

Free Transmitters

Over the last ten years, we have had the pleasure of working with several researchers who carried out projects involving school children. Most recently we were proud to sponsor Neptune Middle School in Florida where the students deployed three PTTs on Blue Herons last April. We have also sponsored children in Israel tracking birds migrating through their homeland. Are you involved with your local middle or high school and wish to involve the students in bird tracking?

As part of our tenth year anniversary celebration, we would like to donate a couple of transmitters for you to carry out a project involving school children.

Email us at microwt@aol.com for a copy of the rules and an application form. The deadline for application is March 29, 2001. The winner will be announced in the spring newsletter.



Photos courtesy of Rob Paswaters

Middle School Students Have a Successful Learning Experience

by Rob Paswaters, Science Resource Specialist, Osceola County, Florida

In 1996, my students and I began to study a wading bird breeding colony in Central Florida. For three years, the students, with the aid of Audubon volunteers, became experts in bird speciation and behavior. They conducted detailed species counts each year and came to love and appreciate the birds they studied. In 1998 we decided to embark on a mission to track immature Great Blue Herons. I began to call environmental groups and scientists asking how this dream could become a reality. I was overwhelmed at how eager each contact was to offer support in terms of expertise, time, equipment and advice. I eventually came into contact with two incredible individuals who offered to help with the capture and banding of the birds – Mary Platter-Rieger a Navy biologist and Bill Everett a Master Bander with the Endangered Species Recovery Council.

With all of the expertise in place, there was still one vital piece of the puzzle missing. We needed to obtain high quality telemetry equipment with which to track the birds. In all of my contacts, one name kept coming up—Microwave Telemetry, Inc. I called Microwave Telemetry and the dream became a reality. They embraced the project with enthusiasm and donated high quality satellite transmitters. Microwave Telemetry then assisted us in obtaining a lease with the ARGOS satellite.

On May 7, 1999, students, volunteers and scientists gathered in this breeding colony at Gatorland of Central Florida. By the end of the day four Great Blue Herons had been captured and fitted with wing tags. Three of these birds were also fitted with satellite transmitters. The entire experience was a complete success and a learning experience that not one

of us will ever forget. Now Microwave Telemetry wants to replicate this experience and give other students the same wonderful opportunity for field research and learning. ❖



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