**Pterosoar Operations Manual**

**Table of contents**

Section 1: General

Section 2: Description

Section 3: Operating limitations

Section 4: Hazards, Protections, and Warning Systems

Section 5: Normal and Emergency Operating Procedures

Section 6: Handling, Care and Maintenance

Section 7: Supplements and Payloads

**Section 1**

**General**

**Table of contents**

1.1 Introduction

1.2 Warnings, Cautions, and Notes

1.3 List of Definitions and Abbreviations

1.3.1 Abbreviations and Acronyms

1.3.2 Definitions

**1.1 Introduction**

This Section provides basic data and information of general interest. It also contains definitions or explanations of symbols, abbreviations, and terminology commonly used.

**1.2 Warnings, Cautions and Notes**

The following definitions apply to warnings, cautions, and notes used in this RPAS operating manual:

**Warning:** An operating procedure, practice, or condition, etc., that may result in injury or death if not carefully observed or followed.

**Caution:** An operating procedure, practice, or condition, etc., that may result in damage to equipment if not carefully observed or followed.

**Note:** An operating procedure, practice, or condition, etc., that must be emphasized.

**1.3 List of Definitions and Abbreviations**

**1.3.1 Abbreviations and Acronyms**

**1.3.2 Definitions**

As may be applicable.

**Section 2**

**Description**

**Ref: 901.78** A manufacturer that has made a declaration to the Minister in respect of a model of remotely piloted aircraft system under section 901.76 shall make available to each owner of that model of system

**(c)** a remotely piloted aircraft system operating manual that includes

**(i)** a description of the system

**Table of contents**

2.1 Introduction

2.2 Physical Description of the RPA

2.2.1 Three-View-Drawing of the RPA

2.2.2 Airframe

2.2.3 Dimensions

2.3 Flight Controls

2.4 Propulsion System

2.4.1 Motor | Propeller | Electronic Speed Control

2.4.2 Battery

2.5 Electrical System

2.6 Avionics System

2.6.1 Navigation

2.6.2 Telemetry

2.6.3 Command and Control Link

2.7 Remote Pilot Station

2.8 Firmware | Software

2.9 Ground Support | Surveillance

**2.1 Introduction**

This Section provides a detailed description of the RPAS and its Systems. Some equipment or payload described may be optional and as such not installed in the RPA. Refer to Section 7 for details of other optional equipment or payload.

**2.2 Physical Description of the RPA**

Airframe Type: Hexacopter

A primarily carbon-fiber construction RPA used for radio science work (mainly antenna calibration) at McGill University.

Built by: Larry Herman, McGill University, Montreal, QC, Canada.

**2.2.1 Three-View-Drawing of the RPA**

(pictures)

**2.2.2 Airframe**

Pterosoar incorporates a Tarot Iron Man 680S carbon-fiber frame.

**2.2.3 Dimensions**

Overall Dimensions (Length, Width, Height)

**Important Dimensions:**

Motor-to-motor diameter: 685mm

Height from ground to lower rods: 180mm

Height from ground to top of frame: 220mm

Propeller diameter: 13in

**2.3 Flight Controls**

Pterosoar uses a FrSky Taranis X9D Plus 2019 handheld controller for manual control. For automated control, a groundstation consisting of a laptop running QGroundControl communicates with the RPA via a telemetry system. The method of flight control is conventional: the Pixhawk Cube Orange flight controller varies each motor’s speed to produce the total required torque and thrust to achieve the desired attitude, altitude, and velocity.

