



Aviation Investigation Preliminary Report

Location:	Avon, ME	Accident Number:	ERA26FA205
Date & Time:	May 12, 2026, 10:58 Local	Registration:	N61368
Aircraft:	Cessna A185F	Injuries:	1 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Public aircraft		

On May 12, 2026, about 1058 eastern daylight time, a Cessna A185F airplane, N61368, was substantially damaged when it was involved in an accident near Avon, Maine. The pilot was fatally injured. The airplane was owned by the state of Maine and operated as a public use aircraft.

The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife, Maine Warden Service reported that the flight originated from a seaplane base on Crystal Lake, Harrison, ME, and repositioned to Rangeley Lake to load fish for the purpose of stocking Schoolhouse Pond, a local body of water. The airplane was equipped with floats and two fish pods, one mounted on each float which were electronically dumped via pilot activated instrument panel mounted controls. Following the repositioning, the airplane’s right pod was loaded with about 12 gallons of water and 42 lbs. of fish.

According to preliminary ADS-B data from the FAA, the airplane departed Rangely Lake at about 1030 and proceeded to the southeast for about 21 miles to Schoolhouse Pond. The airplane continued about 1.5 miles east of the pond, turned left and flew along the pond’s eastern shore in a southwesterly direction. The final data points showed the airplane in a right turn about 400 yards southwest of Schoolhouse Pond.

The wreckage was located on rising terrain in a densely wooded area about 400 yards southwest of Schoolhouse Pond. The airplane came to rest in a nose down attitude and all the major components of the airplane were accounted for at the accident site. The floats remained attached to the fuselage and exhibited leading-edge impact damage. Fish from the stocking operation were observed in the right fish pod and on the ground adjacent to the right fish pod. There was an odor of fuel observed at the accident site, and numerous tree branches near the main wreckage exhibited angular separations with paint transfer marks at their separation areas.

The empennage was relatively undamaged. The wings exhibited leading-edge impact damage, were displaced forward and partially separated from the fuselage. The pilot and copilot seats were impact damaged and the seat rails were deformed. The instrument panel was fragmented. The fuel selector was positioned to BOTH, and fuel line continuity was established from the fuel tanks to the gascolator. The flaps were noted in the 20° position, and flight control continuity was established from the cockpit area to all the flight control surfaces.

The engine was partially separated from the firewall. The three-bladed aluminum propeller was impact separated from the engine and remained attached to the separated crankshaft flange. Leading-edge damage was noted to the propeller blades.

The wreckage was retained for further examination.

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Cessna	Registration:	N61368
Model/Series:	A185F	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Amateur Built:			
Operator:	DEPARTMENT OF INLAND FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None
Operator Designator Code:			

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	VMC	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	8B0,1825 ft msl	Observation Time:	11:00 Local
Distance from Accident Site:	21 Nautical Miles	Temperature/Dew Point:	6°C /-6°C
Lowest Cloud Condition:		Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	13 knots / 25 knots, 290°
Lowest Ceiling:	Broken / 4800 ft AGL	Visibility:	10 miles
Altimeter Setting:	30.06 inches Hg	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	NONE
Departure Point:	rangeley, ME	Destination:	rangeley, ME

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Fatal	Latitude, Longitude:	44.773032,-70.268125 (est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Galbraith, Damian
Additional Participating Persons:	Christopher Grant; FAA/ FSDO; Portland, ME Ryan Roth; Textron Aviation ; Wichita, KS
Investigation Class:	Class 3

Note: