

FIELD NOTES

RESEARCH GROUP: *Club de Cazadores de Becada (CCB), a team project*

STUDY SPECIES: *Eurasian Woodcock*

STUDY LOCATION: *Spanish State*



Some Club de Cazadores de Becada members and helpers. Photo by Zarbo Ibarrola

BACKGROUND:

In the early 2000s, the smallest PTTs weighed 18g, while the Eurasian Woodcock's weight is around 300-350g.

Most of the information available on the internet about the species was already analyzed, but at the end of 2004, we knew that MTI was preparing a new Solar 12g PTT. Our first project, in 2006, was very exciting — lots of nights without sleeping, watching our computer and waiting for new data. Really incredible! We were pioneers in Europe at the time, and today there are more related projects in Russia, Scotland, Italy, Great Britain, and the USA.

BACKGROUND, continued:

The Eurasian Woodcock is a very unusual bird. The bird flies by night. During the day, it rests in places where there is not much sunlight, creating a technological challenge when using Solar PTTs. With the financial help of different institutions (the Governments of Navarre, Catalonia, Bizkaia, Majorca, with some banks and the people from Argos) plus many people (hunters, field people, and more) who helped us to locate the birds in different places around the whole Spanish State, from Galicia to Catalonia, from Andalusia to the Basque Country, we have been able to really understand much more about this bird's behavior. In the future, we hope to try using small Solar Argos/GPS PTTs to track Eurasian Woodcocks.

KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

- What is the real migration route of Eurasian Woodcocks?
- How far do they fly before resting?
- What is the speed of flight?
- Are the Ural Mountains their final destination?
- How do you solve the interference problems around Catalonia?
- Was the PTTs charge a limiting factor?



Eurasian Woodcock. Photo by Ibon Telletxea

APPROACH:

First we used the Solar 12g PTT (one with an ON/OFF duty cycle of 10/48 and two with 10/72). Then Solar 9.5g PTTs with a duty cycle of 10/48. MTI gave us two prototypes, with new solar cells, and a duty cycle of 8/55. Nowadays, we are using Solar 9.5g PTTs with a duty cycle of 10/40. We also developed a special harness to attach the PTT to the bird.