**2.4 Propulsion System**

**2.4.1 Motor | Propeller | Electronic Speed Control**

**Motors**

Number of Motors: 6

Motor Manufacturer: DJI

Motor Model Number: 3510H

Motor Type: Brushless

Motor Power Rating: 420 KV

**Propellers**

Number of Propellers: 6

Propeller Manufacturer: DJI

Propeller Model Number: 1345S

Number of Blades: 2

Propeller Type: Fixed pitch

**Electronic Speed Controls**

Number of ESCs: 6

ESC Manufacturer: DJI

ESC Model Number: Inspire 1

ESC Type: PWM

ESC Power Rating: 26V, 20A

**2.4.2 Battery**

Battery Manufacturer: Tattu

Battery Type: 6S LiPo

Battery Capacity: 16000 mAh

Battery Max. Charge Rate: 1C

Number of batteries required for flight: 1

Number of spare batteries required (available) on site: Mission-dependent

**2.5 Electrical System**

The Pterosoar 6S LiPo battery has a maximum voltage of 3.3V – 4.2V per cell. The battery connects directly to a Power Brick Mini (PBM) power supply via AS150 and XT60 connectors. The PBM supplies full battery voltage to the Power Distribution Board (PDB), and stepped-down 5V power to the Pixhawk Cube Orange flight controller. The PDB supplies electrical power to the motors and ESCs. The flight controller supplies electrical power to all other components.

**2.6 Avionics System**

The primary component of the Pterosoar avionics system is the Pixhawk Cube Orange flight controller. Internal Pixhawk sensors include 3 accelerometers, 3 gyroscopes, 1 compass, and 2 barometric pressure sensors. All other flight-related sensors and radios connect directly to the Pixhawk.

Key features of the Pixhawk:

32bit STM32H743ZI (32bit [ARM Cortex M7 (opens new window)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ARM_Cortex-M#Cortex-M7), 400 MHz, Flash 2MB, RAM 1MB).

32 bit STM32F103 failsafe co-processor

14 PWM / Servo outputs (8 with failsafe and manual override, 6 auxiliary, high-power compatible)

Abundant connectivity options for additional peripherals (UART, I2C, CAN)

Redundant power supply inputs and automatic failover

External safety switch

Multicolor LED main visual indicator

High-power, multi-tone piezo audio indicator

microSD card for high-rate logging over extended periods of time

Below is a diagram of the Pixhawk Cube Orange with all other flight-related components connected. These components are discussed in more detail elsewhere in this Section.

Diagram

Description automatically generated

(Localization of air data sensors, antennas, transceivers and navigational instruments)

**2.6.1 Navigation**

The Pixhawk Cube Orange flight controller also functions as the autopilot. It is a digital, solid-state system that accepts pre-programmed flight plans uploaded from QGroundControl. It controls the RPA via the conventional flight control system, varying motor speeds to produce the desired torque and thrust to control attitude, altitude, and velocity.

Pterosoar’s navigation system includes two separate GPS systems.

The primary GPS system is the Here3 GPS. In the default mode, with a 3D lock the Here3 has an accuracy of +/- 2.5m in any direction. When using the base station for RTK performance, the accuracy is +/- 0.025m in any direction.

The secondary GPS is the Radiolink M8N GPS SE100. The M8N has an accuracy of 0.5m.

The Pixhawk employs an Estimation and Control Library (ECL) which utilizes an Extended Kalman Filter (EKF) algorithm to process sensor inputs and compute the position state of the RPA. Sensors incorporated into the EKF state estimation include the GPS, IMU, magnetometer, and internal barometric pressure sensor.

**2.6.2 Telemetry**

Pterosoar uses Holybro SiK Telemetry V3 radios. Telemetry is streamed to the laptop base station running QGroundControl.

Specifications:

Output power: 100mW

Operating frequency: 915MHz

Firmware: Open-source SIK

**2.6.3 Command and Control Link**

Control via the laptop base station running QGroundControl, as well as wireless flightplan upload for autonomous operation, is conducted via the 915MHz telemetry radios.

Manual control is conducted via the FrSky Taranis X9D Plus SE 2019 handheld controller. Specifications:

Output power: 32mW

Operating Frequency: 2.4GHz

Firmware: Open-source OpenTX

The Taranis X9D and the RPA communicate via a FrSky X8R radio. Specifications:

Output power: 39mW

Operating Frequency: 2.4GHz

Firmware: FrSky ACCST D16

**2.7 Remote Pilot Station**

The groundstation uses QGroundControl on a laptop with standard keyboard and trackpad. The health and status of the RPA is displayed at the top of the main screen. Navigation information, including a real-time depiction of the RPA on a map, and flight plan information is the main element of the home screen of QGC.

