

Have a question about a waterway or some other seaplane issue specific to your area? Ask your SPA Field Director! These experienced seaplane pilots and owners are knowl-

edgeable about the waterways and restrictions in their area, or they know who to contact to get the information. They are happy to hear from you.

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## LOW, SLOW, LONG

After reading Mark Twombly's article, "Going Low, Slow, and Long" (September/October 2018 *Water Flying* page 12), I felt a kinship that only comes from taking such a journey. After buying my Searey Elite in September 2018, and completing the Searey Flight Instructor's Association initial course, I left Florida in N42SR for points west.

My journey took me northwest over Mexico Beach, where I could only think of the havoc that a hurricane would cause if it hit land there. Now, I feel like I jinxed that beautiful place. Stopping for fuel in Panama City, then on to New Orleans for the first day. I remember flying over I-10 with a 20 mph headwind watching cars pass me as I cruised along at 85 mph.

Day two I went north to Vivian, Louisiana, then Claremore, Oklahoma, where I heard Richard Blade on Sirius XM's First Wave give me a shout out as I told him I would be flying across the country listening to his show. I stopped for the night in Great Bend, Kansas, where the owners of the FBO stayed late to take care of me. Their hospitality was only exceeded by their interest in my funny little seaplane.

The third day I departed at sunrise toward Akron, Colorado, then Rawlins, Wyoming. The great plains stretched out below me as I cruised along at 8,500 feet, only about 2,000 feet AGL. I made a point of taking a picture of a lonely bright red barn that seemed oddly out

of place in the middle of nowhere. Then I climbed to 12,500 feet as I crossed the Rockies toward my destination—46U, Alpine Airpark in Wyoming. While there I had the chance to take a few of my fellow residents for a ride in the Searey and got to ask them to do something they had never done before in an airplane: "Open the canopy and tell me how cold the water is..."

After a three-week break in my journey, I headed southwest toward Delta, Utah. A very lonely airport, complete with tumbleweeds, where the Searey was able to attract the only person there to come out and take a closer look. Then off to St. George, where nightfall and a very large cell of weather stopped my progress.

The last day was non-stop to my home in La Quinta, California. I flew over Lake Mead just east of Las Vegas wishing I hadn't promised to get home early as the water was so inviting! I ended up at Jaqueline Cochran Regional Airport (TRM) in Thermal. There the plane sits warm and cozy in the Desert Jet hangar, only coming out to leisurely fly around Southern California at about 2,000 feet AGL, with a huge smile on my face. Thinking about trips to Lake Havasu, possibly Oshkosh, maybe Vancouver, the Bahamas, Key West and any other seaplane-friendly location. I have toyed with the idea of Avalon Harbor in Catalina Island off the Southern California coast. Alas, I'm trying to keep my Searey out of the salt.

2,754 nautical miles as the crow flies,

but I took some liberties. I also lost about 10 pounds on my ion-flight cashews, jerky and Gatorade diet.

Rob Wilson

## SURVIVAL COURSE

In late September 2018, I scheduled a one-day underwater egress course with Survival Systems, USA in Groton, Connecticut. I had wanted to take the course for a long time since I fly amphibian aircraft recreationally on a regular basis, but I kept putting it off due to time constraints. I have almost 3,000 hours in amphibian Huskies and Seareys.

The course was more than I ever imagined. My anticipated anxiety over being upside down, seat belted, under water were quickly calmed by the very capable staff. The cockpit was configured to replicate the Husky I currently fly. After six or seven rollovers and following their system of exiting the cockpit, I felt confident in my new discipline, although it is one that I hope never to have to use.

I felt very satisfied over my decision to take the course and had no regrets regarding my investment in order to learn new things about seaplane flying. I was amazed to discover how many things I did not know! Survival Systems USA offered a useful, challenging and informative learning experience that did not disappoint. I think every seaplane pilot should consider this course.

Jerry Roth ■



Pilots who fly low, slow, and long cross country flights feel a kinship.