



Aviation Investigation Preliminary Report

Location:	Hebron, KY	Accident Number:	DCA26LA106
Date & Time:	January 28, 2026, 15:05 Local	Registration:	N5827K
Aircraft:	Airbus A330-343	Injuries:	2 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 121: Air carrier - Non-scheduled		

On January 28, 2026, at 1505 eastern standard time, Alaska Airlines flight 2616, an Airbus 330-343, N5827K, powered by two Rolls Royce RB211 engines, struck birds during initial climb after takeoff from Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport (CVG), Hebron, Kentucky. There were no injuries to the 2 crew on board. Alaska Airlines operated the airplane as a Title 14 *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 121 domestic cargo flight for Amazon.com Services LLC and was destined for George Bush Intercontinental Airport (IAH), Houston, Texas.

According to the flight crew, after takeoff from runway 27, while climbing through 900-1,000 ft, the captain observed a flock of geese flying from right to left. The captain, who was the pilot monitoring, called out “birds” and then the flight crew felt multiple birds impact the left and right side of the airplane. At that time, the flight crew observed the electronic centralized aircraft monitor (ECAM) warning and a master caution indication. The flight crew observed the ENG 1 FAULT indication on the ECAM, immediately followed by ENG 1 FAIL. The flight crew initiated the ECAM procedures for the No. 1 (left) engine failure. The captain alerted air traffic control (ATC) of the birdstrike, declared an emergency, and requested a return to CVG.

ATC provided vectors for landing on runway 36R. During the air return, the flight crew observed smoke entering the cockpit and subsequently a MD (main deck) SMOKE ECAM message. The flight crew donned their oxygen masks and began to run the quick reference handbook (QRH) procedure for the MD SMOKE indication. After configuring the airplane for landing, the flight crew determined the smoke had dissipated and removed their oxygen masks for the remainder of the approach and landing.

After landing, the first officer, who was the pilot flying, stopped the airplane on the runway and airport rescue and firefighting (ARFF) personnel inspected the airplane. The flight crew completed the left engine failure ECAM procedures and discharged fire extinguishing agent. After determining that there was no fire on the airplane, ground personnel towed the airplane

to the ramp. Airport operations personnel stated that they recovered the remains of eight Canada geese after the event.

A postaccident examination of the airplane revealed bird remnants on the left main landing gear door and strut, the left-wing inboard flap, the No. 2 (right) engine pylon, the right-wing leading-edge slat and slat track. Additionally, both engines exhibited evidence of bird ingestion. Damage and bird remnants were observed on the left engine nacelle (inside and outside of the inlet) and fan blades. The left engine fan had restricted rotation and was visibly misaligned. The right engine had damage to the inlet cowl acoustic liner and bird remnants were found on the spinner and the exhaust nozzle. The right engine fan rotated freely.



Figure 1. Zoomed in picture of the left engine inlet. (Source: Alaska Airlines)



Figure 2. Right wing slat damage and left landing gear door and strut damage. (Source: Alaska Airlines)

As part of the investigation process, the NTSB invited qualified parties to participate in the investigation, including the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and Alaska Airlines. In accordance with the provisions of Annex 13 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation, Accredited Representatives from the Bureau of Enquiry and Analysis for Civil Aviation Safety (BEA) of France, the State of Manufacture for the airplane, the Air Accidents Investigation Branch (AAIB) of the United Kingdom, the State of Manufacture for the engines, and the German Federal Bureau of Aircraft Accident Investigation (BFU), the State of Design for the engines, were appointed to support the investigation, with Airbus, Rolls Royce, and European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) as technical advisors. The following NTSB specialists were assigned to investigate the accident: Airports, Powerplants, and Flight Data Recorder (FDR).

The investigation is ongoing.

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Airbus	Registration:	N5827K
Model/Series:	A330-343	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Amateur Built:			
Operator:	Alaska Airlines	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	Flag carrier (121)
Operator Designator Code:			

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	VMC	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	KCVG,861 ft msl	Observation Time:	14:52 Local
Distance from Accident Site:	0 Nautical Miles	Temperature/Dew Point:	-9°C /-17°C
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Scattered / 25000 ft AGL	Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	15 knots / None, 280°
Lowest Ceiling:		Visibility:	10 miles
Altimeter Setting:	30.19 inches Hg	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	IFR
Departure Point:	Hebron, KY	Destination:	Houston, TX (KIAH)

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	2 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:		Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 None	Latitude, Longitude:	39.0465,-84.67031 (est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Masters, Shannon
Additional Participating Persons:	Troy Levanen; Alaska Airlines; Seattle, WA Terry Walters; Alaska Airlines; Seattle, WA Todd Gentry; FAA AVP-110; Washington, DC Bob Vickery; AAIB Engineering; Farnborough Holm Bielfeldt; BFU Germany; Braunschweig Jerome Bauer; BEA France; Paris Jordan Soula-Oudot; Airbus Gabriel Ivan; EASA
Investigation Class:	Class 3
Note:	The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.