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SONAR PROFILES

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“Of All Our Electronics, The Probe is the One Device We Would Not Trade”

Avid Boater and West Marine Employee Shares How His Interphase Probe Forward-Looking Sonar Keeps Him Safe in Aialik Bay and Other Remote Alaskan Waters

“A friend with an Osprey power boat was navigating at high speed in Price William Sound with his newly installed Interphase Probe looking ahead,” said avid Alaskan boater and West Marine employee Bill Ennis. “It began to squeal at him that a submerged object was within his pre-set danger range. Luckily, he decided to slow the boat and, upon looking ahead, found a Connex (a container from a container ship) that had fallen overboard and was floating, awash, in the water ahead of him. There was no doubt that not even his Osprey would have survived an impact with that container, and only his Probe allowed him to see it,” added Ennis.

In his seasonal job working at a local Alaskan West Marine store, he tells that story frequently to customers who are outfitting their vessels with electronics for the unique challenges of navigating these Northern waters. “This is a true story, and one that always impresses customers,” said Ennis. Perhaps more importantly, Ennis was moved to immediately purchase an Interphase Probe forward-looking sonar for use aboard his 1984 Passport 40, *S/V Wings*. And he has found it to be extremely useful when traveling through Alaska’s remote, treacherous and sometimes uncharted waters.



Interphase Probe Guides *Wings* on Approach to Holgate Glacier

“We have more coastline (in Alaska) than the rest of the U.S. combined,” said Ennis. “Our waters are poorly charted, with rocky spires rising from the bottom in odd places and not appearing on charts. In fact, the chart for nearby Harris Bay in Northwestern Fiord shows only ‘the upper part of Harris Bay is usually filled with floating ice’ and the chart ends at that point. No survey had been done since the glacier had retreated! It was simply an exploration when you crossed the partly submerged moraine and entered Harris Bay. Crossing that moraine was an interesting thing to do, too, watching it rise to within 12 feet of the surface. One only goes across on a rising tide (that way, at least you’ll float free if you do go aground) and then we only creep through the opening with the engines in reverse in the shallower parts. When leaving Harris, pushing through the eight knot tidal current can be daunting,” added Ennis.

The ability to see what’s ahead of the vessel gives boaters like Ennis an extra measure of confidence that is crucial when navigating narrow passages and rocky uncharted waters. “In the same way that radar allows one to ‘see’ the real world around him, our trusty Probe allows us to see the world round us that is below the surface,” said Ennis. “Of all our electronics — radar, chart plotter/GPS, wind instruments, etc. — the Probe is the one device that we would not trade. There is no doubt that our beloved Probe has saved our boat, and possibly our lives, on numerous occasions.”

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