Beat: Business

Hot air balloon carrying 11 crashes in Dutch lake, injuring 2

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USPA News - A hot air balloon carrying eleven people crashed into a lake in the Netherlands on late Tuesday evening, injuring two of the people on board, emergency services said. The exact cause of the accident was not immediately known.

The accident happened at around 9:40 p.m. local time on Tuesday when the hot air balloon came down in Gooi Lake near the city of Almere, which is located in central Flevoland province on the artificial island of Flevopolder. The crash was witnessed by a few dozen people who were on land nearby. "The rescue boats from Huizen and Blaricum were immediately alerted. Rescue boats from two rescue brigades and one boat from a local salvor also came to the scene," Coast Guard spokesman Peter Verburg said. "At 9:50 p.m. a report came in that all occupants were safe ashore and that police, fire and ambulances were at the scene." Dramatic video (http://tinyurl.com/kjblf4m) posted by De Telegraaf newspaper showed how the basket of the balloon came down in the water but was dragged along until it hit the shore. With the basket on its side in the water, the balloon eventually came down on a road near the shore as witnesses rushed in to help. Verburg said two people were injured in the crash and were transported to a local hospital by ambulance, but their conditions were not immediately known. The exact cause of the accident was also not immediately clear, but officials said an investigation is being carried out by provincial police and the Environment and Transport Inspection (ILT). Hot air balloon accidents are fairly uncommon, although deadly crashes have taken place in recent years. On February 26, nineteen people were killed and two others were seriously injured when a hot air balloon caught fire and crashed near the city of Luxor in southern Egypt, making it the world`s deadliest ballooning disaster in history. Prior to that, in January 2012, eleven people were killed when a hot air balloon hit wires on a power line and crashed in the Wellington Region on the North Island of New Zealand. The second deadliest ballooning disaster in history occurred in August 1989 when two balloons collided over Australia`s Northern Territory, causing one of the balloons to crash to the ground and killing all thirteen people on board.

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