

New Zealand Fishing News.

Book review: written by Mark Kitteridge.

How to use an Echo Sounder/Fish Finder

By John Adams

Published by Fremantle Boat School

John Adams was the man to write this book. Coming from a very nautical background, John always knew that his future lay out at sea - and it certainly did.

He started off with commercial fishing (where he quickly became well respected, finding fish where others did not), then moved into the oil rig industry, often crewing and skippering aboard support vessels and tug boats. He also did plenty of recreational angling and diving, and eventually this lifestyle led to him starting up Fremantle Boat School.

Initially set up to deliver boat safety courses, it wasn't long before he realised there was an educational hole when it came to good, up-to-date information on using fish finders (called echo sounders in his book), with many of his students keen to learn more. So, drawing on his extensive knowledge, he started making notes on the subject, and quickly realised he was writing a book.

How to <ITAL>Use an Echo Sounder/Fish Finder<> is that book. John's primary aim is to educate those with absolutely no knowledge, all the way through to those with much more experience, guiding them through the more specialised areas and applications. (What I wasn't expecting though, was all the incidental and interesting knowledge imparted in relation to other aspects of the marine environment - fish behaviour in particular - and the keen observations made from a life spent aboard boats. No doubt about it, this guy's been there, done that!)

So this book's found a good home. Despite my being a reasonably proficient angler, my fish-finding skills are much more basic: I turn my fish-finder on and

then read the screen. I can tell what the bottom looks like and what marks are fish (mostly), and even what some fish look like, but that's about it. Understandably, John starts off with the basics, covering topics that range from 'How an echo sounder works' and 'Can fish hear your echo sounder,' all the way through to 'Angle or aspect of fish in sound beam,' and 'Target strength of fish.' So initially I was 'up with the play', but upon being walked further through the fish-finding process (called echo sounding here), I began to learn more and more, thanks to clearly written, straightforward language, accompanied by copious computer-generated diagrams. Next to be explained are the various and useful aspects involving sounder use, including aspects such as 'High and low frequencies,' 'Bottom zoom,' and 'The A scope and real time signal (RTS).' This is currently where I'm at, and already I have learned more through this book in three hours than I have in the last 20 years of fishing!

However, 'Interpreting acoustic images' is still to come, and I look forward to more fully understanding the advantages behind such topics as 'Interpreting acoustic images' and 'Full and split screens views using bottom lock.'

With all that information under my belt, I cannot be a better skipper and fisherman - and isn't that what we all aspire to be?