

On Wednesday, September 4th at approximately 5:00 pm., I was in the right seat of N143CA, a CE208 amphibious aircraft, departing the East River (6N7) with one passenger going to East Hampton (JPX). Our departure path was southbound, towards the south shore of Long Island. My role is to act as a dockhand for water operations. I untied from the dock and was closing the door when I was rushed back to my seat by the Pilot in Command. He was trying to rush the departure to beat the wake of a Sea Streak ferry, which is known for having a strong wake. As I sat down and buckled my five-point harness we were already on the move. We were getting rocked around by the choppy water in the river and hit the wake of the Sea Streak, launching us into the air. We came back down to the water on the left float. I did not feel the wing strike the water.

I am not positive as to where we were exactly when the PIC pointed out that the left wing had been dented, but I believe we were somewhere near the Verrazzano bridge. I never touched the flight controls, but the PIC stated that the airplane was flying normally. I asked if he felt we should land sooner than our intended destination of East Hampton, and he told me his plan was Islip. I suggested Farmingdale as it was closer, but he said he wanted to go to Islip since that's our base. From the right seat it was difficult to see the damage on the left wing, I tried to look around his head, however it was very difficult to get a good look but I could see the leading edge of the wing was dented.

The remainder of the flight was uneventful, and we landed at Islip where another aircraft met the passenger to take her the rest of the way to JPX.

I have been in the right seat going into the East River several times, with several different PICs. Every one of them would always wait for the wake to diminish before trying to launch. I also am not sure why, if the PIC said the aircraft was flying fine, he decided to divert to ISP, yet didn't choose a closer airport like JFK or FRG as I suggested, since there was really no way he could assess the damage.

Shane L. Drew