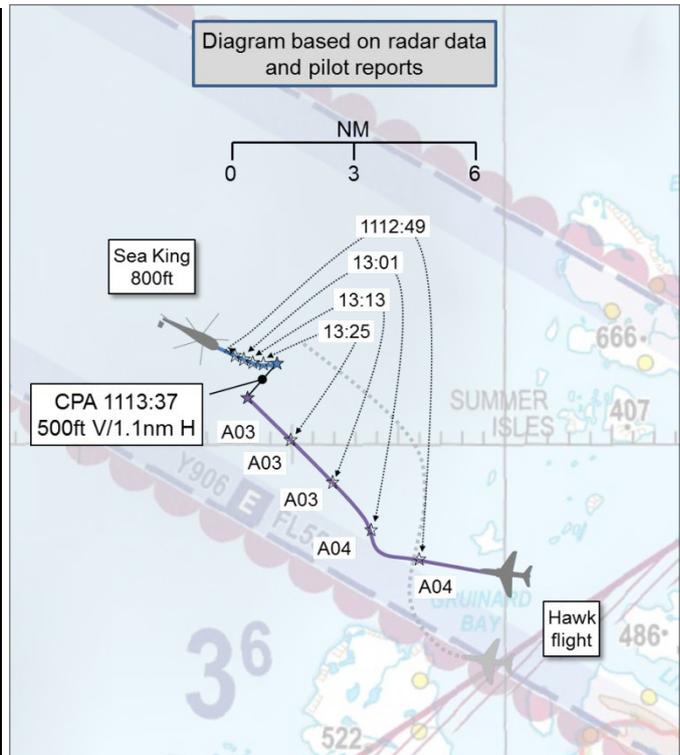


AIRPROX REPORT No 2015186

Date: 14 Oct 2015 Time: 1114Z Position: 5802N 00541W Location: 10nm NW Ullapool

PART A: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION REPORTED TO UKAB

Recorded	Aircraft 1	Aircraft 2
Aircraft	Sea King	Hawk T1
Operator	RN	RN
Airspace	Scottish FIR	Scottish FIR
Class	G	G
Rules	VFR	VFR
Service	Basic	None
Provider	Scottish	N/A
Altitude/FL	800ft	300ft
Transponder	A, C, S	A, C, S
Reported		
Colours	Grey	Black
Lighting	HISLs, nav	HISLs, landing, nav
Conditions	VMC	VMC
Visibility	20km	20km
Altitude/FL	500ft	250ft
Altimeter	RPS (1017hPa)	RPS (1010hPa)
Heading	110°	290°
Speed	90kt	420kt
ACAS/TAS	Not fitted	Not fitted
Separation		
Reported	200ft V/0.25nm H	200ft V/0.5nm H
Recorded	500ft V/1.1nm H	



THE SEA KING PILOT reports having taken part in a Joint Warrior exercise in the North Minch High Density Airspace Control Zone (HIDACZ). The Sea King was transiting through the HIDACZ on return to RAF Lossiemouth, remaining at 500ft on the RPS, below the Rotary Wing Co-ordination Level (RWCL) in accordance with the Joint Warrior sanctuary plan. Approximately 7 miles from coasting in at Ullapool, the Sea King crew became aware of further exercise traffic in their area having heard transmissions from another aircraft. At this point, an observer in the Sea King warned of IFF returns tracking towards them at high speed from Ullapool. Avoiding action was initiated, involving a 30° heading change to the left. The pilot saw one Hawk at approximately 1nm in the 1 o'clock and 200ft below, tracking towards them. At this point a second Hawk was spotted at approximately 0.5nm in the 11 o'clock, 500ft above. Both aircraft passed no closer than 0.25nm either side of the Sea King. The Sea King pilot noted that at the time of briefing, 5hr before the incident, there had been no conflicts in CADS. He also stated that their initial avoiding turn had been towards the Hawk wingman, as the wingman had not been squawking and did not indicate on their equipment.

He assessed the risk of collision as 'Medium'.

THE HAWK PILOT reports leading a flight of 2 Hawks, conducting a low-level Maritime strike raid against surface units in the North Minch. He contacted 'EAGLE SAFETY' to determine if there were any restrictions in force for the Maritime Strike serial, who replied that there were none. The flight subsequently entered low-level (250ft agl) in the Sound of Sleaf. The flight was unable to communicate with 'EAGLE SAFETY' for the next 10min due to terrain masking, although another aircraft was attempting to update the picture with 'EAGLE SAFETY' on their behalf. The flight went 'feet wet' in the North Minch HIDACZ after entering from Lock Broom. Shortly afterwards, the flight lead saw a helicopter in the 12 o'clock position, slightly high, at a range of about 4nm. This was communicated to the wingman, who also became visual and initiated a climb to 1500ft. The flight lead

elected to stay at 250ft. The Sea King passed down the middle of the flight, which was line abreast with 1.5nm separation between the Hawks.

He assessed the risk of collision as 'Low'.

Factual Background

The weather at Stornoway was recorded as follows:

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METAR EGPO 141120Z 19017KT 9999 FEW015 SCT021 13/08 Q1023=
METAR EGPO 141050Z 19015KT 9999 FEW015 SCT023 13/08 Q1023=
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Analysis and Investigation

UKAB Secretariat

The Sea King and Hawk pilots shared an equal responsibility for collision avoidance and not to operate in such proximity to other aircraft as to create a collision hazard¹. If the incident geometry is considered as head-on or nearly so then both pilots were required to turn to the right².

Occurrence Investigation

The RN Investigation concluded that the incident appeared to have occurred due to a lack of situational awareness between EAGLE and FALCON SAFETY as to the position of both the Sea King and the Hawk flight. EAGLE believed the area to be clear, did not know that it was not, and hence cleared the Hawk flight 'no restriction'.

Summary

An Airprox was reported when a Sea King and a flight of 2 Hawks flew into proximity at 1114 on Wednesday 14th October. Both pilots were operating under VFR in VMC, the Sea King pilot in receipt of a Basic Service from Scottish Information and Exercise control from EAGLE SAFETY and the Hawk pilots in receipt of Exercise control from EAGLE SAFETY.

PART B: SUMMARY OF THE BOARD'S DISCUSSIONS

Information available consisted of reports from both pilots, radar photographs/video recordings and a report from the appropriate operating authority.

The Board was further briefed by the RN Operations member, who explained that the Exercise was split into north and south areas, with EAGLE providing a service for the south area and FALCON providing a service for the north area. EAGLE cleared the Hawks 'no restrictions' but was not aware that they were operating in the north area or that the Sea King was transiting back to its operating base after refuelling at Stornoway. Whilst EAGLE was permitted to clear the Hawks below the RWCL if the area was clear, he was looking at the south area, did not have sufficient information to do so in the north area and was not aware of the Hawks' location. Members agreed that, although there were important issues of Exercise airspace design and coordination to be addressed, the pilots had been aware of and had seen each other at sufficient range that normal safety standards had been met.

PART C: ASSESSMENT OF CAUSE AND RISK

Cause: The Sea King pilot was concerned by the proximity of the Hawks.

Degree of Risk: E.

¹ SERA.3205 Proximity.

² SERA.3210 Right-of-way (c) (1) Approaching head-on.