

# UNOFFICIAL WORLD RECORD LONG DISTANCE MICROLIGHT FLIGHT

SHARK 600  
30 June - 1 July 2024



• My aircraft on the apron of Brač airport with unusual Mammatus clouds in the sky / Photo: Anna Hero



AT THE END OF JUNE I FLEW THE LONGEST FLIGHT EVER IN A MICROLIGHT –  
– SOME 3,189 KM. THIS IS NOW PROBABLY AN UNOFFICIAL WORLD RECORD.

Jiří Pruša • Photo: J. Pruša, unless stated otherwise

## History

In August 2023, together with a 16-year pilot Eliška Kudějová I managed to set an official FAI <sup>1)</sup> record by flying 1,915 km non-stop: (Travelling ultra-light: new FAI distance record by Jiří Pruša and Eliška Kudějová | World Air Sports Federation) The FAI criteria require a record flight to be flown on a closed circuit with complex rules for the length of the legs which form the circuit. There are strict rules for the maximum/minimum angles between each leg and the crew has to consist of two pilots. This means it is impossible to make a real maximum distance record as the amount of fuel is limited because of the weight of the crew. The real maximum distance record can only be achieved by flying alone and using the maximum part of the allowable payload for fuel. Also, flying direct from point A to point B offers more flexibility and is much more interesting than flying a closed circle with the same airport of departure and arrival.

## Planning

Using calculations based on the experience of our earlier record flight and my two previous long distance non-stop flights (Benesov, Czech Republic – Benavente, Portugal) and Reykjavik – Prague) I came to the conclusion that with my Shark 600 aircraft I should be able to cover a distance of over 3,000 km. I first planned to fly the length of the Mediterranean from Lisbon to Larnaca. However, such a flight would require 17 to 18 hours which is more daylight than is possible even during long Summer days. Flying at night was excluded because my aircraft is not appropriately equipped and, in any case, night flying is prohibited in UL aircraft registered in the Czech Republic.

After some thought, I came to a simple solution: “If I fly from the North to the South, I can use the unending polar day in June or July”. This brought to mind Alta airport which I had visited two years earlier and which is located some 400 km north of the northern Polar circle. Having done some basic calculations I realised that I would have to depart at about 22.00 local time so as not to overtake the twilight somewhere over Stockholm. Thus, I would be able to fly legally by VFR rules all the way.

My first plan was to fly from Alta to Rome Urbe airport. The SkyDemon app showed the distance to be 3,181 km and I planned Rimini as an alternate airport. After giving it more thought, I realised

this was not a good idea. This was because somewhere over the Croatian city of Pula, I would have had to make a critical decision, with very little fuel in the tanks, whether to continue or land. A wrong decision would mean that either I would not cover my dream distance of 3,000 km (Pula is closer) or, by pushing my luck, I could end up with empty tanks somewhere over the Adriatic. I did not like either of these options. I discussed the plan with my Norwegian friend Bjørn and on his recommendation I decided to fly from Honningsvåg (ENHV) airport which is located close to Nordkapp, the iconic northernmost point of Europe, i.e. some 500 km north of the northern Polar circle. At the same

1) Fédération Aéronautique Internationale / World Air Sports Federation





time, I chose not to fly over the Adriatic but to land in Croatia and selected the airport of Brač as my destination with Zadar as an alternate. The distance from Honningsvåg to Brač is 3,189 km.

## Preparations

Norway is part of the Schengen area but the free movement rules are only valid for people, not for goods. So, I had to resolve the problem of how to depart the Czech Republic where the full free movement rules apply and then where I should land in Norway where they don't. Initially I wanted to fly via one of Germany's international airports. However the European football competitions taking place in Germany made the whole approval procedure somewhat complex. With the help of my friend Jan at the flight planning department of ABS Jets company I found that it was possible just to announce my flight to the Czech Customs and leave directly from my home airport Příbram (LKPM). That was a great solution.