[Screenshot]

The Taranis X9D controller has the following switch layout:

Diagram

Description automatically generated

The controller is configured such that the left stick controls thrust and yaw, and the right stick controls lateral motion.

The primary flight mode switch is SA, and it’s 3 positions are assigned to Altitude (Alt Hold) (up), Position (Pos Hold) (middle), and Mission (Auto) (down). When SC is up, it overrides to Manual mode (this may only be for testing). Moving SE to middle/down will override to Return (RTL). Moving SF to down will override to Land. SC middle/down, SE up, and SF up are all inactive positions.

The main telemetry screen of the Taranis X9D has been configured to show the following information:

[Picture]

**2.8 Firmware | Software**

QGroundControl: Version 4.1.3

FrSky Taranis X9D: OpenTX version 2.3.12

Pixhawk: PX4 version 1.12.3

Holybro SiK telemetry radio: SiK version 2.1

FrSky X8R radio: ACCST D16 version 2.1.0

Here3 GPS: version 1.6

**2.9 Ground Support | Surveillance**

No specific GSE is required for the Pterosoar. The RPA must be flown within visual LOS.

**Section 3**

**Operating limitations**

**Ref: 901.78** A manufacturer that has made a declaration to the Minister in respect of a model of remotely piloted aircraft system under section 901.76 shall make available to each owner of that model of system

**(c)** a remotely piloted aircraft system operating manual that includes

**(ii)** the ranges of weights and centers of gravity within which the system may be safely operated under normal and emergency conditions and, if a weight and center of gravity combination is considered safe only within certain loading limits, those limits and the corresponding weight and center of gravity combinations,

**(iii)** with respect to each flight phase and mode of operation, the minimum and maximum altitudes and velocities within which the aircraft can be operated safely under normal and emergency conditions,

**(iv)** a description of the effects of foreseeable weather conditions or other environmental conditions on the performance of both the system and the pilot

**Table of contents**

3.1 Introduction

3.2 Weight | Center of Gravity Limits

3.2.1 Weighing Procedures

3.2.2 Weights

3.2.3 Center of Gravity

3.3 Altitude Limitations

3.4 Velocity Limitations

3.5 Weather Limitations and Effects on System and Pilot

3.6 Kinds of Operation

3.7 Battery Limitations

3.8 Range and Endurance Limitations

3.8.1 Battery

3.8.2 Command and Control Link

**3.1 Introduction**

This Section includes operating limitations which are necessary for the safe operation of the RPAS, its motors, standard equipment and standard payload. All information and limits in this Section apply to both normal and emergency conditions.

**Warning:** All limitations given in this Section must be complied with for all operations.

**Note:** Refer to the Supplements, Section 7 of this operating manual for information regarding specific equipment or payload.

**3.2 Weight | Center of Gravity Limits**

To obtain the performance, flight characteristics, and safe operation described in this RPAS operating manual, the RPA must be operated within the permissible weight and center of gravity limitations specified in this Section.

**3.2.1 Weighing Procedures**

For weighing, the RPA should be placed in the normal ground position in the center of the scale.

**3.2.2 Weights**

Basic Weight (including battery): 3.87 kg

Maximum Take Off Weight: 6.3 kg

Maximum payload: 2.43 kg

**Warning:** Exceeding weight limitations may lead to overloading of the RPA structure and cause loss of control of the RPA and/or structural damage.

**3.2.3 Center of Gravity**

Pterosoar is a hexacopter with very long moment arms relative to the width of the central platform. [Measurements] As a result, components of typical drone equipment weights essentially cannot result in a limiting-case balance condition.

The heaviest component is the battery which is mounted on-centerline at the geometric center of the RPA and as such cannot produce an unbalanced condition. The next heaviest component is the Pixhawk Cube Orange which weighs 73g. Any component weighing less than 73g is considered safe to mount to the central platform without encroaching any limiting-case balance condition.

Any payload must be mounted on-centerline of the central platform.

