

Variety of Pinger Use



Government agencies and marine service companies are finding a variety of uses for acoustic pingers and pinger receivers. Pingers are signaling devices that can be attached to an underwater site or instrument package. Using the pinger receiver, a gun-like instrument carried by a diver, the sonar signal transmitted by the pinger can easily be detected and followed to its source.

Scientists at the US National Marine Fisheries Service attach pingers to instruments that help them monitor the health of our oceans. They never need worry about losing an expensive instrument like a Current, Depth, and Temperature (CTD) probe when one of these beacons is attached. Nautica Environmental Associates (NAE) in the United Arab Emirates use pingers for similar work in private industry. NAE provides ecological

consulting services to the region's oil and gas companies, and conducts environmental investigations and impact studies. At the University of Delaware's College of Marine, Ocean, and Environment senior research technician Bill Parnella reports, "We use them to locate a small unmanned research sub when it doesn't do what its told." So does U-Boat Worx, a dutch manufacturer of manned submersibles. They attach these acoustic signaling devices to their subs as an added safety feature.

Other users of pingers and receivers include the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and France's military and police units. ESDT, a French distributor of equipment to the country's Army, police, and special forces, has supplied these devices to help in combating terrorism and narcotic trafficking. One use for the pingers is attaching them to explosive devices, such as mines, so they can be relocated and removed by EOD specialists. These acoustic beacons have also caught the attention of many public safety dive teams. Groups like Harrisburg River Rescue and Emergency Services in Pennsylvania are attaching pingers to their divers when performing search and recovery operations. Should a diver run into trouble, other team members using the receiver can quickly locate the individual in distress.

Associated Terminals, a full service marine facility near New Orleans, offers an array of berthing options for their customers. They use pingers and receivers to relocate mooring chains that get lost on the muddy harbor bottom, saving days of dive time searching for it. JW Fishers developed a special long duration pinger, where the device is deployed for a year or more at a time. The underwater housing is significantly larger than the standard pinger to accommodate more batteries which provide the extended operating time.