For arrival in Norway, I had to advise Norwegian Customs a minimum of four hours before my arrival to my chosen airport of entry to Norway – Kristiansand which is located in the South of the country. I sent an e-mail to them and within an hour received a confirmation along with best wishes for my flight. I therefore planned to use a similar procedure for my departure for the record flight from Honningsvåg, i.e. advising the Customs at least four



• At the airport of Honningsvåg (ENHV) minutes before departure for the longest flight

hours before my departure and giving them a chance to see me before leaving Norway.

According to my information, it was necessary to obtain an approval from the Norway CAA to operate a foreign registered microlight aircraft in Norway. I submitted an application with all the required documents. Two days later I received an answer that approval was no longer needed if I didn't plan to fly within Norway for more than one month per year. I just needed to have all the required documents on me. This was a great news, not just for me but also for anyone wanting to fly to Norway with a microlight registered in another country.

A somewhat complex issue was the airport's hours of operation because I was planning my departure for a rather unusual time - at 22.00 hours. Smaller Norwegian airports, including Honningsvåg, set their operational hours according to the flight schedule of

Widerøe airlines which operate most of the local flights. After a lot of searching I found that Honningsvåg airport is open on weekdays till 22.00, and is completely closed on Saturday. On Sunday it opens for two hours from 12.30 to 14.30 and again from 21.00 to 23.00. This meant that the most attractive day for me happened to be Sunday. The final decision, however, would have to be dictated by the meteorological situation.



• Filling the gas cans at a fuel station in Alta / Photo: Birger Mannsverk



• The crew together with Olin getting ready to depart from Příbram to Kristiansand  
Photo: M. Dermišek jr.

With the exception of the maritime emergency equipment, one bottle of engine oil and a bottle of cooling liquid, I took only some underwear, a limited amount of snacks, and some drinking water. The rest of the payload was reserved for fuel which I carried in a 90 litre capacity external tank placed on the rear seat. When loading the aircraft, my main focus was on maintaining the centre of gravity within the allowable limits. This needed a bit of thinking about because when fuel from the external tank is used, the centre of gravity moves forward. I did my best to place the tank as close as possible to the CG to neutralise its impact on the position of the CG. The adjustable rear seat helped. I made all the preparations of my aircraft, as always, the day





• Transporting the fuel to the aircraft at Alta



• Pouring over the fuel from the fuel can into the aircraft tanks / Photo: Birger Mannsverk



• The cockpit of the Shark with the Australian made additional tank "turtlepack" fully fuelled up

before my planned departure, i.e. on Wednesday June 27. I dislike having to prepare the aircraft for my expeditions or special flights under pressure knowing that my flight plan is filed and I have to depart at a certain time.

## The flight

On Wednesday evening I sent the information on my flight to the respective Norwegian and Czech authorities and filed a flight plan from Pribram to Kristiansand for the following day with a departure at 8.15 a.m. local time. On Thursday morning I put the last item into my rucksack - the stuffed tiger Olin given to me by a group of young aviation fans who wanted Olin to participate in the flight.

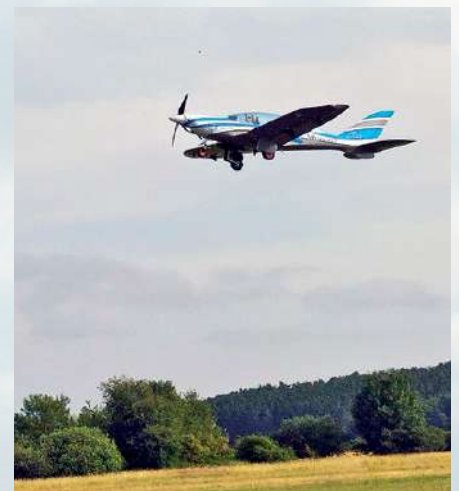
Everything went well in the morning and I took off for Kristiansand with just some 15 minutes delay. A couple of minutes after 13.00, i.e. after some 4.5 hours, I landed at Kristiansand airport

