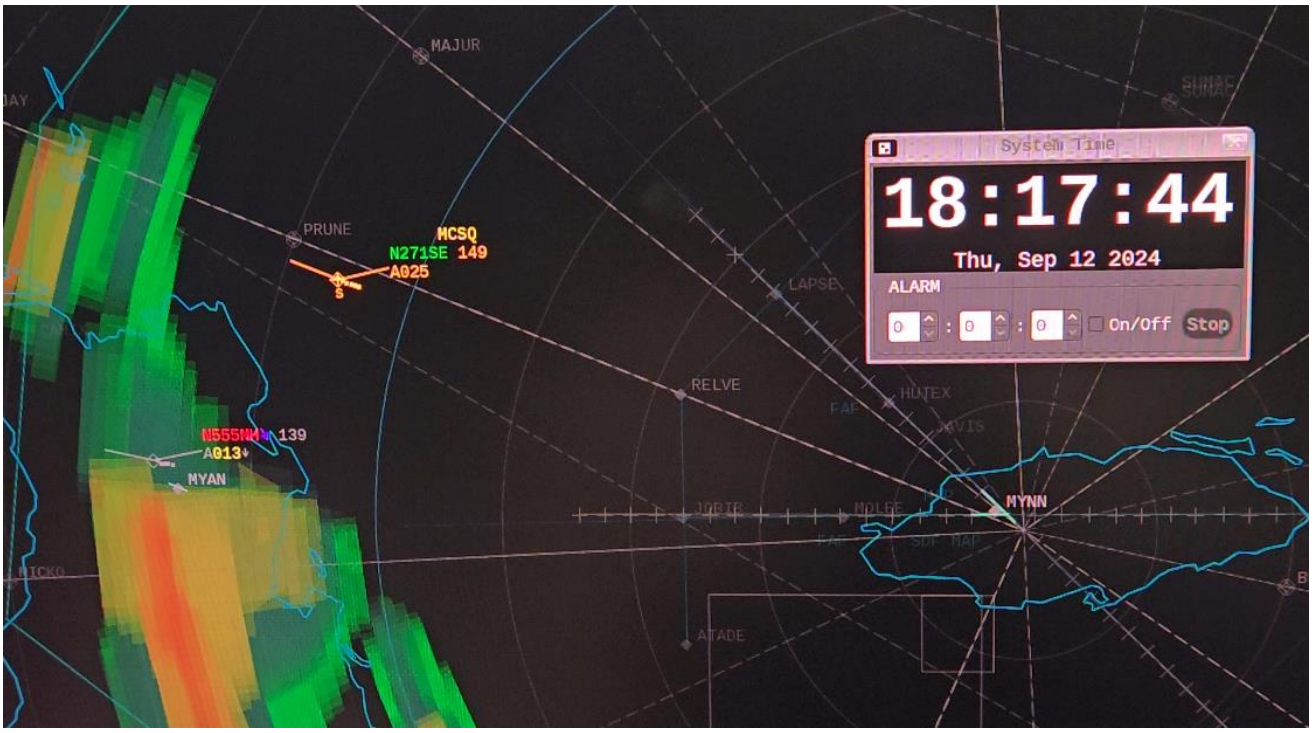

Fig. 1 Nassau Approach Control Radar image of N555MH aprroach into MYAN

[4] Visual Meteorological Conditions (VMC) - are weather conditions under which pilots have sufficient visibility to fly aircraft relying on visual references. VMC is defined by specific criteria regarding visibility, cloud distance, and ceiling, which must meet or exceed established minimums

[5] Instrument Flight Rules (IFR) – refer to a set of regulations and procedures that govern flight operations when visual reference to the ground or horizon is unavailable

