

X-Tag News

DTF™ - Digital Tide Filter

This new feature enhances the operation of the constant pressure popoff. As many of you know, the sensitivity of the constant pressure popoff feature is limited by the need to ignore tide induced pressure changes, especially on a tag trapped on the bottom attached to a dead fish. When activated this digital filter notches out the low frequency tidal pressure changes, monitoring only those caused by vertical movement of the

fish, so allowing a much tighter depth band setting.

Together with a programmable delayed activation and constant pressure time window, the DTF™ should be especially helpful for those of you studying fish that stay near the surface for extended periods or inhabit shallow waters.

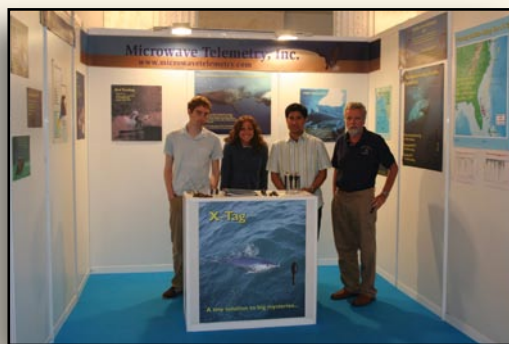
Spain Conference

We at Microwave Telemetry, Inc. would like to thank everyone who visited our booth at the *Second International Symposium on Tagging and Tracking Marine Fish with Electronic Devices* in San Sebastian, Spain last month. We hope you enjoyed it.

MTI Conference!

We are considering hosting our own 3-day Bird Conference in the fall of 2008. The conference would include scientific papers, speakers, and workshops relating to bird tracking.

If you would be interested in attending or presenting at this conference, please contact us by March 2008. If there is enough interest, we will post more information in the next issue of Tracker News.



Russell, Lucy, Ricardo and Paul at the Microwave Telemetry booth in Spain.

Photo by Ted Rollins



Your Strangest Story.

Here is the winning "whopper" from the stories that you all sent in!

Over the past several years we've put out about 150 PSATs on billfish (blue marlin, white marlin, and sailfish), and while I'd like to suggest that all of the deployments have gone off without a hitch, it would be stretching the truth big time to do so. I guess our "strangest" story involves an early tagging experience off the coast of Punta Cana, Dominican Republic. We were deploying PTT 100 tags on white marlin in a pilot study to determine if these smaller billfish (typically 45 - 60 lbs) were capable of carrying PSATs. The weather was rough and white marlin were scarce -- we were lucky to catch a fish a day. Around noon on our second day I was fighting the first fish of the day and my graduate student Andrij Horodysky was standing nearby, ready to tag the white marlin once the mate had control of the leader and the fish was positioned properly next to the boat. With high winds and a confused sea, it was difficult getting the fish in a position where Andrij could deploy the tag. After considerable jockeying of the boat and the fish, Andrij had the right moment and started to deploy the tag, but before the dart could be applied the fish jumped and the leader was pulled out of the mate's hands. Andrij stopped tagging in mid-stroke and in so doing, the tag fell off the tagging pole and into the water. While I was trying to regain control of the fish, the mate was preparing to jump in and rescue the tag. I assured the mate that the tag floated and that all we needed to do was to get a long handled net and move the boat into a position where we could recover the tag. As the boat was slowly backing down into the swells, a free swimming white marlin appeared out of nowhere and started to charge the floating tag. *It was trying to eat our \$3800 tag!* Pandemonium ensued as we screamed at the free swimming fish and used the long handled net to discourage its appetite. We prevailed and in short order the tag was back on the boat and quickly attached to the back of white marlin #1 (as opposed to inside the stomach of white marlin #2).

John Graves, Professor of Marine Science, Virginia Institute of Marine Science, College of William and Mary, VA

Journeys of Sakers *continued from page 4*

of hours), she travelled 334 km/day with an average speed of 40-50 km/hour when crossing the Mediterranean Sea. Her speed was slower over land. Viki's track supported the theory that falcons cross large bodies of water. She took off in Greece on the island of Zakynthos and flew almost straight to North-Africa, traveling almost 600 km and spending more than 12 hours in the air non-stop. Unfortunately, her PTT stopped transmitting on 12/10/2007 for an unknown reason (trapping for falconry?).

Emese is our only falcon with a non-GPS PTT that started the migration. She made the most impressive move so far. She travelled about 3100 km from

South Hungary to Libya across Egypt within 14 days (14/10/2007 - 27/10/2007). That means an average travelling speed of 185 km/day. Similarly to Viki, she also avoided the straits - well-known crossing sites for migrating raptors.

The other birds were still in the Carpathian Basin at the time of writing this article.

Of course, there are many open questions which we hope to receive answers to in the coming years with the help of satellite tracking.

We would like to thank our colleagues, who give their best to learn more about the movements of our Sakers.

www.sakerlife.mme.hu

mprommer@yahoo.com