

MiniPAT User Guide



WILDLIFE
COMPUTERS

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About the MiniPAT

The MiniPAT is a pop-up satellite archival tag used to track behavior and migration of marine animals. It is an archival tag equipped with an Argos transmitter and a corrodible attachment link. The MiniPAT is designed to be attached to an animal by a tether. The corrodible burn pin releases the tag from the tether on a pre-programmed date, or optionally when the MiniPAT determines it is no longer attached to an animal. Depth, temperature, and light-level data are collected and summarized for transmission through Argos. Transmission occurs after the release of the tag from the tether, while the tag is floating on the ocean surface.

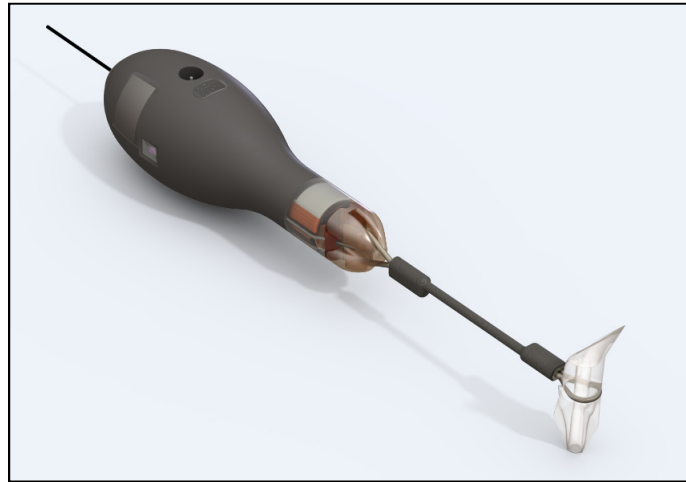


Figure 1 – MiniPAT tag rigged with a stainless steel heat shrink-covered tether and a Wilton anchor.

About this Guide

This guide describes how to set up and deploy the MiniPAT. Transmitted data products are also explained.

Before you Begin

The list below shows what is required in order to configure and deploy a MiniPAT:

- A Windows computer with Tag Agent software and USB-Blue driver installed
- A Wildlife Computers Portal account
- A USB-Blue communications cable and magnet
- Argos account access

Visit wildlifecomputers.com to download the required Tag Agent software and set up a Portal account. At the end of this document, there is a list of key concepts to reference. We recommend new users review this list.

Anatomy of a Tag

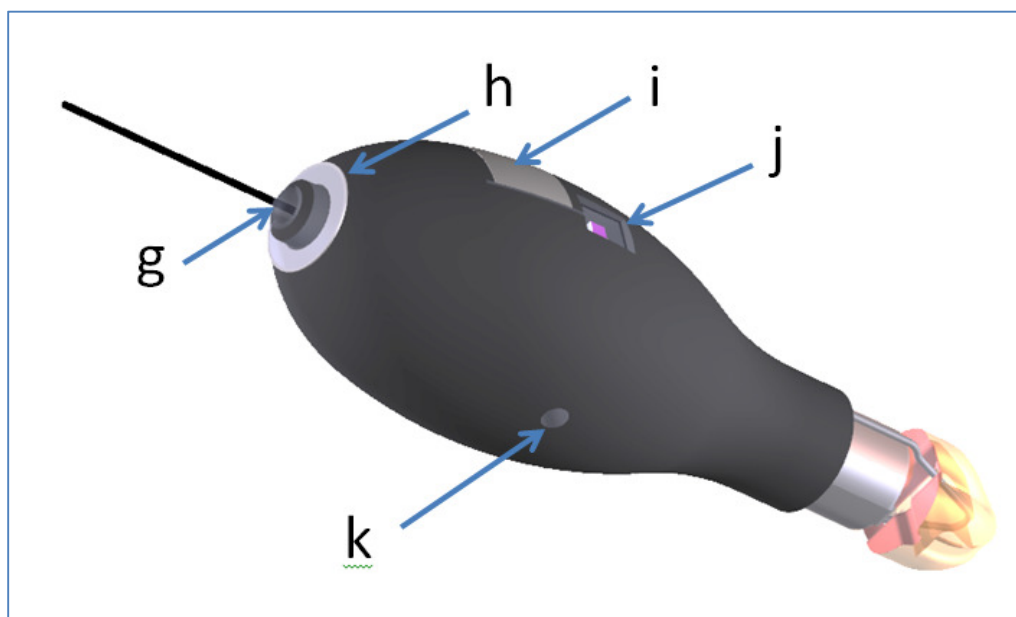
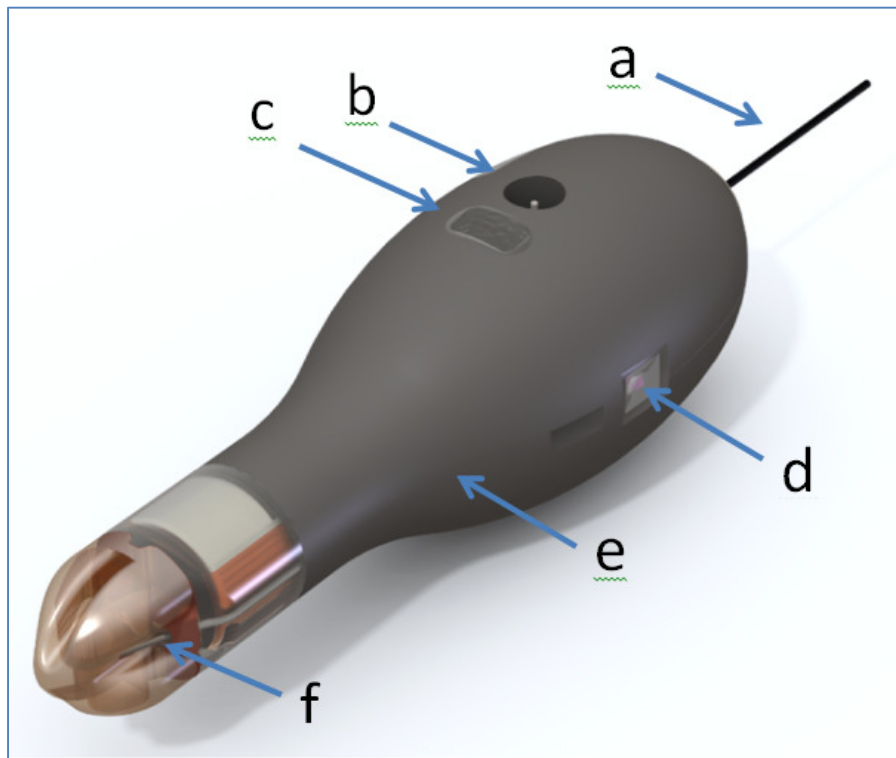


