
swamps Flying over swamps / marshes

Posted by Grumman-581 - 2010/02/22 10:17

The other day, I was flying from New Orleans to Houston and was getting an up close and personal view of the swamps / marshes / wetlands in the southern Louisiana coastal areas... Usually I fly quite a bit higher and I don't really get much of a chance to see much of the terrain... For this morning's flight, I was down low at around 500 ft or so and getting a great view of the terrain... The haze was such that although there was 3 nm of visibility at a more normal altitude, the visibility at 500 ft was probably 10 nm or better... After awhile, I noticed another aircraft flying directly across my path, but at perhaps 250 ft lower than I was... I pretty much went directly over him... He was flying a high-wing (Cardinal, perhaps) and I was flying a low wing, so it was pretty much a classical case of each of us being in the other's blind spot... There weren't any airports nearby, so I guess someone else was just touring the swamps... I had figured that I only needed to watch out for helicopters and pelicans at that altitude...

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Posted by Mackfly - 2010/02/22 10:17

From: Grumman-581 noticed another aircraft flying directly across my path, but at perhaps 250 ft lower than I was... I pretty much went directly over him... He was flying a high-wing (Cardinal, perhaps) and I was flying a low wing, so it was pretty much a classical case of each of us being in the other's blind spot... There weren't any airports nearby, so I guess someone else was just touring the swamps... I had figured that I only needed to watch out for helicopters and pelicans at that altitude... Had he been in YOUR blind spot you would of not seen him, right? I've pretty much given up the low flying thing. Yeah it's fun, but is it worth the risks? Read the NTSB reports on line. You'll find a good number of folks would still be alive had they had a little more air under them. I've flown right through the center of a flock of geese. They spread out to make a hole for me but it could of been a very different outcome. Also down low like that once something does go wrong you don't have much time to deal with it. Just my thoughts. Mac

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Posted by Grumman-581 - 2010/02/22 10:17

Also down low like that once something does go wrong you don't have much time to deal with it. Correct... It would be a very wet walk for a long distance back to civilization...

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Posted by CVBreard - 2010/02/22 10:17

needed to watch out for helicopters and pelicans at that altitude.... I live in Baton Rouge and have to cross that Atchafalaya swamp frequently to shoot aerial photos in the Lafayette, LA area. You won't catch ME flying over that swamp at 500'!! We recently had an FAA-sponsored How To Survive A Crash in the Swamp program here, and that gets your attention. There are very few places to put one down out there and walk away, and flying at 500' agl would only make a bad situation worse. I fly I-10 across the swamp, then head off wherever I have to go over dry land - takes longer/more miles, etc., and yeah, I know that trusty Lycoming/Continental has run 1000 hours without a hiccup, but that's how I've lived to be an Old Pilot, not a Bold Pilot. Nevertheless, I have HAD to fly across that swamp a number of times, and as my old instructor told me - Listen, Charlie, you can almost 'hear' those alligators snapping... And 'hitting a pelican' is only one of the large birds that could ruin your day.

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Posted by Sydney Hoeltzli - 2010/02/22 10:17

We recently had an FAA-sponsored How To Survive A Crash in the Swamp program here, and that gets your attention. So what did they suggest? Cheers, Sydney

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Posted by Grumman-581 - 2010/02/22 10:17

here, and that gets your attention. So what did they suggest? Bring plenty of chickens to feed the gators? <grin

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Posted by Craig Prouse - 2010/02/22 10:17

We recently had an FAA-sponsored How To Survive A Crash in the Swamp program here, and that gets your attention. So what did they suggest? I was enjoying a beautiful flight in south central Oregon just northeast of Upper Klamath Lake. I was admiring the wide open pastures, which appeared to be good places to set down amongst all the rough terrain in case I suddenly needed a place to land. A couple minutes later, I started noticing glints of light, as if the pasture were full of bits and pieces of broken mirror. Yes, it would have been bad luck indeed to try to land in that pasture, for it was actually a widespread marsh, covered with enough lily pads and pond scum to make it look like a pasture. My suggestion would be to know where the swamp is, and fly somewhere else if possible!

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Posted by CVBreard - 2010/02/22 10:17

So what did they suggest? 1. Don't do it if you don't have to. 2. Carry a well thought out full blown SURVIVAL KIT. It's amazing all the stuff you can cram into a backpack size package. You think you go down, the ELT goes off and the Coast Guard helicopter is lowering the basket before you miss a meal. Don't count on it. And don't worry just about the alligators - watch out for the snakes and spiders.

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