N555MH Preliminary Occurrence Report

Release Date 7th October 2024

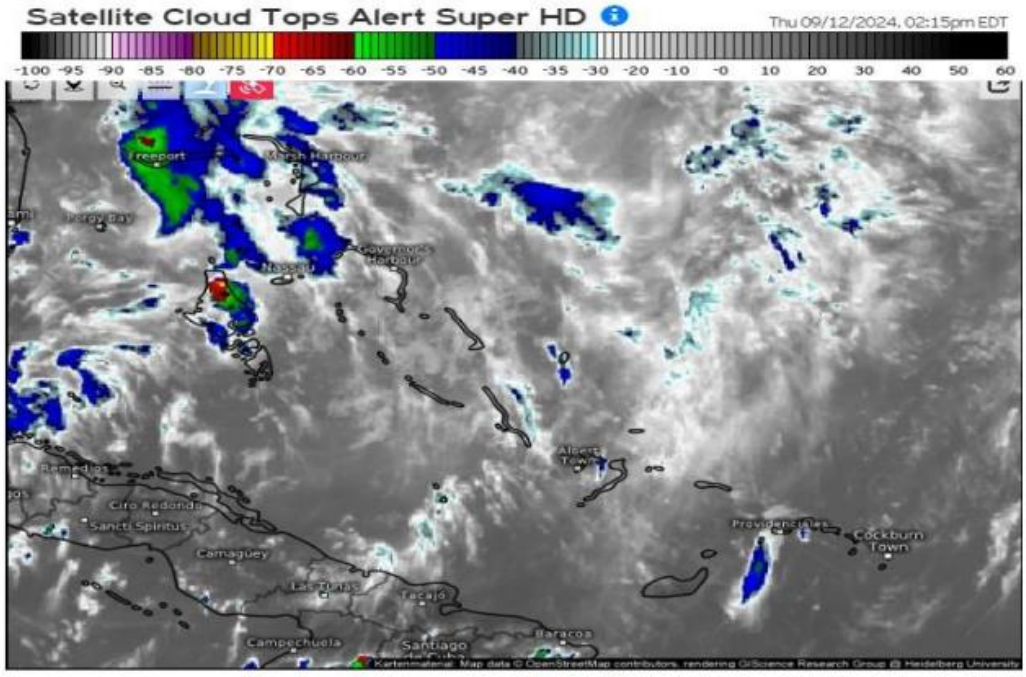

Fig.2 Sattellite imagery depicting cloud conditions for The Bahamas at 2:15 pm (1815 UTC)

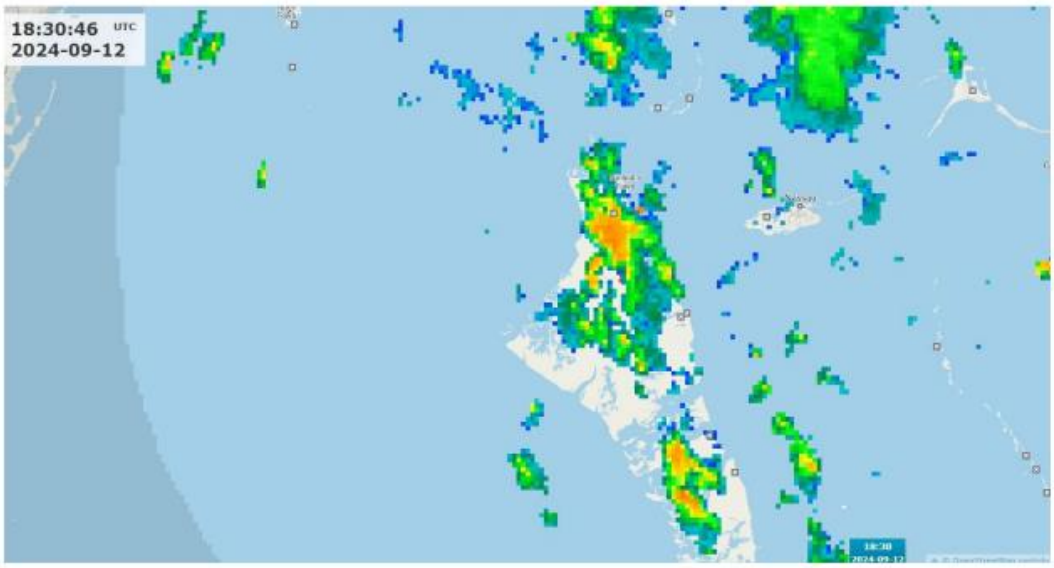

Fig.3 Radar imagery depicting conditions at MYAN at 2:30 pm (1830 UTC)

Aircraft Accident Investigation Authority of the Bahamas

N555MH Preliminary Occurrence Report

Release Date 7th October 2024

Over the course of approximately 9 minutes from 2:26 pm (1826 UTC) – 2:35 pm (1835 UTC), the following was noted in relation to N555MH:

@18:26:27z N555MH was radar contact by Nassau Approach Control. N555MH showed climb to 2200 ft.

@18:2755z N555MH advised Nassau Approach Control that he needed priority landing

@18:28:11z N555MH advised that the engine (did not specify which one at this point) was having problems

@18:30:20z N555MH advised Nassau Approach that he had 20 minutes of fuel, and the left engine was giving some problems

@18:31:02z N555MH declared emergency appx. 15 NM west of Nassau

@18:32:32z N555MH advised that he is going down. Radar showed descending out of 1000 ft.

@18:33:38z N555MH asked if help was being sent, Nassau Approach then advised they were making contact with appropriate agencies

@18:34:03 N555MH advised he will try to get close to Nygard Cay to ditch the aircraft

@18:34:35 N555MH advised he was 200 ft. and showing 8 miles west of MYNN

@18:34:48 WMA125 said he was close to N555MH and could render assistance trying to locate him

@18:35:34z N555MH ditched into the water and disappeared one final time. WMA125 who was enroute to the crash site advised that he saw something in the water

N555MH Preliminary Occurrence Report

Release Date 7th October 2024

Fig.4 Last radar indication of N555MH before loss of radar contact (ditching)

Prior to ditching the aircraft, the pilot in command briefed the passengers of the emergency situation and all persons on board were able to don their respective life jackets prior to the aircraft impacting the water.

