# Seaglider Science Controller

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# **Contents**



## <span id="page-2-0"></span>Introduction

This document is an introduction to the use of the Seaglider science controller (scicon). Scicon is an electronic and software subsystem on Seaglider vehicles that allows for independent (of Seaglider flight operations), asynchronous sampling and onboard processing of science sensors. This guide assumes that the user is familiar with general glider piloting, basestation and software menu operations.

In the Seaglider software architecture, scicon is an autonomous logger (as opposed to a sensor). This means that the Seaglider provides power and the flight software communicates with scicon via a series of action messages at specific points of flight operations (dive start, apogee reached, dive finished, pre-Iridium call, post-Iridium call, depth changed, etc.), but otherwise the logger device operates independently of the glider flight control. During flight, scicon samples sensors according to its own configuration files (the glider *science* file has no effect on scicon operations). When the dive is complete, the glider queries scicon for all data collected during the dive and then passes those files to the basestation directly. Data collected by scicon is not reported in the regular glider log and engineering files. Basestation software is responsible for merging glider data and scicon data into the resultant netcdf product.

## <span id="page-3-0"></span>Hardware and wiring

Scicon consists of a small ARM-based single-board computer usually mounted on the VBD cylinder in the aft of the vehicle. This arrangement provides the easiest wiring access to the bulkhead connectors on the aft endcap for sensors mounted in or on the aft fairing.

Scicon provides connections for five serial sensors (four RS232, one logic level) and two frequency output sensors (e.g., SBE CT, SBE 43). The logic level serial port and one frequency channel are shared. The layout of channel connectors on the board is shown in Fig. [2.1.](#page-4-0) Scicon is connected to the glider via the console serial port. To configure scicon on the glider, configure a logger device using the param/config/logger menu option. Scicon is usually connected to one of the standard glider serial ports USART2, USART4, USART5B or 5C.

Generally, sensors are connected either to scicon or to the glider "truck" platform. If they are connected to scicon, then sampling is done via scicon and control is via the scheme file, scicon.sch (below). If connected to the glider directly then sampling is controlled via the science file. With the latest generation of electronics, specifically the Rev E "combi" tailboards, it is possible to have one serial sensor and one frequency sensor (e.g., the SBE CT sail) electrically connected to both scicon and the glider truck. In this arrangement, the configuration can be changed mid-mission. At any one time, only one platform (glider truck or scicon) can be configured to sample a given sensor. Simultaneous access is not allowed. On the glider the shared ports are the CT frequency port and the 5D serial port. An example of typical aft endcap wiring is shown in Fig. [2.2.](#page-5-0)

It is possible, though not common, to have some sensors connected to the glider (to be controlled via science file and reported in the engineering file) and some sensors connected to scicon.

<span id="page-4-0"></span>

Figure 2.1: Science controller board layout with connector numbering and channel labels.



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<span id="page-5-0"></span>Figure 2.2: Example wiring for an aft endcap with scicon installed. Bulkhead assignments, tailboard USART assignments, and scicon channel assignments are somewhat arbitrary. Generally, wiring can be re-arranged as mission needs dictate.

## <span id="page-6-0"></span>**Configuration**

Scicon operations are controlled by three configuration files: *scicon.ins* (describes instrument definitions), scicon.att (how sensors are attached), and scicon.sch (sampling scheme for the intervals, depth bins, dives and profiles of each attached sensor). Generally, scicon.ins and scicon.att do not change over the course of a mission, but they can be changed if needed.

The scicon configuration files are automatic, that is, they are handled automatically by the glider if they are present in the glider home directory on the basestation, similar to targets, science, etc. If present during an Iridium communication session, the glider will download the file to its own local file storage, and then after the call is complete will copy the files over to scicon's own filesystem. They are read by scicon at every power-up during the execution of the script file startup.scr so any changed configurations will take effect at the next operation.

Comments in all three files are denoted with a # as the first character on a line. Inline comments are not supported.

### <span id="page-6-1"></span>3.1 scicon.ins

The instrument properties file defines the classes of instruments that can be sampled, one definition per instrument type. This class definitions contains information such as baud rate, warmup times, timeouts, query strings, how data is parsed, and the types of data returned.

