

Battery advice from Sirtrack

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The whale entanglement floats have an estimated battery life of 140 days. Note that this is for continuous operation. In practice, the saltwater switch will extend the battery life by turning off the transmitter whenever it is underwater.

Batteries typically lose 3-5% of their charge per year while not in use (although extremes of temperature will exacerbate this). To determine how much battery life remains, check the tag's Argos data files for a column relating to battery life. This column should give an indication of how much life is left in the battery or if the battery life has dropped significantly over time. Sirtrack would be happy to look at the data if need be.

Note that if transmitters are not used for a long time batteries can sometimes suffer from a condition known as passivation, where salt builds up on the anode terminal and shortens the life of the batteries. For this reason, Sirtrack recommends that transmitters which will not be deployed for some time be turned on for a day every 3-6 months to "exercise the batteries." If passivation has occurred, it may be difficult to turn on the transmitters. However once they are on, any passivation should dissipate.

Sirtrack can offer a battery replacement option for 50% of the current new price. This reuses the old electronics. Note that there is some risk in re-using the existing electronics as their life expectancy may have been compromised by prior field deployments. Also, the heating and cutting involved in this process puts stress on the electronic components which definitely increases the chance of failure. As a result some tags may not survive the process, and any repowered tags will have a limited warranty. Alternatively, Sirtrack can offer a 15% replacement discount when ordering new tags with the same specifications (applicable once per collar in the initial order).