The aircraft came to rest at coordinates 25° 2'53.74"N 77°35'45.92"W, approximately some 6.5 NM west of MYNN.

All six (6) persons on board were able to successfully exit the aircraft after it impacted the water.

Nassau air traffic control initiated its emergency response procedures and contact was made with the Royal Bahamas Police Force (RBPF), Royal Bahamas Defense Force (RBDF) and the United States Coast Guard (USCG).

Marine assets were subsequently dispatched to the area of the aircraft's last known position.

The flight crew of Bahamas registered Beech 99 aircraft, C6-OFM, operated by Flamingo Air were able to render assistance in search efforts as they advised Nassau air traffic control that they would be on lookout for persons in the water.

Aircraft Accident Investigation Authority of the Bahamas

N555MH Preliminary Occurrence Report

Release Date 7th October 2024

At approximately 3:15 pm, the flight crew of C6-OFM would have located a group of five (5) persons in one area, and a single individual some distance away.

Shortly after, a vessel from the Royal Bahamas Police Force (RBPF) Harbour Patrol arrived on scene followed by the Royal Bahamas Defense Force (RBDF).

All six (6) persons were located and retrieved from the water.

After assessments were made by search and rescue personnel, an 87 year old male passenger and a 43 year old female passenger were observed in an unresponsive state subsequently resulting in two (2) fatalities.

The remaining three (3) passengers and one (1) pilot were taken to the Princess Margaret Hospital, Nassau, Bahamas to receive medical attention.

They were noted as receiving various minor injuries in relation to the accident.

This is preliminary information, subject to change, and may contain errors. Any errors in this report will be corrected when the final report has been completed.

Aircraft Accident Investigation Authority of the Bahamas

N555MH Preliminary Occurrence Report

Release Date 7th October 2024

Aircraft and Owner / Operator Information:

Aircraft Manufacturer	Registration
Piper	N555MH
Model / Series	**Aircraft Category**
PA-23-250	Normal
Amateur Built	
Operator	**Air Carrier Operating Certificate**
Not Applicable	Not Applicable

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan:

Conditions at Accident site	Condition of Light
Visual Meteorological Conditions	Day
Observation Facility	**Observation Time**
Lynden Pindling Int'l Airport (MYNN), Nassau, Bahamas	1800 UTC
Distance from Site	**Temp /Dewpoint**
6.5 nautical miles	32°C/33°C
Lowest Cloud Condition	**Wind Speed / Gust Direction**
SCT025	150/08 knots
Lowest Ceiling	**Visibility**
BKN016	>6 statute miles
Altimeter Setting	**Type of flight Plan Filed**
29.90 in. Hg	Visual Flight Rules

Aircraft Accident Investigation Authority
of the Bahamas

N555MH Preliminary Occurrence Report

Release Date 7th October 2024

Departure Point	Destination
Lynden Pindling Int'l Airport (MYNN), Nassau, Bahamas	San Andros Airport (MYAN), Andros, Bahamas

Wreckage and Impact Information:

Crew Injuries	Aircraft Damage
One (1) Minor	Destroyed (submerged in ocean)
Passenger Injuries	**Aircraft Fire**
Two (2) Fatal Three (3) Minor	Not Applicable
Ground Injuries	**Aircraft Explosion**
0	Not Applicable
Total Injuries	**Latitude, Longitude**
Two (2) Fatal Four (4) Minor	25° 2'53.74"N 77°35'45.92"W

N555MH Preliminary Occurrence Report

Release Date 7th October 2024

Administrative Information:

Investigator in Charge
Mr. Kendall Dorsett Jr

Additional Information

Accredited Representative:
Mr. Deepak Joshi
National Transportation Safety Board

Date of Publication
7th October 2024

Publishing information

Aircraft Accident Investigation Authority
Lynden Pindling International Airport
Domestic Terminal
Unit A1.120
P. O. Box CB-11702
Nassau N. P., Bahamas
Tel: 1 (242) 376-1617 or (242) 376-8334
Fax: (242) 377-0272
Email: baaid@bahamas.gov.bs
Website: http://www.baaid.org

About the AAIA

The Aircraft Accident Investigation Authority (AAIA) is the independent accident investigation agency under the Bahamas' Ministry of Energy & Transport (MOET) charged with the responsibility of investigating all aviation accidents and serious incidents in the Bahamas.

The AAIA does not investigate for the purpose of apportioning blame or to provide a means for determining liability.

The AAIA performs its functions in accordance with the provisions of the Aircraft Accident Investigation Authority Act 2019 and Regulations 2021, International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Annex 13 and, where applicable, relevant international agreements.