which is surrounded by a beautiful landscape. I was immediately taken to the terminal where I was required to walk through the Customs area to give them the opportunity to check me. Since no one was there, I walked back landside to my aircraft which was parked on the other side of the airport. Then I called Bjørn and we agreed to meet at around 20.00 at the airfield of Hattfjelldal (ENOV). My plan was to land at and film several Norwegian airports for the European airports guide that I have been working on for some time and which I intend to make public by the end of 2024. At 20.00 I indeed landed at Hattfjelldal. Bjørn was waiting for me at the end of the runway. The first day ended fine.

Friday morning, we both fuelled up at a service station located some 200 metres from the runway. I then set off to film some more airfields and enjoy the fascinating views of the Lofoten Islands. At 15.30 I landed at Alta. Now, the critical issue of refuelling had to be resolved. The airport of Alta offers Avgas but this type of fuel is both more expensive and unsuitable for Rotax engines. I was very happy to be met by Birger, a local aeroclub member whom, by coincidence, I had met at Alta two years earlier and who was recommended to me by Bjørn and the Norwegian Shark Aircraft distributor. Birger proved to be extremely helpful and indispensable. His help was vital as I would not have been able to transport

the fuel from the service station and neither would I have been able to get it to my aircraft through the passenger terminal. So that was the good news. The bad news was that Bjørn unfortunately did not make it to Alta because he encountered some technical issues with his VL 3 on his way and our plans for a good talk on Friday evening were cancelled.

Saturday morning it was raining cats and dogs and we had to wait till about noon to leave for the airport and start the complex process of filling the aircraft with fuel. In the hangar we found five 20 litre canisters so we made two trips to a special service station which had N95 fuel without added



• Taking off at Pribram (LKPM) airfield for the flight to Kristiansand (ENCN) Photo: Miloš Dermišek jr.





- Invaluable friend Birger without whose assistance I could not have done it



- With Thomas shortly before departure from Honningsvåg (ENHV) to Brač (LDSB)

ethanol. The most difficult task was to fill up the external fuel tank placed on the rear seat of the Shark. We had to bring up folding steps and it took both of us to manage the fuelling. Birger then went home while I stayed with my aircraft for another two hours to make sure that everything was in order and ready for the long flight.

The rain on Sunday morning was even more torrential than the day before and my noon departure to Honningsvåg as well as the evening departure for Brač

did not look very realistic. However, the weather started easing and the forecast for the whole trip did not look too bad with the exception of southern Poland and the Czech Republic. Compared to the length of the whole flight these were very small pieces so I hoped the weather would improve by the time I reached those areas on Monday morning. My great concern was the direction and strength of the wind. Checking the website Windy I came to the conclusion that over the whole distance of the flight the average direction and speed of the wind would balance out with the result being neutral.

At around 10.00 a.m. I filed my flight plan declaring that the flight time would be some 13 hours with an additional two hours fuel reserve. I admit I was a bit nervous that someone from ATC Avinor would call to tell me that I was crazy and that it was impossible. To offer some explanation, I put into the notes field no 18 of the flight plan form the brief information that I was attempting a world record. No one called either in the morning or in the afternoon so I started believing that maybe I would really depart.



- My longtime friend Bjørn on the right, at the road fuel station next to Hattfjelldal (ENHT) airport



- Impatient Olin watching over the preparations for the long flight

At noon, the weather was reasonable and I departed for Honningsvåg which is about 40 minute flight from Alta. Immediately after landing there I found a friendly person, Thomas, working at the airport. Thomas told me to wait some 30 minutes until he finished work so that he could take me in his car to the service station to fill up my 10 litre tank in order to compensate for the fuel used from Alta. At 16.00 I was supposed to meet "under the statue in the park" the director of the local Tourist office and a young journalist from the local newspaper. After filling the small tank, Thomas took me to town and we agreed to meet at 20.45 when he would drive back to the airport. My meeting with two friendly ladies in the park went fine, I visited the local museum, and I had a light dinner followed by a brief nap in the lobby of Scandic hotel. Then Thomas picked me up and took me to the airport. I sent a couple of e-mails and sms messages to my friends, fuelled up the aircraft tanks to the last drop and prepared for my departure. At 22.10, at full light, I took off from runway 26 and by making a careful, wide climbing right turn over the sea, I slowly settled on my southern course to a very distant Croatian island of Brač.