**Warning:** Exceeding the center of gravity limitations reduces the maneuverability and stability of the RPA.

**3.3 Altitude Limitations**

Maximum altitude: 400 ft AGL or 100 ft above a structure when within 200 ft horizontally from the structure.

Maximum base station altitude: 10,000 ft MSL.

Consideration should be given to barometric sensor accuracy at altitudes above 8,000 ft MSL. Consider switching to GPS as the primary height data source when operating above 8,000 ft MSL.

**3.4 Velocity Limitations**

Maximum horizontal speed: 20 m/s

Maximum takeoff vertical speed: 5 m/s

Maximum landing vertical speed: 1 m/s

**Note**: The above limits are based on maximum allowable parameters in QGC and demonstrated performance.

**Caution**: Maneuver speed and Vne have not been measured. Avoid abrupt control inputs.

**3.5 Weather Limitations and Effects on System and Pilot**

**Wind**

Wind limitations: 10 kts sustained, 15 kts gusting.

It is expected that operators have a clear understanding of the effect of wind on aviation, and that flying in wind will have operational effects. In automated (HOTL) flight modes including pre-programmed flight path, automated takeoff, automated landing, or RTH, the RPA will fly against the wind to maintain it’s desired position or flight path. The same is true of semi-automated (HITL) modes including position or altitude hold. In manual mode, the operator must be aware of the winds and make the appropriate inputs to counteract them. This may increase pilot fatigue. In all cases, the effects of flight against the wind on battery endurance should be considered.

**Temperature**

Ambient temperature operating range: 0°C to 40°C

**Caution**: Consideration should be given to the effects of ambient temperature on pilot fatigue.

**Air density**

Air density is an important factor in rotary-wing aircraft operations as it directly impacts the generation of lift. Consideration should be given to the density altitude at the time of flight. If the density altitude for the given conditions is abnormally high and aircraft performance seems affected (excess thrust required for takeoff or to maintain altitude), consider aborting the flight. Also consider the effects of abnormally high density altitudes on pilot fatigue.

**Precipitation**

Flight in any form of precipitation is prohibited.

**Vibration**

Vibrations generally result from the operation of the RPA itself. The Pixhawk flight controller includes vibration isolation on two of the IMU's, with a third fixed IMU as a reference / backup.

**Icing**

Flight is prohibited when icing conditions are observed, are reported to exist or are likely to be encountered along the route of flight. Flight is prohibited with frost, ice or snow adhering to any part of the RPA.

**Electromagnetic Environment**

Consider the effects of electromagnetic interference (EMI) from nearby sources such as cell towers, microwave radio relays, or Wi-Fi transmitters. If any interference with the telemetry or C2 link is suspected, abort the flight until the interference is eliminated.

It is strongly suggested to know the KP index expected on the day of the flight. This is the index used to express the magnitude of geomagnetic storms. The scale of the KP index ranges from 0 to 9. It is strongly discouraged to fly a drone when the KP index is between 4 and 9 as this indicates a geomagnetic storm. A geomagnetic storm interferes with the drone's GPS positioning.

**3.6 Kinds of Operation**

RPAS flights are limited to Visual Line Of Sight (VLOS) flights, under DAY Visual Flight Rules (VFR) conditions.

Night flight is prohibited.

**Modes**

With the exception of automated takeoff, the following modes may be engaged via the Taranis X9D controller as described in section 2.7. All settings are configurable via QGC. Position hold is the recommended flight mode for hand-flying. All flight modes are designed for operation with all motors functioning.

**Caution**: If any motor ceases functioning, land immediately.

Fully-automated (HOTL):

Mission: Vehicle executes a [predefined mission/flight plan](https://docs.px4.io/master/en/flying/missions.html) that has been uploaded to the flight controller.

Return to Home: Ascend to safe altitude and return via a direct path to the home location.

Auto takeoff: Vehicle ascends to takeoff altitude and holds position. Triggered via QGC.

Auto land: Vehicle lands at the position where the mode was engaged.

Semi-automated (HITL):

Position Hold: RC mode where roll, pitch, throttle sticks control movement in corresponding axes/directions. Centered sticks level vehicle and hold it to fixed altitude and position against wind.