Figure 2 – MiniPAT tag showing: (a) Argos antenna, (b) temperature sensor , (c) communications port with plug, (d) light sensor (1 of 2), (e) float, (f) release pin, (g) LED light, (h) wet/dry sensor, (i) ground plate, (j) light sensor (2 of 2), (k) pressure sensor.

The communications port is where the USB-Blue plugs into the tag. Prior to a deployment, this port should be sealed with the plug provided by Wildlife Computers. Apply a small amount of silicone grease (supplied in shipment) to the port and press the plug into position. The plug protects the pins so data can more easily be downloaded if tag is recovered. The plug is not required for the tag to function normally.

The wet/dry sensor, ground plate, pressure sensor, thermistor, and electronic release pin should not be covered. Covering these sensors will interfere with the normal function of the tag. This includes antifouling coatings, brightly colored paints for recovery purposes, and attachment adhesives (e.g. epoxy).

Interacting with a Tag

Tag Agent

Tag Agent software is used to communicate with the MiniPAT. Tag Agent can be downloaded from our website wildlifecomputers.com. Once installed, Tag Agent can be used to:

- Change tag states
- Configure tag settings
- Upload remotely-selected settings into a tag
- Check sensor readings and conduct test transmissions

To communicate with a tag, first open Tag Agent software (Figure 3).



Figure 3 – Tag Agent screen prior to tag connection.

Use the USB-Blue cable to plug the tag into your PC. Take care to ensure that the pins are aligned. Once plugged in, swipe a magnet near the tag communication port to establish connection. The tag LED at the base of the antenna will turn orange, and the Tag Agent home screen will appear with tag information on the left and sensor readings on the right (Figure 4).

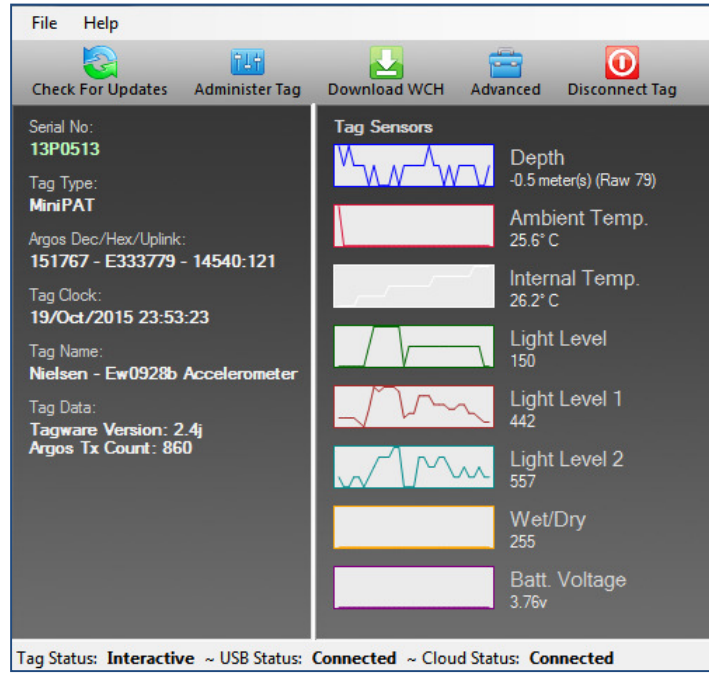


Figure 4 – Tag Agent home screen.

Tag States: Start, Auto Start, and Stop

MiniPAT tags have 3 states: Start, Auto Start, and Stop. When in Start mode, a tag is running and will begin its deployment. Auto Start allows the tag to Start by submersion in seawater (for use in brackish or freshwater contact Wildlife Computers). In Stop mode, the tag will remain unresponsive unless connected to Tag Agent. Stop mode is used for storage of tags for periods longer than a month.

Changing Tag States

Within Tag Agent, the Disconnect Tag tab on the top right navigation bar can be used to put a tag in any state.

Once disconnected, a single pass of a magnet near the communications port will cause the tag to blink the indicator light, revealing its current state.

- Two blinks and a pause repeated 3 times means the tag is in Auto Start.
- Ten rapid blinks indicate the tag is Started.
- No blinks indicate the tag is Stopped.

A magnet can be used to toggle the MiniPAT out of Start mode. This requires two specifically timed passes of the magnet. First, swipe the magnet and wait for the tag to indicate its current state. At the end of the blinking pattern (10 rapid blinks in a row if Started) the indicator light will remain on for several seconds. If the magnet is swiped a second time during the extended light-on stretch, the state will toggle. The second swipe needs to happen in the window when the light is on.

For the first 5 days of deployment, toggling with the magnet will switch the tag from Start state into Auto Start state. This allows a tag to be redeployed without having to be plugged into Tag Agent. After 5 days, the magnet toggle will put the MiniPAT in Shut Down mode. This is to avoid unintentional data erasure. If a new deployment is started, the MiniPAT will write over data previously collected.

In addition to revealing the tag state, the LED also indicates the following conditions:

- Erasing the archive: Many rapid blinks with the LED mostly on indicate that the tag is clearing the archive in preparation for a new deployment.
- Sample rate: For the first two hours of a deployment (or until the tag depth exceeds 5 meters) the tag will briefly blink at the sampling interval.

Configuring Tag Settings

To configure tag settings within Tag Agent, select the Administer Tag button in the upper menu.

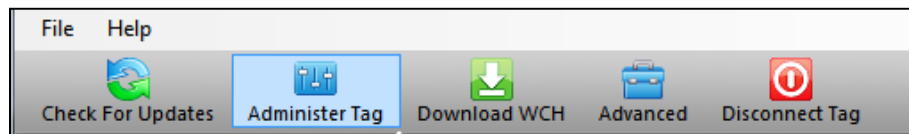


Figure 5 – Tag Agent menu bar. Select Administer Tag to edit tag settings.

A new window will open revealing 4 sections: Tag Information, Tag Release Sequence, Data Product Settings, and Transmission Settings.

Tag Information

Tag Details & Argos Settings

Tag administrators, tagware version and tag type are displayed on the Tag Details tab (Figure 6). Tag Name is an optional user-definable field which makes a tag or tags easy to find in the Tag Portal using the filter. The Argos Settings tab displays the tag PTT ID details.

For more information on these terms, reference the Key Concepts section at the end of this document.

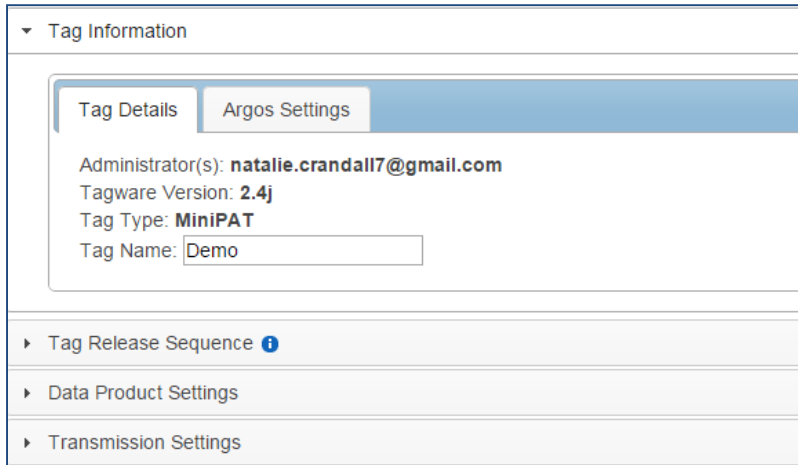


Figure 6 – Expanded view of Tag Details tab.

Tag Release Sequence

These settings define when the tag will activate its release mechanism.

Either an interval release or scheduled date release can be set. The release will begin at 20:00 UTC after the number of days specified or on the chosen date.

The tag automatically sets its archival sample interval based on the deployment length specified.

Conditional Release

The MiniPAT uses sensor measurements to make reasonable assumptions about the state of the deployment. Depending on your study design and the behavior of your study animal, you can program the tag to release and begin transmitting if certain conditions are met.

Auto-Detect Tag Detachment

This parameter automatically initiates release if the tag detects that it is floating at the surface.

- Select a depth threshold that the tag must exceed before monitoring for detachment. This helps prevent triggering a conditional release before the tag is attached to its host animal. For example, if you are programming a MiniPAT tag and put the tag in Start mode using Tag Agent (while tag is attached to your PC) it will detect constant depth while it's sitting on your desk.
- Select how long the tag must be at the surface before a release will occur. The pin burn will occur after the specified time has elapsed, not at 20:00 UTC like the scheduled release.

Auto-Detect Mortality

This parameter monitors for three mortality conditions:

1. Floater — the tag is floating at the surface (constant depth of 0)
2. Sitter — the tag is sitting at a constant depth
3. Sinker — the tag remains below a certain depth

Upon satisfying any one of these conditions, the tag automatically initiates release. To monitor for mortality, configure the following:

- Select a depth threshold that the tag must exceed before monitoring for detachment.
- Optionally, select the depth that the tag must remain below to be considered a sinker.
- Select the duration. This sets how long each of the depth criteria must be maintained before a release will occur. The pin burn will occur after the specified time has elapsed, not at 20:00 UTC like the scheduled release.
- Select the variance. Variance is used here in a statistical sense (see example below). Be mindful of the tidal activity in your study area. A tag stuck on the bottom will detect some minor depth changes as tides change the water depth. If you choose a range that is too small for local tidal conditions, the tag will not initiate a conditional release when it is stuck or sitting on the bottom.

▼ Tag Release Sequence ⓘ

Release my tag days after deployment start, or on this given date .

The tag will set its Archive Sample Interval to 5 second(s) based on a 150 day deployment.