The cloud base was quite low so I decided to fly South through the 150 km long fjord called Porsanger. In my rear-view mirror, I could see the sun's rays penetrating the clouds quite high over the horizon despite it being close to midnight. The ATC controller at the airport of Banak, which I overflew, cautioned me about the strong precipitation in front and to the East of me and suggested a more westerly routing. This meant I had to change the entry point to Finland, a tiny part of which I had to overfly as well.



- Olin waiting for departure from Alta





• View towards Nordkapp from Honningsvåg airport

human dwelling for about four hours after my takeoff. I had to meander quite a lot during the first part of the journey in order to avoid the frequent clouds. Part of the flight led me to fly between two layers of clouds of which the lower layer fortunately consisted only of individual clouds not covering as much as half the land below. What was very important for me was the fact that the outside temperature was at least 7 degrees Celsius which relieved my worries about possible icing. During the first four hours the headwind was not as strong as forecast so my anxiety about fuel consumption etc. started slowly easing. I often found my brain calculating the remaining time, distance already



• After our meeting at the park of Honningsvåg



• Flying at around 1 a.m. between the cloud layers over a tiny part of Finland

When preparing for this flight, my great concern was how not to fall asleep during the flight. To this end, I took with me several energy drinks which I started drinking not long after my takeoff. At the same time, I was fascinated by the midnight sun which was from time to time clearly visible behind me. Somewhere far ahead, the sky was dark grey and black, showing that south of me it was still night. According to my calculations, I was supposed to catch up with the night somewhere around Stockholm after

some five hours at which time the sunrise there would already be bringing the light. During the flight, I was exchanging sms messages with my friends and colleagues who did their best to entertain me and keep me awake by writing to me. My progress was shown on-line on the Flying Revue website [www.flying-revue.cz](http://www.flying-revue.cz) since I was using the SPOT device which sends position signals via satellite.

Tundra, forest, meadows, lakes, rivers, creeks; all of this was passing quickly below me. I did not see any

flown, distance to be still covered, the amount of fuel used and the amount of fuel remaining, all the while estimating whether I would be able to make it to Brač. At times I had to remind myself to exercise my legs. For some more energy I finished off two chocolates in addition to the energy drinks.

Whenever the fuel gauge of the right internal tank showed 50 litres, I switched on the auxiliary pump and fuelled the tank up to 70 litres from the external tank that was sitting on the rear seat. I carried this out



• Flying alongside Porsanger fjord shortly after takeoff from Honningsvåg





• *Midnight sun north of the northern polar circle*

several times until I estimated that the tank behind me, which I could not see, was indeed empty. This moment came somewhere off the southern tip of Sweden. From then on, I knew that I had 150 litres in my main tanks and that I would have to use the fuel wisely to make it to Brač.

At around 7.00 a.m. I entered FIR Warsaw still in good weather. However, crossing my own country, Czechia, I encountered less favourable conditions. I was obliged to descend to low altitude in order to avoid the clouds. Next I transited through the TMA of Náměšť military airport and a couple of minutes later I was asking Austrian Tulln military airport for permission to cross their TMA. The wind was blowing strongly from the west and the Alps were making it very turbulent. After passing through CTR/TMA Maribor airport in Slovenia, I contacted Pula Radar in Croatia, then Zadar Radar and, a couple of minutes later, Split Radar. At 11.34. I landed at Brač airport.

