



# Aviation Investigation Final Report

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|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Location:</b>               | BIG LAKE, Alaska                     | <b>Accident Number:</b> | ANC03LA084        |
| <b>Date &amp; Time:</b>        | July 21, 2003, 15:00 Local           | <b>Registration:</b>    | N8383Q            |
| <b>Aircraft:</b>               | Cessna 185                           | <b>Aircraft Damage:</b> | Minor             |
| <b>Defining Event:</b>         |                                      | <b>Injuries:</b>        | 1 Serious, 1 None |
| <b>Flight Conducted Under:</b> | Part 91: General aviation - Personal |                         |                   |

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## Analysis

The private certificated pilot reported that he was landing a float-equipped airplane toward the southeast on a lake near a point of land. During the landing flare, about 2 feet before touchdown, he noticed a blurred object on the right side of the airplane, moving perpendicular to his direction of landing. He then felt and heard an impact on the right float. When the airplane settled off the step, the pilot observed that a collision had occurred with a jet ski and rider that previously had been eastbound. The airplane received damage to the underside of the right float, specifically, to the right sister keelson at the step bulkhead, and along the keel area, aft of the step bulkhead. The operator of the stand-up type jet ski sustained multiple breaks of the bones of her left arm. The jet ski received damage to the upper handle portion. The operator of the jet ski said that she was heading east about 30 feet from the shore, passing a point of land, when the collision occurred. She said that at the time of the collision, the airplane had not touched the water. She estimated her speed between 20 to 35 mph. A review of the FAA's Federal Aviation Regulations (FARs) and the U.S. Coast Guard's navigation rules, disclosed no right-of-way regulations pertaining to an airborne seaplane and a vessel on the water.

## Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The failure of the pilot of the seaplane and the operator of the jet ski to maintain an adequate visual lookout, which resulted in a collision during the airplane's landing flare.

## Findings

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Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH OBJECT  
Phase of Operation: LANDING - FLARE/TOUCHDOWN

### Findings

1. OBJECT - OTHER
2. (C) VISUAL LOOKOUT - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. TERRAIN CONDITION - WATER
4. (C) VISUAL LOOKOUT - INADEQUATE - OTHER PERSON

## Factual Information

On July 21, 2003, about 1500 Alaska daylight time, a float-equipped Cessna 185 airplane, N8383Q, received minor damage to the right float assembly when it collided with a jet ski during the landing flare/touchdown at Big Lake, Alaska. The airplane was being operated as a visual flight rules (VFR) cross-country personal flight under Title 14, CFR Part 91, when the accident occurred. The airplane was operated by the pilot. The private certificated pilot, the sole occupant, was not injured. The operator of the jet ski received serious injuries. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed. The flight originated at the Lake Hood Seaplane Base, Anchorage, Alaska, about 1445. No flight plan was filed, nor was one required.

During a telephone conversation with the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) investigator-in-charge (IIC), on July 22, the pilot reported that he planned to land near Hulen Point on Big Lake. He indicated that the airplane's landing lights and strobe lights were on. He said he scanned the landing area from 500 feet as he overflew the lake, and again at 100 feet during the landing approach. As the airplane was in the landing flare, about 2 feet before touchdown, the pilot said he noticed a blurred object on the right side of the airplane, moving perpendicular to his direction of landing. He then felt and heard an impact on the right float. When the airplane settled off step, the pilot turned the airplane and observed a jet ski and rider in the water. He noticed other witnesses coming to the aid of the rider. His airplane began to list as the right float assembly began to fill with water, and he beached the airplane.

The pilot provided repair information for the right float of his airplane. Repairs were performed to the underside of the float, specifically, on the right sister keelson at the step bulkhead, and along the keel area, aft of the step bulkhead.