Auto-Detect Tag Detachment ⓘ

Auto-Detect Mortality ⓘ

Activate auto-detection after the first dive below meter(s).

Start tag release sequence if:

- tag is floating at the surface
- tag is at a constant depth
- (optional) tag is deeper than meter(s)

for longer than day(s).

Use a depth variance of meter(s).

Figure 7 - The release settings shown in the above screen capture will result in the following:

- The tag will release 150 days after deployment.
- The tag will release if it exceeds 10 meters in depth and then meets any of the following criteria:
 - Stays within 6m (+/- 3 meters) of a constant depth for more than 3 days.
 - Stays deeper than 400m for more than 3 days.

If your animal naturally remains at a constant depth for long durations consider disabling the Auto-Detect Mortality feature.

Adaptive Transmission Schedule on Conditional Release

In the case of early release the MiniPAT transmits time-series data messages in addition to its scheduled data products. This can help when investigating the cause of the conditional release event. The time-series interval depends on deployment duration.

If the conditional release is:

- Less than 15 days the MiniPAT will transmit 300 second time-series for depth and temperature (unless the originally programmed interval was faster).
- Between 15 and 30 days, the MiniPAT will transmit 600 second time-series for depth and temperature.
- Greater than 30 days AND no temperature or depth time-series were initially enabled, the MiniPAT will create 600 second Time-Series messages for the two days leading up to release.

Ignore Wet/Dry After 45 Days

You can optionally choose to have the tag ignore its wet/dry condition 45 days after release. The tag will then attempt transmissions at its scheduled repetition interval until the battery expires. This setting can be useful if a tag is fouled or hung up on debris, in which case the wet/dry sensor may indicate wet, even when the tag is at the surface. The longer a tag is at the surface the more susceptible it is to damage and predation.

Pinger

The pinger is used for tag recovery. When enabled, the MiniPAT sends out low power “pings” after release, while at the surface. The tag can be located with an appropriate receiver and directional antenna. A one or two-second ping interval is the most appropriate setting for tracking, and mimics a typical VHF tracking transmitter. Excess power draw from the pinger is negligible. The transmissions sent by the pinger are very short and do not carry any data.

External Release Device

If using an external release device, such as Wildlife Computer’s Programmable Timed- Release (PTR), the MiniPAT will not burn its release pin. With the burn pin still intact, the MiniPAT can be redeployed. Set the date the external release device is programmed to release and expected deployment date. Based on this range, the tag will calculate the archival sample interval. The pinger feature can be enabled to assist with recovery.

▼ Tag Release Sequence ⓘ

My external release device is set to release on this given date . My expected deployment date is .

The tag will set its Archive Sample Interval to **1** second(s) based on a **12** day deployment.

Enable Homing Pinger - Interval: second(s).

Use an external release device.

Figure 8 – Release settings for a 12 day deployment using an external release device. The pinger is enabled.

Data Product Settings

Data products are the various types of data available from Wildlife Computers tags.

To take full advantage of the capability of the tag, great care should be taken in considering which data products to enable and the frequency of message generation. If too many messages are generated not all of them will be received. In this case, the result will be random gaps of time during the deployment for which data are missing.

Many settings on the tag affect the total number of Argos messages generated. These include:

- Enabled data products
- Duty-cycling of enabled products
- Sampling Interval
- Summary Period

The combined effect of the chosen settings is shown at the bottom of the Data Products Settings section. The number of messages generated per day and the total number of messages generated during the entire mission are displayed. In the case of duty-cycling, two values are shown to account for the different number of messages generated during on and off duty-cycle days. A warning is displayed when the message total exceeds the maximum likely to be successfully received. The total number of messages received varies depending on sea-surface conditions, satellite coverage, battery capacity, length of deployment, and background radio interference. The average number of messages received for a standard MiniPAT deployment is approximately 2,000 messages.

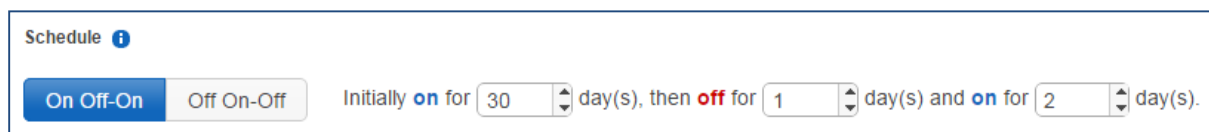
The rule of thumb is, the fewer number of messages that the tag generates, the greater the probability that ALL generated messages will be received. Some study objectives require finer temporal resolution, contiguous temporal coverage, and/or longer deployment durations such that a large number of messages are generated. In these instances one can use duty-cycling to help control when the “holes” in the data occur.

Duty-Cycling

Duty-cycling is the generation of Argos messages on an intermittent schedule, rather than daily. Duty-cycling can be used to reduce the total number of messages generated and to extend deployment duration.

- Duty cycle a data product by selecting: Generate On Schedule
- The scheduler will appear at the base of the section (figure 9).
- Select your preferred pattern, either On-Off-On or Off-On-Off, and fill in the number of days for each step.

The same schedule is used for all duty-cycled data products.



Schedule ⓘ

On Off-On Off On-Off

Initially **on** for day(s), then **off** for day(s) and **on** for day(s).

Figure 9 –Argos message generation duty-cycle pattern. Messages are initially generated for 30 days then off for 1 day and on for 2. The off 1, on 2 pattern repeats for the duration of the deployment.