I was pleasantly surprised that I managed to get out from the cabin with my body in a reasonably fresh



• *Warm welcome at Brač airport by Anna Hero, the singer performing "You are the champion of the world..."*

state: I did not fall down or trip when leaving the aircraft. With my rucksack on my back, I followed the lady from the handling department of Brač airport. On entering the airport terminal, I found a great surprise waiting for me. A lady with a guitar and a microphone started to play and sing a special song "You are the champion of the world".... © The welcome at Brač was fantastic and very warm. Anna, the charming singer, recorded an interview with me which is now shown



• *With Anna Hero, here as manager ground operations, Brač airport  
Photo: Kamil Kouba*

on website Avioradar.net. Then, within 30 minutes I was able to jump into the refreshing waters of the Adriatic.

### A couple of closing words

According to the information that I found on the internet, the three longest flights in a microlight were made in 2022 and 2023. One was flown by Mack Rutheford in 2022 from Kushiro in Japan to the Alaskan island of Attu, covering the distance of approximately 2,480 km (according to Google Earth) in about 10 hours in a Shark aircraft. Then in June 2023 I flew a non-stop flight from Reykjavik to Prague, covering the distance of 2,630 km (according to SkyDemon) in about 9.5 hours in a Shark 600. In July 2023 Olivier Ronveaux flew from Iceland to Goose Bay in his VL3, covering the distance of about 2,475 km (according to SkyDemon) from Reykjavik to Goose Bay in about 10 hours. This year I wanted to test both the aircraft and myself, so I tried to fly a maximum possible distance in my Shark 600. The distance from Honningsvåg in northern Norway to Brač in Croatia is, according to SkyDemon, 3,189 km and I managed to cover it in 13 hours and 24 minutes.

So, the game is on and I look forward to seeing someone taking up the challenge and flying a longer flight in his/her microlight! 🇫🇷

Main statistics of the flight	
Distance covered	3,189 km
Average speed	240 km/h
Average consumption	17 l/h
Total flying time	13 hours 24 minutes

**Flight Plans** Close

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**Filed at 2024-06-30 08:17 Z**  
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• *My VFR flight plan for the longest flight*





# JIŘÍ PRUŠA

pilot • publicist • businessman

It was Jiří's father who first took him to the airport in Prague at the age of four. Since he was 15, he has flown gliders and also, later, paragliders. Since 2010 he has been focussing on long range VFR international flights in single engine small aircraft.

By 2024 he has accumulated over 3,500 flight hours and the number of airports he has landed at around the globe has grown to over 1,300. These include Wales airstrip in the Bering Strait, Death Valley Airport in California, Funchal Airport in Madeira, the desert airfield of Cup Juby in Morocco and Masada in Israel, the lowest airport in the world (378 metres below mean sea level). He has flown several times over the Sahara as well as the Namib desert in Namibia, the Kalahari desert in Botswana and the Mojave desert in California.

Jiří publishes a bi-monthly aviation magazine, Flying Revue, for which he has written dozens of articles based on his experiences on flight expeditions over all of Europe, the USA including Alaska, the Caribbean, Australia, Russia, New Zealand, Greenland and many countries in Africa. Over the last four years he has also published three books: *European Islands from the Skies*, *The World from the Skies* and *By Small Plane to Greenland*. Very popular is his practical computer application and textbook entitled *VFR English Communication* which is available in Czech, Russian and German. There is also an international version in English.

In 2023 Jiří, together with his 16 year-old female co-pilot, set an FAI registered world record in distance flying by covering 1,912 km without landing. Jointly with his friend, renowned movie director Petr Nikolaev, he created three successful TV documentaries: *Caribbean Islands from the Skies*, *Adriatic Islands from*

*the Skies* and *Double record*. Jiří publishes many of his videos on YouTube and internet TV *Stream*. He is well known to Czech audiences for two exhibitions of his multimedia event, *The Beautiful World of Flying*, organised in 2017 and 2018 in Karolinum, the most prestigious exhibition hall in Prague.

