Field Test **Garrett Pro-Pointer AT**


Side profile.


Holster.

Garrett broke the mould when they introduced their first pinpointer in 2008. It took off like wildfire and it seemed that everyone and his uncle had one. It was far superior compared to anything else that was available at the time. Of course, being the kind of people we are, many wished for a waterproof version and five years later Garrett introduced the new 'more sensitive' Garrett Pro-Pointer AT continuing on the legendary performance while adding a whole lot of very useful features. These include:-

- Improved On/Off switch
- Completely waterproof (to not exceed 10 feet or 3 metres)
- A measurement ruler to 8 inches engraved on its side
- Clip attachment for lanyard
- Fast retune for mineralised soils
- Lost alarm
- Auto Off
- Low battery alarm
- Holster with metal snap within that will cause an alarm if put away switched on.

There was panic in the house when my Garrett Pro-Pointer AT couldn't be found after being out with it on the previous day!

The place was turned upside down and the dog, car and carry bag searched as well, but to no avail; the pinpointer was missing. "Not good" I thought, especially as I had only just received it for tests. To make matters worse, this would bring my tally for lost pinpointers up to five. What is it about them, that makes them so easy to lose? For starters, it might be the colour – usually black and not easy to spot in low light situations such as a wood where I had 'mislaid' two of them (never did find them again).

I remembered having to make a dash for the car as a sudden heavy shower had me running for shelter and, as I was loading everything into my detector carry bag, this fell off the tree branch that I had been using as a bench.

A hasty journey was made to the previous day's location and as I walked up to the area I could thankfully see a bright orange shape in among the nettles and leaves. The probe was found easily.

Tip: there's a handy lanyard clip attachment near the battery compartment and I would recommend tethering yourself to it somehow.

Another thing you could do is discard the 'Black Cat' battery shipped with the device and instead fit a good alkaline; the 'Cats' aren't great. The battery fitted is 'carbon' and won't last long at all.

Don't over-tighten the screw cap as I cracked the body of another pinpointer by trying to make sure it was closed properly. However, I am sure the quality of this particular Garrett pinpointer is better than some cheaper versions out there which, if they crack won't turn out to be so cheap. 'Buy cheap buy twice', the old saying goes.

I'd also recommend reading the Instructions that come with the AT really well, and perhaps even to laminate page 3 and carry it with you. It's easy to become a bit frustrated if you continually press the button, and what you want to happen doesn't! This isn't your typical 'on off' probe!

Instructions

Powering On: press and release the button while holding the device away from metal. You will hear two beeps and the LED will remain on.

Adjusting Settings: the AT has three Sensitivity settings and two detection settings and these are: Audio plus Vibrate, or Audio only (silent).

To enter Adjustment Mode press and hold the button for two seconds – indicated by a single beep, followed by a dual-tone beep and a flashing LED (In Silent Mode beeps are replaced with pulses).

The first button press after entering adjustment mode indicates the current setting. Repeatedly press the button to cycle through the six settings:-

- 1 beep = minimum Sensitivity with audio
- 2 beeps = medium Sensitivity with audio (Default setting)
- 3 beeps = maximum Sensitivity with audio
- 1 vibrate = minimum Sensitivity/Silent
- 2 vibrate = medium Sensitivity/Silent
- 3 vibrate = maximum Sensitivity/Silent

To exit adjustment mode, press and hold the button for two seconds, indicated by a dual-tone beep (dual vibrate in silent) or wait five seconds for automatic exit.

Grass recovery.

Wet sand recovery.

Fast Retune for Mineralised Ground: to tune out the detection of saltwater, wet sand or highly mineralised ground, hold the tip of the Pro-Pointer AT to the water, sand or soil and quick-press the On button for an instant retune.

In Use – Grass

My first time out with the AT was to a grass site I've been searching for years. I also brought a brand new detector that had arrived for testing that same day so it was an opportune time to see how both devices worked. The site is adjacent to back gardens so at times – especially if the weather is fine – I try to keep very quiet.

I decided to work in Vibrate Mode only at Medium Sensitivity. This was perfectly adequate because no small items were ever found any deeper than 8 inches and it was really easy to use as the pulses are very powerful even with gloves on as the 'engine of the device' is very strong.