Daily Messages

Light-Level and SST Geolocation

Light-level and sea-surface temperature messages are always generated daily. The dawn and dusk transitions are used to calculate geolocation. Two light-level curves are created for each day of the deployment containing the following information:

- Whether or not the curve contains a dawn or dusk transition.
- Nine light-level and depth samples taken during each transition.
- A sea-surface temperature for each transition. This is compiled from the samples taken up to seven hours on the dark side and one hour on the light side of the transition.

Light Attenuation Constants

The tag calculates daily light attenuation constants, correcting the light measurements for depth. For most applications, having light attenuation constants turned on is appropriate. If this feature is disabled, the tag uses predetermined values for the light attenuation constant. Disabling this feature can be useful for animals that follow isolumes (e.g., swordfish).

Daily Data

Daily data messages contain the minimum and maximum temperature and depth readings from the fast-sampled archive data set, as well as the change in light-level for each UTC day. Each message contains four days of data. Originally created for Wildlife Computers support purposes, the message type is now available to all.

Daily Data cannot be duty-cycled.

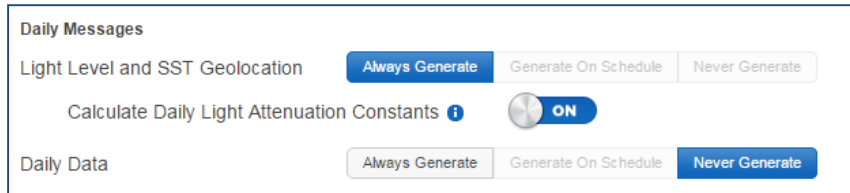


Figure 10 – Daily Message data products. Screen capture shows Light-Level messages generated daily, Light Attenuation calculations turned on, and Daily Data messages turned off.

Time-Series Messages

MiniPAT tags have the ability to send time-series depth and/or temperature data through Argos. Time-series provides low frequency reporting of sensor data for instruments which may never be recovered.

Sampling Interval

Time-series messages can be generated using one of five sample intervals (75, 150, 300, 450, 600 seconds). This determines the number of Argos messages generated per day. **The time-series sample interval is entirely independent of and unrelated to the archive sample rate.** 48 summarized samples, covering one Message Period, will fit into 1 Argos message. Messages are transmitted in sequential order to maximize the probability of receiving continuous runs of data.

Sampling Interval (seconds)	Argos Messages Per Day		Message Period (hours)
	Depth or Temp (1 channel)	Depth and Temp (2 channels)	
75	24	48	1
150	12	24	2
300	6	12	4
450	4	8	6
600	3	6	8

Figure 11 – The number of Argos messages created per day and the corresponding message sample period for the 5 Time-series sample intervals.

The sample interval determines the number of messages generated per day. Selecting a short (75-second) time-series sampling interval will rapidly generate many messages. This may be appropriate for a short deployment. However, if too many messages are generated, they may not all be received. The result will be random gaps of time during the deployment for which there is no time-series data. Selecting a longer sampling interval will improve the odds that

there will be no gaps; however, the temporal resolution of each datum will be reduced. Different study objectives will warrant different trade-offs between coverage and temporal resolution.

Each time-series message contains:

- The time-series data sampled at the specified interval.
- The minimum and maximum values encountered during the period of time covered by the time-series message period as measured at the fast archive sampling rate.

Note the absolute Min/Max values and point sample values may not match as the absolute values are determined from all archived data collected during the message period. This can give insight to the amount of aliasing that has occurred when generating the time-series message.

Duty-cycling can be used to reduce the number of time-series messages generated. Duty-cycle settings do not affect the tags archive sample rates.

Example Time-Series Sampling Settings

For the MiniPAT tag, on average approximately 2,000 Argos messages are received following release. With this number in mind, one can work backwards to determine how quickly time-series can be sampled given a preferred deployment length. Following are some typical set-ups:

1 month deployment = 75 second sampling interval for depth and temperature time-series.
48 messages per day x 30 days = 1440 messages.

3 month deployment = 300 second sampling interval for depth and temperature time-series.
12 messages per day x 90 days = 1080 messages.

8 month deployment = 600 second sampling interval for depth and temperature time-series.
6 messages per day x 240 days = 1440 messages.

Time-Series Sensor Resolution

Time-series sensor resolution will vary for each measurement. All time-series sensor readings have an associated resolution which is reported in the decoded data. The resolution is dynamically adjusted to compress the data for transmission.

Summary Messages

In order to maximize information throughput, the MiniPAT condenses sensor observations into summarized messages.

Mixed-Layer Temperature

Mixed-layer temperature messages describe the amount of time the animal spends in the mixed layer, the depth of the thermocline, and temperature of the mixed layer. When enabled, one message is created for each summary period and includes:

- Time in the mixed layer (percent)
- Depth of mixed layer (max)
- Temperature of mixed layer (min, max, avg)
- Temperature of the sea surface (min, max, avg)
- Overall depth (min, max)
- Overall temperature (min)

Profile of Depth and Temperature

PDTs record the minimum and maximum temperatures observed at different depths.

- Low-resolution profiles use 8 different depths and fit into one message per summary period. When all dives during a summary period are less than 400m the tag will default to low-resolution profiles.
- High-resolution profiles use 16 different depths and generate two messages per summary period. For summary periods when the tag ventures below 400m the tag defaults to high-resolution profiles.

Depth points are distributed between the minimum and maximum depths observed during each summary period.

Histogram Messages

Two types of histograms are available:

- Time-at-Depth (TAD) histograms bundle the depth sensor measurements collected into bins based on how much time the tag was at the user-defined depth ranges.
- Time-at Temperature (TAT) histograms bundle the temperature sensor measurements into bins based on how much time the tag was at user-defined temperatures.

