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Video Friday: Rescue Robot, Gesture Control, and 1986 Self-Driving Van

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[\(There were a few pieces before the Aerovel piece.\)](#)

I wouldn't want to try to drive a boat through Arctic ice, and neither do captains of ships who have to do it to retrieve anchors from mooring sites. Aerovel's Flexrotor UAV acts as a spotter aircraft to help find safe routes through the ice:



Video from the aircraft became the most compelling show onboard, especially for the seasoned ice pilot responsible for navigating the ship to its targets. Video was also followed with keen interest by web viewers in Alaska and the “lower 48,” streamed in real-time through the boat’s satellite link. Occasionally their view was clouded by fast-forming fog – a common problem that, together with the cold and distance from help, makes manned-aircraft reconnaissance a daunting proposition over the Arctic. Low visibility would have put a helicopter’s crew in danger, but Flexrotor simply returned to the fog-shrouded ship, landed automatically, and waited for the skies to clear. The whole reconnaissance operation was much safer and more practical than any manned-aircraft option, and less costly.

[[Aerovel](#)]