There is much scrap tin and old heavy foil material that give interesting signals and sometimes foil can tear apart and leave smaller bits behind after removing the main piece. The probe was very thorough locating any stray pieces ensuring holes were then empty. The bright LED light was very handy in illuminating the side walls of holes and helping to see the finds if a deep hole was necessary. Similarly, the 'ruler' on its side left no doubt as to the depth of a notable find.

In one area an over abundance of old cinders in the soil caused some confusion as I wasn't used to the pinpointing characteristics of the new test detector and I was 'off' in some of the holes dug, sometimes badly (a DD coil). The probe was run around the side walls and located the target, and then the hole received another 'surgical slice' and the target recovered.

I found that after locating the target with the detector I then ran the tip of the pinpointer around the approximate surface area and more often than not I got a pulse and didn't have to dig too far at all. This resulted in less soil disturbance from holes and less mess left on the surface. The AT is very sensitive, typically reacting to a medium size coin from around 2-3 inches. It worked as expected here and was very quick.

Interference

Over the course of several weeks I had reason to use the probe with a variety of detector brands and models. I had read reports that when used alongside a Minelab GPX5000 it did cause some interference but that is the only incidence I am aware of. The Pro-Pointer is sensitive enough for tiny nuggets.

My tests didn't show any interference with the exception of one model operating at a similar frequency of 11.8kHz. This model has other frequency choices anyway so this shouldn't be a problem.

One way to eliminate the possibility of interference occurring is to turn on the Pro-Pointer AT and leave it a few feet away from your detector while doing a noise cancel procedure. If your particular detector doesn't have this feature then ensure the coil and the pointer are not 'parallel' to one another when digging. Turn the detector away from you at a 45 degree angle and any stray blipping should be eliminated.

There was a funny incident when I was filming some of the procedures and I was a few feet from the pointer talking to the camera when I heard a 'beep' followed by another and it took several seconds to twig I had left the pointer switched on and it was using the Lost Pinpointer Alarm function.

In Use – Beach

It was really nice to be able to search the wet sand of beaches and use the Pro-Pointer AT to assist in the recoveries. There was zero stray blipping. At the same time I was able to 'dig and scrape' with the probe without any stray noises at all.

It was especially helpful in recoveries that ceased producing signals when the sand was disturbed due to the infamous 'halo effect' and more often than not the targets were hair clips, nails and some modern copper coated iron core coins.

This is normal as the preset discrimination levels on various detector models can vary and some react to these ferrous bits while others don't.

It was good to be able to recover these and not walk away wondering what had been missed. It's so easy to do this when you've shifted a ton of sand and a target could be anywhere.

If using the Pro-Pointer AT in salt water and say a hole gets flooded by an incoming wave or you're searching in rock pools, you may find it 'sounds off' as soon as the tip hits the water. This is what the Fast Retune function is for. If you 'quick press' the On/Off button you will get an instant retune. However, if you're in several inches of water you may have to retune again and possibly two to four times when the tip hits the sand. So remember that because it can get very noisy and you might think you've damaged it. No you haven't. It's normal and very well thought out.

If wearing headphones at the beach in a roaring gale the vibration aspect of the Pro-Pointer AT is very useful because you probably won't want to remove your

Waterproof to 10 feet.

headphones to listen to the probe on every signal. Similarly, if fully submerged the vibration is the best way to 'feel the signals'.

Conclusion

Be sure to rinse the probe off in fresh water after immersion in the sea, but don't open the battery compartment while the device is wet. Allow it to air dry and then feel free to open it afterwards. It won't do any harm to remove the battery when not in use and place a Silica Gel pack inside with the cover loosely tightened to absorb any stray moisture that may be inside. (You can find Silica Gel packs inside some tablet medicine bottles and small electronics). Just make sure you put the battery into your detector carry bag!

If you're considering the purchase of a pinpointer then you should put this one at the top of your list.

It's the most confident pinpointer I have ever used and its build quality is second to none. It's also the most stable pinpointer I have used.

The bright orange colour has to be one of the best aspects of the Pro-Pointer AT and should be easily visible if accidentally dropped and left behind as I did!

I'd have no hesitation at all in buying a Pro-Pointer AT

Follow the Instructions, set it up properly, and it will be very straightforward.

Technical Specifications

Operating Frequency 11.5kHz
Tuning Automatic or Manual Retune (quick press)
Waterproof Rating to 10 feet
Length 9 inches
Weight 6.5oz (0.2kg)
Battery 9 volt (alkaline lasts 30 hours)
Warranty 2 Years, Limited Parts/Labour
Price £124.95 TH