Histograms are generated starting at 00:00 UTC.

Histogram Bin Limits

There are twelve bin limits for each of the two histograms. These numbers are the upper inclusive limit for each bin. The limits in first eleven boxes can be edited. The twelfth bin limit shows the highest valid sensor measurement and cannot be adjusted.

Summary Period

The summary period is the collection duration of the summary messages. The summary period can range from 1 hour to 24 hours, but the chosen period must divide the day evenly. The summary periods begin immediately after midnight UTC by default and run to the end of the UTC day. Selecting a 6-hour summary period will cause the tag to split the day into four periods from 00:00hr to 06:00hr, 06:00hr to 12:00hr, 12:00hr to 18:00hr and 18:00hr to 24:00hr. This pattern will repeat on the next UTC day.

Daily Messages

Light Level and SST Geolocation

Calculate Daily Light Attenuation Constants **ON**

Daily Data

Time Series Messages

Depth

Temperature

Sampling Interval

Summary Messages

Mixed Layer Temperature

Profile of Depth and Temperature

Histograms (TAT & TAD)

Summary Period

Histogram Bin Limits

Bin #	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Temp.	5.0 °C	10.0 °C	12.0 °C	14.0 °C	16.0 °C	18.0 °C	20.0 °C	22.0 °C	24.0 °C	26.0 °C	28.0 °C	45.0 °C
Depth	2.0 m	5.0 m	10.0 m	15.0 m	20.0 m	30.0 m	40.0 m	50.0 m	100.0 m	150.0 m	200.0 m	2,000m

The tag will generate **11** message(s) per day, for a total of **1,980** message(s) based on a **180** day deployment.

Figure 12 –The Data Product settings shown in the above screen shot are for a 180-day deployment. 11 messages are generated each day. These include:

- 1 x Light-level message
- 6 x Time-series messages
- 2 Mixed-layer temperature messages
- 2 Histogram messages

Transmission Settings

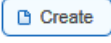
This category displays the Argos interval how often the tag will test for dry conditions and try to transmit after pop-off. The recommended interval for pop-up tags is 60 seconds. This parameter is set by Wildlife Computers.

Loading Settings into a Tag

Once settings have been chosen use the blue Send Changes button (or Propose Changes button if working in Tag Portal) to load settings into tag. Tag Agent will confirm receipt of settings via dialog box. The Check for Updates tab on the top left navigation bar of Tag Agent home screen can be used at any time to see if setting updates are available.

Creating Templates

Once tag settings have been configured a template can be saved. Templates allow configure multiple tags with the same settings. Select the ☰ icon in the upper right corner of the screen to reveal the Template Manager. You have the option of creating an online template or a local template file of the current settings selected. Local templates are used when no internet connection is available.

To create a temple, select  and give the template a name.

Viewing Configuration History

A tag's configuration history can be viewed using the arrowhead icon on the left sidebar menu. Clicking the arrowhead will expose the tag history and once viewed, clicking on the arrowhead again will hide the History. Previous tag settings can be viewed by clicking on each date listed.

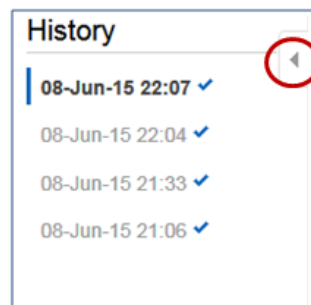


Figure 13 –Tag configuration history can be viewed using arrowhead icon.

Disconnect from MiniPAT

Use the Disconnect tab on the upper left of the Tag Agent Menu to select the tag state before unplugging. If you are planning to deploy in the near future, select Auto Start mode. Tag will then auto deploy on saltwater submersion.

Always disconnect the tag using the Disconnect button. Unplugging without setting the tag state could leave the tag in a mode that will rapidly deplete the battery.

Clearing the MiniPAT Memory

The memory archive is cleared automatically when a new deployment is Started (Tag set to Start, then put into Standby or Stop, and then Started once again). The LED will indicate that the tag is clearing the archive with many rapid blinks.

Be mindful of this when selecting the tag state. If a tag is recovered, be sure to download the data prior to putting back in Start mode.

Checking Sensor Readings & Transmission Test

The sensor values displayed on the Tag Agent home screen are continuously updated from the tag. Sensor functionality can be validated by manipulating the sensors as follows:

- **Ambient Temperature:** Responds quickly to warm air blown onto the thermistor located immediately above the communications port.
- **Internal Temperature:** This will change slowly as the entire tag changes temperature. Leaving a tag in a refrigerator for a while will change the value.
- **Wet/Dry:** Connecting a wire from the large rectangular ground plate strap above the communication port to the metal ring around the base of the antenna (letters i and h respectively in fig. 2) should change the value from over 200 to less than 20.
- **Light-Level:** Under typical office lighting, covering both light sensors (shiny squares on opposite sides of tag, letters d and j in fig. 2) with your fingers should drop the value by 20 to 40 counts.

Test Transmission

Under the Advanced button on the top menu there's an option to Send Test Transmission. When selected, a pop-up box with transmission values will appear.

