

Seaplane Adventures



With the arrival of warmer weather, seaplane enthusiasts are drawn back to the lakes. Seaplanes with quiet electric motors are particularly suitable for this wonderful way of flying model aeroplanes in the great outdoors.

Three categories

Manned seaplanes are usually divided into three categories:

- Floatplanes
- Amphibious aircraft
- Flying boats



This simplified categorisation is generally also used in aeromodelling, the most popular being model floatplanes such as Piper and similar aircraft. These types have the fuselage and propellers at a sufficient height above the water surface, which is generally not the case with flying boats and amphibious models. With the latter, there is a tendency for a propeller to come into contact with water. The resulting impressive water fountains can have the detrimental effect of slowing the aircraft down during take-off. Many flying boats are equipped with sponsons on the outside quarter of the wing to help keep the aircraft horizontal during the take-off phase.



In conditions with crosswinds or cross waves, just taxiing to the take-off location is a real challenge, even for experienced pilots. Take-off for flying boats with sponsons then turns into a veritable rollercoaster ride. If just one of the two sponsons hits a wave, the plane can be thrown off course by 90 degrees. High

wing planes with floats present relatively few problems, especially when the floats are fitted with a water rudder. This makes for easy manoeuvring between launch and take-off sites. Overall, lightweight model planes with correspondingly low wing loads are far more suitable for water flying and easier to operate than heavier ones. This is why vintage planes are particularly suitable.



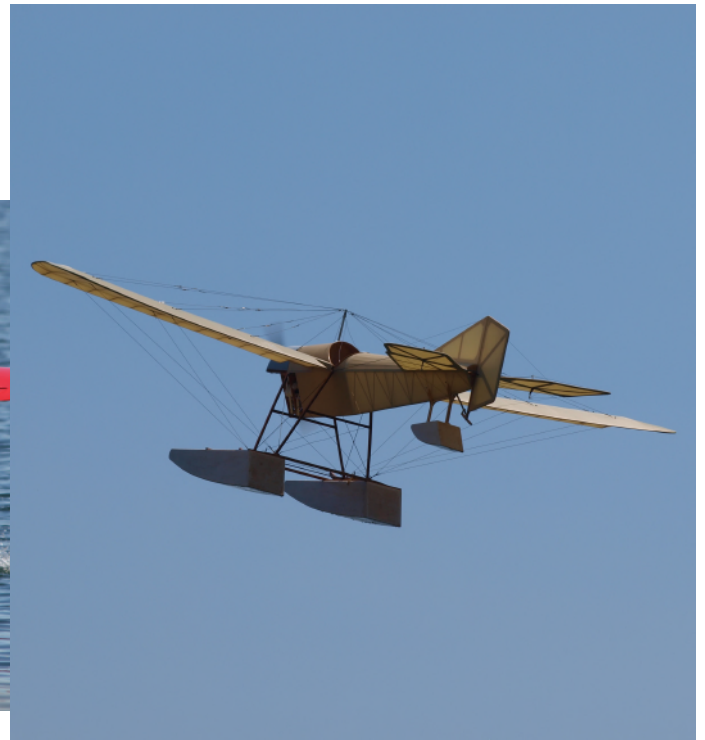
Gliding and lift-off

Unlike taking off and landing on grass or hard-surface airstrips, doing so on water is often an adventure. Depending on the size of the model, even small waves can make taking off difficult or even impossible.



What's important

- Never fly near beaches where there are swimmers and other people.
- Look out for anglers and fishermen.
- Never fly in nature reserves.
- Never fly in harbours or over residential areas.
- If in doubt, do not fly in difficult weather conditions.
- Have a "rescue boat" available, e.g. an inflatable rubber dinghy.



Meets and competitions

As FAI Scale World Championships are held at airfields and not near water, there are generally no seaplanes to be found at them – unless they are amphibious planes also capable of taking off from land. There are, however, plenty of seaplane meets and even competitions - in

Europe these are particularly frequent in Italy and Austria. Dates can be found on various websites.



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FAI Scale Rules
<http://www.fai.org/ciam-documents>

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