



## No Traffic? Consider A Portable

Since even the lowest-end active traffic alert system installation will easily top 10 grand, this safety-enhancing system rarely makes the equipment list on a budget upgrade. But there is a worthy alternative: Zacon's XRX portable traffic minder saddled to a portable GPS. In a recent comprehensive shoot-out between several portable traffic nags by sister publication *Aviation Consumer*, the Zacon XRX performed best at spotting traffic of any in the test group. Plus, it has a host of useful features.

Better yet, the XRX can play its traffic symbology on everything from the Honeywell AV80R GPS to later-generation Garmin portables and several tablets. It also easily interfaces with LSA/experimental avionics. The XRX is unique by displaying the target's bearing and its feature set allows for two configurable traffic screen options, including a top-down, 3-D quadrant view. It has an RS-232 serial port and an audio interface, and it comes with a rugged data cable. Speaking of audio, the XRX offers tone or voice alerts routed through headsets with a plug-in adapter which Zacon calls Headset Direct. It worked well with our Bose headsets when the extra wires weren't getting in the way.

We think the XRX traffic presentation and azimuth function is the most detailed of any of the portables. The unit detects and paints up to three target aircraft, and bearing data is depicted with intuitive on-screen arrows. It also has easy-to-navigate menus for setting surveillance target range—one, three or six nm as well as a relative altitude window of  $\pm 500$ , 1500 or 2500 feet. You can even configure whether the host aircraft is a high or low wing. An optional ground mode won't show traffic less than 200 feet above, eliminating nuisance calls on the ground. For traffic resolution, the system uses an integral altimeter, compass and turn-and-bank as well as thermal sensors. As a result, there's display of local squawk code, altitude, bank angle, bearing and temperature, offering some critical and useful flight data.

Keep in mind: Portable units won't catch all the traffic, given their passive operating logic, which simply listens for the 1090 MHz transponder transmissions of other aircraft. Still, if budget traffic alerting is high on your list of safety devices, I think the Zacon XRX—coupled with a portable display—offers the best solution with good performance and an increased level of safety you can rely on.