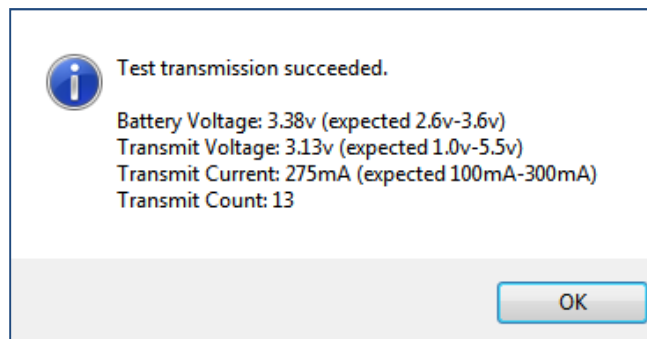


Figure 14 – Test transmission results.

The Battery Voltage value will be lower in the pop-up box than on the Tag Agent home screen because it is measured when the battery is driving a transmission.

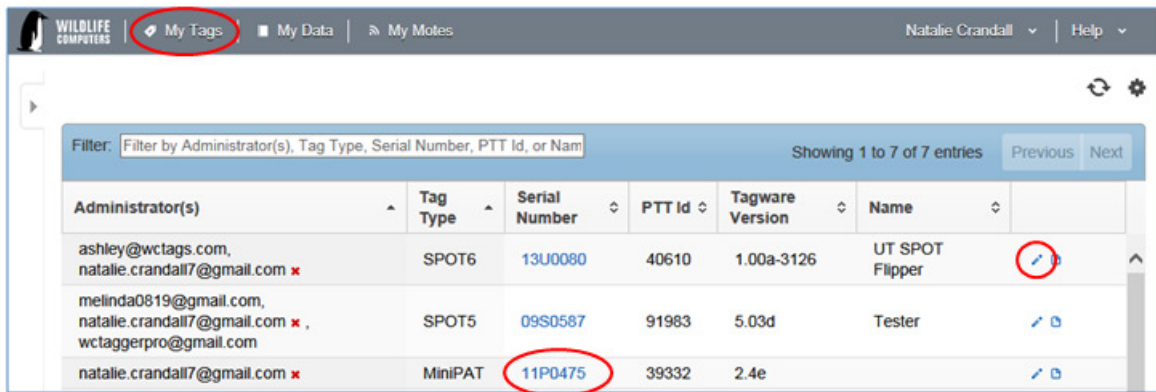
The Transmit Current will vary depending on the presence of conductive objects near the tag. It has been optimized for a tag that is floating in seawater.

Transmit Count is the number of transmissions the tag has made since it was manufactured.

Using Tag Portal to Select Settings Remotely

Tag Portal is the cloud-based service offered by Wildlife Computers for remotely selecting tag settings. Configuring can be done without connecting to your tag. This enables project coordinators to review and select settings for their associates and programming to be done while tags are in transit, before arrival.

When logged into your Portal account, a list of the tags which you have administrator power over can be viewed under the “My Tags” tab. To select settings, click on the serial number of the tag you wish to configure or use the pencil icon.






Administrator(s)	Tag Type	Serial Number	PTT Id	Tagware Version	Name	
ashley@wctags.com, natalie.crandall7@gmail.com ✖	SPOT6	13U0080	40610	1.00a-3126	UT SPOT Flipper	
melinda0819@gmail.com, natalie.crandall7@gmail.com ✖, wctaggerpro@gmail.com	SPOT5	09S0587	91983	5.03d	Tester	
natalie.crandall7@gmail.com ✖	MiniPAT	11P0475	39332	2.4e		

Figure 15 - List of tags within Tag Portal. To program select the serial number or pencil icon.

This will open a new window with setting selections. The same programming options are available whether settings are configured via Tag Portal or from within Tag Agent.

Once settings have been selected in Tag Portal, click the blue Propose Changes. This will save the settings in the cloud. The next time that tag communicates with Tag Agent (no matter who plugs the tag in), a dialog box will appear notifying that new settings are awaiting upload.

Multiple set-ups can be published resulting in a queue of configurations awaiting upload. In this case, a dialog box will reveal a list of the configurations published, when they were selected, and which administrator chose the settings.

Tag Portal maintains a historic record of tag settings each time changes are uploaded into a tag. The record is instantly updated so long as an internet connection is available.


If tags are programmed offline, using Tag Agent, the next time an internet connection is established and Tag Agent software is open, the record automatically updates.

Offline Mode

Before programming can be done offline, Tag Agent must be downloaded **and opened with valid credentials entered** while connected to the internet.

So long as the software has been opened once and credentials have been entered, programming offline is feasible. To program settings, select Administer Tag from Tag Agent's top navigation bar, choose settings, and click Send Changes. A dialog box will confirm settings have been loaded into tag.

The next time internet connection is established, and Tag Agent software is open, the historical record will be updated in Tag Portal.

Online templates are not accessible when working offline. To program a group of tags with the same settings when working without internet connection create a local template. A file of the selected tag settings will be saved onto your local machine. Local templates can be created and applied in the Template Manager. Expose the Template manager with the  icon in the upper right corner of the screen.

