

Tracker News



Microwave Telemetry, Inc.

Cruising the Oceans: Above and Below

Dear Customers and Friends,

I have always dreamed of taking the 'Southwest Chief' from Chicago to Los Angeles; this would be an amazing train ride crossing the prairies of Kansas, the mountains of Colorado and the desert and stark red rock country of Arizona. I also wonder how I would occupy my time: perhaps admiring the scenery or reading a book. I recall our last newsletter where we looked at amazingly long journeys taken by relatively small birds. Do they admire the scenery? Do they rest or take a break? Why do birds undertake these long treks, particularly over the oceans? So, please join me in this newsletter as we cruise above and below the oceans.

The wandering albatross has rightly earned the reputation of being the ultimate cruiser of oceans, covering staggering distances. We thank Susanne Åkesson and Henri Weimerskirch for taking us on their albatross' journey of 52,346 km covered in 7 months, an average distance of 610 km a day!

From the southern oceans we travel to the Pacific Ocean where we follow the foraging trips of the Hawaiian Petrel with individual trips exceeding 10,000 km. We thank Josh Adams for introducing us to this rare and endangered bird. Also battling the wind and waves of the Pacific Ocean is the Pomarine Jaeger whose migration from Barrow, Alaska to Australia constitutes a trek of sorts. Our heartfelt thanks to Declan Troy for sharing his jaeger's wanderings with us.

As we hop across the United States and into the Atlantic Ocean, we encounter the ocean sunfish or *Mola mola*, whose shape and size belie its ability to cruise the oceans. We are grateful to Inga Potter for a most fascinating article on this mysterious creature of the deep.

It is rather astounding that all of the above bird studies were carried out using standard solar PTTs. I can only imagine how much more we could have learned using GPS PTTs, though at this point these are not light enough for the jaeger and the petrel. However, we continue to develop this technology and are pleased to bring you our latest parser with its capability of importing data directly into Google Earth™. Also, we present here a short introduction to GPS in an attempt to help newcomers to this technology.

We thank you for the opportunity to serve you. Have a productive field season and a good summer.

Sincerely,
Paul and the staff at MTI



Photo by Ghislain Doremus

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Above:
A young male wandering albatross fitted
with a GPS PTT at the Crozet Islands.