Altitude Hold: RC mode like Manual mode but with *altitude stabilization* (centered sticks level vehicle and hold it to fixed altitude). The horizontal position of the vehicle can move due to wind (or pre-existing momentum).

Non-automated:

Manual: RC mode where centered sticks level vehicle (only - position is not stabilized).

**3.7 Battery Limitations**

Use only 6S LiPo batteries with AS150 connectors. Consideration should be given to battery weight vs capacity if replacing the battery.

Battery capacity: 16000mAh

Maximum charge rate: 1C

Maximum discharge rate: 15C

Ambient temperature for battery charging: 0°C to 43°C.

Ambient temperature for battery discharging: 0°C to 60°C.

**Warning**: Battery exposure to temperatures greater than 60°C for extended periods of time (more than 30 minutes) may result in damage to the battery or a fire.

**3.8 Range and Endurance Limitations**

**3.8.1 Battery**

The battery will nominally last approximately 25 minutes depending on flight conditions.

**3.8.2 Command and Control Link**

The C2 link has a published range of 1.5km. Maintaining VLOS will likely require a significantly reduced range.

**Section 4**

**Hazards, Protections, and Warning systems**

**Ref: 901.78** A manufacturer that has made a declaration to the Minister in respect of a model of remotely piloted aircraft system under section 901.76 shall make available to each owner of that model of system

**(c)** a remotely piloted aircraft system operating manual that includes

* **(v)** the characteristics of the system that could result in severe injury to crew members during normal operations,
* **(vi)** the design features of the system, and their associated operations, that are intended to protect against injury to persons not involved in the operations,
* **(vii)** the warning information provided to the pilot in the event of a degradation in system performance that results in an unsafe system operation condition,

**Table of contents**

4.1 Introduction

4.2 Hazards to RPAS crew

4.3 Protections Against Injury to Uninvolved Personnel

4.4 Warnings and alerts

**4.1 Introduction**

This section describes potential hazards to RPAS crewmembers, design features to protect against injury to persons not involved in RPAS operations, and the RPAS warning and alert systems.

**4.2 Hazards to RPAS crew**

Electric shock: The maximum battery voltage is 25.2V which poses a minimal shock risk. The PDB is purposefully located at the center of the frame platform and is difficult to reach by hand, so the chance of accidental contact is remote. The battery should be checked for damage or swelling prior to each use, and never short-circuited.

Laceration: Crew members should not approach the RPA on the ground when armed for flight without coordination with the pilot, or at all when motors are spinning. The RPA cannot be armed unless the safety switch has been pressed and held for approximately 2 seconds. If there is a preflight delay, the safety switch should be deactivated to prevent inadvertent motor actuation.

Trauma injuries: Crew members should not approach the flightpath of the RPA unless necessary for an emergency or safety concern, and should never stand directly beneath it. Unless required, it is good practice to stay at least 5m laterally from the RPA.

Burns: Crew members should not mishandle the battery. Mishandling the battery can pose a fire risk. Puncturing, short circuiting, or exposing the battery to excessive ambient temperature could cause a fire. Mishandling the battery during charging by selecting the wrong battery type, failing to perform a balanced charge, or excessive charge rate could cause a fire.

**Note**: See Section 3.7 for battery limitations.

**4.3 Protections Against Injury to Uninvolved Personnel**

Pterosoar is not intended to fly over or near people and must maintain 100 ft horizontal separation at any altitude from any non-crew member or person uninvolved in its operations.

The flight crew should include visual observers to ensure that uninvolved personal do not approach the flightpath or come within 100 ft of the RPA.

The RPA has configurable failsafe actions. Failsafe actions include: provide a warning, hover in place, return to home, or land in place. The following conditions can be specified to trigger a failsafe action:

Geofencing: Virtual regions within which the vehicle can fly, or in which it is *not allowed* to fly. The geofence regions are configurable in QGC. Breaching the fence triggers the failsafe action.

Low power: Battery level which triggers the failsafe action is configurable via QGC.