During a telephone conversation with the NTSB IIC on July 23, the operator of the jet ski reported that she is a member of a jet ski club, and at the time of the accident was practicing for an endurance ride on Big Lake. She said she was riding a stand-up type of ski that utilized a vertical handle, and she was wearing a jet ski helmet and goggles. She said that she had just come abeam Hulen Point, and was headed east about 30 feet from the shore. She indicated that she made sure no one was coming around the point, and began to accelerate. She then saw an airplane coming at her from her left side. The airplane collided with the upper handle portion of her jet ski. She said that the nose of the jet ski was not damaged, and at the time of the collision, the airplane had not touched the water. The operator said the jet ski does not have a speedometer, but she estimated her speed as between 20 to 35 mph. She reported that she sustained multiple breaks of the bones of her left arm, and received a slight concussion, but did not lose consciousness.

A review of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Federal Aviation Regulations (FARs) and the U.S. Coast Guard's Inland Navigation Rules, disclosed no right-of-way regulations

pertaining to an airborne seaplane and a vessel on the water. FAR 91.113, Right-of-Way rules: Except water operations, requires each person operating an aircraft to see and avoid other aircraft. FAR 91.115, Right-of-Way rules: Water operations, applies to right-of-way regulations when an aircraft is operated on the water. The U.S. Coast Guard's Inland Navigation Rules contain a requirement that vessel operators maintain a proper look-out by sight and hearing to make a full appraisal of the risk of collision with other vessels, and to adhere to right-of-way rules for vessels and seaplanes operated on the water.

## Pilot Information

|                                  |   |  |               |
|----------------------------------|---|--|---------------|
| <b>Certificate:</b>              | Private   | <b>Age:</b>                              | 59, Male      |
| <b>Airplane Rating(s):</b>       | Single-engine land; Single-engine sea   | <b>Seat Occupied:</b>                    | Left          |
| <b>Other Aircraft Rating(s):</b> | None  | <b>Restraint Used:</b>                   |               |
| <b>Instrument Rating(s):</b>     | None  | <b>Second Pilot Present:</b>             | No            |
| <b>Instructor Rating(s):</b>     | None  | <b>Toxicology Performed:</b>             | No            |
| <b>Medical Certification:</b>    | Class 3 Valid Medical-w/ waivers/lim  | <b>Last FAA Medical Exam:</b>            | May 13, 2003  |
| <b>Occupational Pilot:</b>       | No  | <b>Last Flight Review or Equivalent:</b> | June 25, 2002 |
| <b>Flight Time:</b>              | 1669 hours (Total, all aircraft), 1600 hours (Total, this make and model), 1669 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 25 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 15 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 2 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft) |  |               |

## Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

|                                      |                                |                                       |                 |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Aircraft Make:</b>                | Cessna                         | <b>Registration:</b>                  | N8383Q          |
| <b>Model/Series:</b>                 | 185                            | <b>Aircraft Category:</b>             | Airplane        |
| <b>Year of Manufacture:</b>          |                                | <b>Amateur Built:</b>                 |                 |
| <b>Airworthiness Certificate:</b>    | Normal                         | <b>Serial Number:</b>                 | 18503675        |
| <b>Landing Gear Type:</b>            | Float                          | <b>Seats:</b>                         | 4               |
| <b>Date/Type of Last Inspection:</b> | January 15, 2003 Annual        | <b>Certified Max Gross Wt.:</b>       | 3350 lbs        |
| <b>Time Since Last Inspection:</b>   | 35 Hrs                         | <b>Engines:</b>                       | 1 Reciprocating |
| <b>Airframe Total Time:</b>          | 1082 Hrs as of last inspection | <b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>           | CONTINENTAL     |
| <b>ELT:</b>                          | Installed, not activated       | <b>Engine Model/Series:</b>           | IO-520-D        |
| <b>Registered Owner:</b>             | GORDON THOMPSON                | <b>Rated Power:</b>                   | 300 Horsepower  |
| <b>Operator:</b>                     |                                | <b>Operating Certificate(s) Held:</b> | None            |

## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

|   |                                  |   |          |
|---|----------------------------------|---|----------|
| <b>Conditions at Accident Site:</b>     | Visual (VMC)                     | <b>Condition of Light:</b>                  | Day      |
| <b>Observation Facility, Elevation:</b> |                                  | <b>Distance from Accident Site:</b>         |          |
| <b>Observation Time:</b>                |                                  | <b>Direction from Accident Site:</b>        |          |
| <b>Lowest Cloud Condition:</b>          |                                  | <b>Visibility</b>                           | 20 miles |
| <b>Lowest Ceiling:</b>                  | Overcast / 2500 ft AGL           | <b>Visibility (RVR):</b>                    |          |
| <b>Wind Speed/Gusts:</b>                | 8 knots /                        | <b>Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:</b>     | /        |
| <b>Wind Direction:</b>                  | 130°                             | <b>Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:</b> | /        |
| <b>Altimeter Setting:</b>               |                                  | <b>Temperature/Dew Point:</b>               | 13°C     |
| <b>Precipitation and Obscuration:</b>   | No Obscuration; No Precipitation |   |          |
| <b>Departure Point:</b>                 | ANCHORAGE, AK (PALH)             | <b>Type of Flight Plan Filed:</b>           | None     |
| <b>Destination:</b>                     | BIG LAKE, AK                     | <b>Type of Clearance:</b>                   | None     |
| <b>Departure Time:</b>                  | 14:45 Local                      | <b>Type of Airspace:</b>                    | Class G  |

## Wreckage and Impact Information

|                            |                   |                             |                       |
|----------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Crew Injuries:</b>      | 1 None            | <b>Aircraft Damage:</b>     | Minor                 |
| <b>Passenger Injuries:</b> |                   | <b>Aircraft Fire:</b>       | None                  |
| <b>Ground Injuries:</b>    | 1 Serious         | <b>Aircraft Explosion:</b>  | None                  |
| <b>Total Injuries:</b>     | 1 Serious, 1 None | <b>Latitude, Longitude:</b> | 61.534999,-149.947784 |

## Administrative Information

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|--|---|
| <b>Investigator In Charge (IIC):</b>     | Erickson, Scott   |
| <b>Additional Participating Persons:</b> | WENDELL WILLIAMS; FAA-AL-ANC FSDO 03; ANCHORAGE, AK   |
| <b>Original Publish Date:</b>            | February 5, 2004  |
| <b>Last Revision Date:</b>               |   |
| <b>Investigation Class:</b>              | <a href="#">Class</a>   |
| <b>Note:</b>                             |   |
| <b>Investigation Docket:</b>             | <a href="https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=57546">https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=57546</a> |

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is an independent federal agency charged by Congress with investigating every civil aviation accident in the United States and significant events in other modes of transportation—railroad, transit, highway, marine, pipeline, and commercial space. We determine the probable causes of the accidents and events we investigate, and issue safety recommendations aimed at preventing future occurrences. In addition, we conduct transportation safety research studies and offer information and other assistance to family members and survivors for each accident or event we investigate. We also serve as the appellate authority for enforcement actions involving aviation and mariner certificates issued by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and US Coast Guard, and we adjudicate appeals of civil penalty actions taken by the FAA.

The NTSB does not assign fault or blame for an accident or incident; rather, as specified by NTSB regulation, “accident/incident investigations are fact-finding proceedings with no formal issues and no adverse parties ... and are not conducted for the purpose of determining the rights or liabilities of any person” (Title 49 *Code of Federal Regulations* section 831.4). Assignment of fault or legal liability is not relevant to the NTSB’s statutory mission to improve transportation safety by investigating accidents and incidents and issuing safety recommendations. In addition, statutory language prohibits the admission into evidence or use of any part of an NTSB report related to an accident in a civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report (Title 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b)). A factual report that may be admissible under 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b) is available [here](#).