



**PRESS RELEASE**  
For immediate release

## 12 May 2011: First Human-Powered Rotorcraft Record celebrates 5 years anniversary!

Lausanne, Switzerland, 10 May 2016 – On 12 May 2011, biology student and female pilot [Judith Wexler flew the human-powered helicopter “Gamera I” for 4.2 seconds in College Park, MD \(USA\)](#), thus setting the first ever FAI world record in this type of aircraft ([see video](#)).

The “Gamera Project” was introduced to try and achieve the dream of human-powered hovering flight. No less than fifty graduate and undergraduate students from the Alfred Gessow Rotorcraft Centre of the University of Maryland’s Department of Aerospace Engineering participated in the design and construction of Gamera I. It was made of several lightweight composites and foam, the total weight of this quadrotor helicopter was just about 95.25kg including the pilot. It was built of four trusses, each with a rotor. Both hand and foot pedalling drive the rotors for improved performance. Four cameras were positioned to film the attempt, as the aircraft was so large.

For such records three factors are essential: design, weight, and power. In order to increase the altitude and time in the air, reducing the weight of the aircraft, increasing the efficiency of the rotor design and finding a pilot of just the right size and strength are critical.

Since May 2011, not many records have been set in this very special category. Two months after the first record, Judith managed to [supersede her own record with “Gamera II”](#), a refinement of the “Gamera I”. [The current record which was achieved only two years later, is held by Justin Mauch](#) who was airborne for 1 minute and 37.5 seconds. The enormous increase of flight duration between the first and the most recent record shows just how significant and fast the development of human-powered flight has become.

The rules and regulations of Human Powered aircraft are defined in the FAI Sporting Code as an aerodyne that takes off and remains airborne only by direct human muscular energy. It must not use any system of static support such as gas or hot air nor may it carry any kind of apparatus that could receive energy during flight although such equipment may be used to store muscular energy after take-off.

### About FAI

The [Fédération Aéronautique Internationale \(FAI\)](#), also known as the World Air Sports Federation, is the world governing body for air sports and for certifying world aviation and space records. The FAI was founded in 1905 and is a non-governmental and non-profit-making organisation recognised by the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

FAI activities include Aerobatics, Aeromodelling, Airships, Amateur-Built and Experimental Aircraft, Balloons, Gliding, Hang Gliding, Helicopters, Manpowered Flying, Microlights, Parachuting, Paragliding, Paramotors, Power Flying and all other Aeronautic and Astronautic sporting activities.

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