Piper PA-E23-250 Aztec, G-AXZP

AAIB Bulletin No: 10/2003	Ref: EW/G2003/08/34	Category: 1.2
Aircraft Type and Registration:	Piper PA-E23-250 Aztec, G-AXZP	
No & Type of Engines:	2 Lycoming IO-540-C4B5 piston engines.	
Year of Manufacture:	1970	
Date & Time (UTC):	15 August 2003 at 1447 hrs	
Location:	Manchester Low Level Route, UK	
Type of Flight:	Private	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1	Passengers - 3
Injuries:	Crew - None	Passengers - None
Nature of Damage:	Damage to leading edge of starboard wing	
Commander's Licence:	Private Pilot's Licence	
Commander's Age:	64 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	1,500 hours (of which 600 were on type)	
	Last 90 days - 10 hours	
	Last 28 days - 10 hours	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot	

The flight was conducted under visual flight rules (VFR) from Fairoaks Airport, Surrey, to Blackpool, Lancashire. While the aircraft was transiting at 1,200 feet amsl along the designated Low Level Route to the west of Manchester Airport, a large bird struck the leading edge of the starboard wing. The pilot saw the bird swerve and dive, apparently in an attempt to avoid the aircraft, but he had no time himself in which to attempt avoiding action. He did not see the bird against the land background until just before the impact and observed that from the bird's perspective the aircraft would have been into sun. The impact made a significant dent outboard on the starboard wing but did not puncture the skin. The pilot was able to continue the flight to Blackpool.