

PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AERIAL BELUGA WHALE OBSERVATIONS USING A SMALL HELIKITE AEROSTAT

Beluga whale behaviour has successfully be recorded from the air using video cameras lifted on miniature, lighter-than-air, Helikite aerostats. The Helikites were deployed from a small rubber dinghy allowing them to fly directly over the pods of Beluga whales whilst silently filming them.

The research work was done by a team led by Roman Belikov of the Marine Mammal Laboratory at the Shirshov Institute of Oceanology, Moscow

Observing Beluga whale behaviour from the air has previously been difficult for this team. They had tried using drones but the noise of these machines disturbed the whales causing unnatural behaviour. The drones had very limited persistence making understanding of the behaviour difficult and were unreliable.

The Helikites were reliable, silent and very persistent, allowing long term behavioural studies to be made easily with no disturbance to the whales. Helikites are also highly capable of flying in difficult weather conditions that defeat small drones.

Being small allowed the Helikites to be safely deployed form small rubber dinghies that were easy to transport to the whale observation site.

A video of the project made by the Marine Mammal Laboratory is here:
<https://cloud.mail.ru/public/K7kq/VJdvBej8E>

This persistent overhead viewing capability is useful for many other marine animal research regarding dolphins, fish, and sea lions. It is also an excellent capability for spotting dangerous sharks near recreational bathing areas and monitoring oil-spill incidents.

Above land Skyshot Helikites can be used by researchers to monitor rivers, land use, plant ecology, urban activities, traffic movement, meteorology, etc.

Helikites are the world's only successful lighter-than-air kite capable of flying in almost all weathers up to very high altitudes for days. This is possible because unlike other aerostats that are pushed down by high winds, Helikites are actually pushed up by wind. This allows them to be far smaller and economical than any other type of persistent tethered aircraft, so they are highly favoured by scientists worldwide.



Beluga Whale behaviour filmed from high altitude Skyshot



2m3 Skyshot Helikite plus pan/tilt video camera moored to boat.



The Whale Observation Team and Helikite.

About Allsopp Helikites Limited

Allsopp Helikites Ltd is a privately owned SME and a designer and manufacturer of advanced lighter-than-air, miniature, all-weather aerostat systems. The company delivers a full range of products including Helikite aerostats, rapid Helikite launch systems, trailers, winches, video surveillance cameras, aerial photographic equipment, and radio-relay equipments.

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