



Tracker News

Microwave Telemetry, Inc.

Conserving Biodiversity Through Technological Diversity

Dear Customers, Colleagues and Friends,

Reading through the articles featured in this issue of our newsletter spurred thoughts of common themes we, here at MTI, see every day. It is staggering how many taxa can now be tracked and studied in the year 2014. We hear, either first hand or through the literature, about the variety of species you are dedicating your lives to conserve. Not all are cute, charismatic or even economically important – undoubtedly some of you have trouble making the argument to your funders and institutions that the protection of your study species is a worthwhile endeavor – but we, as conservationists, are well aware that species diversity is the key to preservation.

I was nine when my parents started this company, relatively unimpressed and admittedly embarrassed (imagine explaining to other 3rd graders that your dad makes bird backpacks for a living). I do, however, remember the excitement after the first bird was tracked with a 95g satellite transmitter. Now, 23 years later, I am amazed (rather than embarrassed) but mostly humbled to still be a part of this journey.

Through the last quarter century of designing transmitters, we have amassed a diverse array of devices. In a way, the needs of avian and marine conservation and the availability of technology have coevolved. However, while the future brings the excitement of new technologies, human population growth, development and diminishing resources continue to threaten more species' existence. There is definitely more work to be done!

This issue explores a variety of species, transmitter models and examples of how studying animal movement can protect biodiversity and, ultimately, all life on this planet. Mihai Valcu writes about the long voyage of pectoral sandpipers tracked with 5g Solar PTTs, while Larry Bryan and his team share data from their GSM/GPS units used to examine fine-scale vulture movement. Brian Washburn reports on how he is using our smallest GPS transmitter to track gulls in Chicago. Lastly, Cindy Tribuzio explains migration patterns and habitat use of dogfish in the Gulf of Alaska. We are grateful for their contributions. Someone once told me that we must learn to appreciate and conserve all animal life because what happens to them, will eventually happen to all of us. Thank you for allowing us to share that goal through your research.

Lucy and the Team at MTI



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Above: Osprey in flight.