The internet connection status is displayed at the bottom of the Tag Agent home screen.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Key Concepts

- Administrator – Someone who has the authority to publish tag settings.
- Argos ID – Uniquely identifies a transmitter for the Argos system. The ID consists of a decimal number and a hexadecimal (base 16) number.
- Argos location – A location generated by the Argos system from uplinks received during a satellite pass. Get more information about how the Argos system works here: www.argos-system.org
- Argos uplink – A radio transmission intended for the Argos satellite system.
- At Sea and Haul Out – Tag states controlled by wet/dry readings.
- Daily Data – Generated from sensors over a fixed 24-hour period.
- Data message – Created by the tag to transmit data through the Argos system. Each data message is transmitted as payload in an Argos uplink. In order to increase the likelihood of its reception by the Argos system, each message is sent a fixed number of times.
- Data Products – The various types of data available from Wildlife Computer tags.
- Deployment – The period when a tag is associated with an animal and actively collecting and sending telemetry data.
- Location uplink – A transmission intended to generate an Argos location. These uplinks can also carry a data message payload. Multiple uplinks are required to generate an Argos location.
- Pinger – A UHF radio tracking beacon.
- Repetition Interval (repetition rate) – How often a tag will test for dry conditions and try to transmit. Typically set at 60 seconds for MiniPATs, this value is programmed by Wildlife Computers.
- Start/Auto Start/Stop – Tag states. When in Start mode, the tag will generate locations and/or collect sensor data. Auto Start will allow the tag to Start using a magnet or when reading wet. Stop causes the tag to do nothing until reconnected to Tag Agent.
- Summary Period Data – Generated from sensors during a defined number of hours.
- Tag Agent Software – The program used to change tag states and select tag settings and connect a tag to the Wildlife Computers Tag Portal.
- Tagware – The software version running on a tag.
- Tag Portal – The cloud-based service offered by Wildlife Computers for remote tag setup. A historic record of tag settings and templates are maintained within the Tag Portal.
- USB-Blue – The Wildlife Computers communication cable required by Tag Agent.
- Wet and Dry – The state of the tag as determined by the wet/dry sensor which measures conductivity.

Tag Storage and Battery Maintenance

Store tags in a cool environment (ideally around +5 °C) to help minimize passivation and keep the batteries charged. When stored correctly, the amount of battery life lost per year is only 1-2%. It is recommended to exercise the batteries every few months by sending a test transmission. This can be done in Tag Agent. Select “Advanced” and then “Send Test Transmission.” The transmission voltage should read approximately 3.2v and the battery voltage displayed on the main sensor screen should be around 3.5v. If you receive a low voltage reading, it may be due to passivation forming during storage.

MiniPAT Recovery Instructions

If the MiniPAT is recovered after deployment, it is possible that contamination of the communications port may cause some communication difficulties. The following instructions, in addition to describing how to recover the data, explain possible problems that might occur during the recovery and how to fix them. Even if all attempts to communicate with the MiniPAT fail, your deployment data are probably still in memory, and can be retrieved by Wildlife Computers.

Preparation for post-deployment communication

When you recover your MiniPAT full of valuable deployment data, there are several steps to perform before attempting to connect it to the USB-Blue.

As a precaution, it is advised to have the following on hand:

- Compressed air in a can
- Electronic contact cleaner, if available

1) Thoroughly dry the MiniPAT with a paper towel.

2) Remove the rubber communications port protection plug.

3) Blow out any water in the communication port. Make sure the port is clean and dry. Compressed air in a can works well for this. Note that communicating with a MiniPAT which has saltwater in the communications port will cause the pins to corrode very fast!

4) Count the number of pins in the communications port. If there are not four pins, one or more have corroded or broken off. Stop there and send the MiniPAT to Wildlife Computers, and we will download your data.

5) Examine the pins in the communications port. If they are rusty or corroded, send the MiniPAT back to Wildlife Computers for downloading.

6) If all four pins look clean and golden in color, you can continue and attempt to establish communications.

7) You may wish to spray some contact cleaner into the communications port as a precaution.

If you are able to establish a communication connection with the tag, you are now ready to download your data with Tag Agent.

Download your data

Use the Download WCH tab on the Tag Agent top navigation bar to download MiniPAT archival data (Figure 16). You'll be prompted to save the .wch file to your computer. The file can then be uploaded into the Data Portal for decoding, analysis, and storage.

Put tag into Stop mode after downloading the data.



Figure 16 – Tag Agent menu bar. Select Download WCH to download archived data.

RD1800 Release Device for MiniPAT

Wildlife Computers supplies an RD1800 release device with the MiniPAT. When included on the tether, the RD1800 prevents the tag from being towed to depths at which it could be crushed. When the RD1800 is exposed to depths exceeding 1800m, water pressure causes an internal pin to be sheared and the tag releases from the animal and leader material. The MiniPAT can then float to the surface.

RD1800s are supplied preassembled. For the RD1800 to function correctly it is important that there is no heat shrink tubing or other interference at the release point.



Figure 17 – Inline RD1800 mechanical release device tethered with stainless steel line.

Technical Specifications

Dimensions	124mm (length) x 38 mm (diameter)
Weight in air	60 grams
Pressure rating	2000 m
Memory	16 Mbytes
Operating Frequency	401.678MHz
Operating Life	Up to 2 years
Sensors	Light, Pressure, Temperature, Wet/Dry
Light	5 x 10 ⁻¹² W.cm ⁻² to 5 x 10 ⁻² W.cm ⁻²
Pressure	Range: 1700m / Resolution: 0.5m
Temperature	Range: -20 to 50°C / Resolution: 0.05°C
Storage Temperature	5°C
Communication	Via USB Port using Wildlife Computers USB-Blue Cable

Contacting Wildlife Computers

U.S. and International

Members of the Wildlife Computers technical sales and support team are located in Redmond, WA, USA, and Havelock North, New Zealand, allowing us to cover promptly a wide range of time zones.

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While we welcome your direct correspondence, we recommend that you contact our colleague, Yong Huang, for assistance. Mr. Huang understands the special purchase processes for your countries, and will provide you with the best service for the best price. He also is fluent in Japanese, Chinese, and English.

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