Lost link (C2 or Telemetry): Link loss timeout and failsafe action for either datalink are configurable via QGC.

**4.4 Warnings and Alerts**

The primary warning system is through QGroundControl. The laptop base station will sound an audio alert and give a corresponding on-screen message of any system degradation. Alerts include but are not limited to low signal strength, low battery, non-responsive motor, GPS degradation, Pixhawk sensor degradation or failure, geofence alert, etc. Most warnings also appear on the screen of the Taranis X9D with corresponding audio cueing.

**Section 5**

**Normal and Emergency Operating Procedures**

**Ref: 901.78** A manufacturer that has made a declaration to the Minister in respect of a model of remotely piloted aircraft system under section 901.76 shall make available to each owner of that model of system

**(c)** a remotely piloted aircraft system operating manual that includes

**(viii)** procedures for operating the system in normal and emergency conditions

See document “Normal and Emergency Procedures” as well as the pre-flight planning guide.

**Section 6**

**Handling, Care and Maintenance**

**Ref: 901.78** A manufacturer that has made a declaration to the Minister in respect of a model of remotely piloted aircraft system under section 901.76 shall make available to each owner of that model of system

**(a)** a maintenance program that includes

**(i)** instructions related to the servicing and maintenance of the system, and

**(ii)** an inspection program to maintain system readiness;

**(c)** a remotely piloted aircraft system operating manual that includes

**(ix)** assembly and adjustment instructions for the system.

**Table of contents**

6.1 Introduction

6.2 Transport | Storage

6.3 Assembly | Disassembly

6.4 Cleaning and Care

6.4.1 Propeller Care

6.4.2 Battery Care, Storage, and Use

6.5 Scheduled Maintenance

6.5.1 Annual Inspection (example)

6.5.2 500 Hour Preventive Maintenance (example)

6.6 Other Field and/or Shop Maintenance

**6.1 Introduction**

This Section contains the recommended procedures for proper handling of the RPA. It also identifies certain inspection and maintenance requirements which should be followed if the RPA is to retain its original performance and dependability.

**6.2 Transport | Storage**

Pterosoar should be transported in its protective carrying case with sufficient padding. Propellers should be removed. It is recommended to tape off the positive terminal of the battery.

**6.3 Assembly | Disassembly**

The forward and rear motor arms are hinged and lock in the central position for storage, and in the deployed position for flight. The landing gear is hinged and locks in the downward position for flight operations. The propellers incorporate a DJI quick release mounting system and lock in place.

**6.4 Cleaning and Care**

The RPA can be cleaned with a soft cloth and isopropyl alcohol. Ensure the battery is disconnected and the RPA is powered off prior to cleaning.

**6.4.1 Propeller Care**

Propellers must be checked before each flight for nicks or cracks and installed securely.

**6.4.2 Battery Care, Storage, and Use**

The battery is charged using HT206 charger. Ensure LiPo battery type and balanced charge are selected. The maximum charge rate is 1C and discharge rate is 15C. Do not exceed 4.2V per cell. If the voltage is less than 3.3V in any cell, the battery must be replaced. For long term storage (over a week), the battery should be charged to 3.8V – 3.9V per cell.

**6.5 Scheduled Maintenance**

**6.5.1 Annual Inspection**

Test all batteries for capacity.

Upgrade firmware and software to latest revisions.

**6.5.2 500 Hour Preventive Maintenance**

Disassembly, inspection of components for wear, replace any components as required by manufacturer.

Test all motors and replace if necessary.

Test all batteries for capacity.

Upgrade firmware and software to latest revisions.

**6.6 Other Field and/or Shop Maintenance**

Either the Here3 GPS or the M8N SE100 GPS may be used. The Here3 plugs into either CANbus port of the Pixhawk. The M8N SE100 plugs into the GPS2 port and the I2C port of the Pixhawk.

## Section 7

### Supplements

#### Table of contents

7.1 General

7.2 Radio Payload

### 7.1 General

This Section contains information regarding optional equipment | payload | accessories which may be installed in the RPAS.

**7.2 Radio Payload**

Radio payload is still under development.