#### <span id="page-6-2"></span>3.1.1 example

```
sbect = {
    prefix = ct
    cycles = 255
    warmup = 700timeout = 2000column = condFreq(1000, 0)column = tempFreq(1000, 0)}
```

```
legatoPol1 = {prefix = fb
   baud = 19200cycles = 0
   timeout = 1000warmup = 8000skip = 0terminator = 10
   query = %F%n%3%F%n%[Ready: ]fetch sleepafter=true%r%n
   format = \frac{1}{6}d - \frac{1}{6}d - \frac{1}{6}d \frac{1}{6}d : \frac{1}{6}f, \frac{1}{6}00, \frac{1}{6}01, \frac{1}{6}02, \frac{1}{6}03meta = %F%n%1%F%n% [Ready: ]getall%r%n% [Ready: ]start = %F%n%1%F%n%[Ready: ]disable%r%n%[Ready: ]
   stop = %F%n%1%F%n%[Ready: ]%9%9powerexternal used%r%n%[%n]
   column = conduc(10000, 0)column = temp(10000, 0)column = pressure(1000, 0)column = conductoremp(10000, 0)}
aa4831 = {prefix = aa
   format = \%s \%d \%00 \%01 \%02 \%03 \%04
   baud = 9600warmup = 1000terminator = 10
   timeout = 5000skip = 0column = 02(1000, 0)column = airsat(1000,0)column = temp(1000, 0)column = calphase(1000, 0)column = tcphase(1000, 0)meta = %[4831] % n% $11%9 get all% r% n% [Reference] % [% $23]}
```
#### <span id="page-7-0"></span>3.1.2 syntax

```
instrumentClass = {
   prefix= two character prefix for file and directory names
    driver= standard | ad2cp | json - specifies which parser to use for
               handling data. standard is default and uses the format=
               definition to parse data. ad2cp handles averaging and
               decimation for Nortek AD2CP binary format. A single coeff=
               must be specified in the instance to set the expected
               record size (for example, (86 + 4x1xN_burst_cells)
               + (86 + 4x3xN_velocity_cells)).
```

```
baud= baud rate for serial communications (e.g., 19200)
cycles= number of cycles to measure for frequency channel
timeout= timeout in milliseconds
warmup= warmup time in milliseconds
status= status expression, evaluated and returned on "log sample"
skip= number of initial lines to skip after power-up before sampling
terminator= terminating character of data output line (decimal byte value)
query= query string to send for each sample (can be empty)
format= format string for parsing serial data returned
meta= command string to retrieve instrument metadata
start= command string start sampling
stop= command string to stop sampling
column= name(scale,offset)
column= name(scale,offset)
... additional columns
conf= configuration string to send before starting
conf= configuration string to send before starting
... additional configuration strings
post= RBR-TS | TS - apply post-stop function (e.g., bin averaging)
           If TS is specified for T-S profiles derived from SBE CT
           then 8 coeff= values (C_G. C. C_J, T_G. T. J) must be provided
           in the instrument instance
comment= comment string
comment= comment string
... additional comment strings
```
prefix and one of baud or cycles are required. format and terminator are required for serial instruments if using the standard driver (which is the default if not otherwise specified). At least one column must be specified. All other values default to zero or empty.

#### <span id="page-8-0"></span>3.1.2.1 format statements

}

For sensors that return data as a single line of ASCII serial text, the format estatement is used to define how that line will be parsed into individual columns. It can be any string consisting of regular text (that will be matched exactly) and the special characters:



Columns can be parsed in any order in the format statement, i.e., they do not need to appear in numerical order. If channel 00 is "temperature" and channel 01 is "salinity" based on the order of column statements and the instrument output format is

mm/dd/yyyy HH:MM:SS salinity voltage temperature

then the format might be one of

format=%s %s %01 %f %00 format=%d/%d/%d %d:%d:%f %01 %f %00

#### <span id="page-9-0"></span>3.1.2.2 columns

There must be one column= statement in the definition for each datatype returned by the instrument. If columns %00 ... %05 are referenced in the format statement then there must be six column statements to define the name and packing information for those variables.

```
column = name(scale,offset) - scale and offset are applied for conversion
                              to long integers for the differenced tabular
                              ASCII data file representation
```
Columns must be listed in order (00, 01, 02...). The first column listed will define channel 00, the second channel 01, etc. Scale and offset values determine how scicon will pack the parsed data into files for transmission. Data are sent as long integers. If the data from the sensor is reported as integers then scale can be 1. Floating point values are generally scaled up by the order of magnitude that preserves the appropriate number of decimal places when the data is reconstructed on the basestation.

#### <span id="page-9-1"></span>3.1.2.3 string commands

Commands that are sent to the instrument (start, query, meta, stop, conf) can contain interpolated text. Interpolated text are special strings, similar to print/printf format specifiers in some programming languages, which are evaluated each time the string is constructed and sent to the instrument.

```
%1 ... %9 = DelayMilliSecs(10) .. DelayMilliSecs(90)
%b = serial break
\sqrt[n]{r} = CR (13)
\gamma_{n} = NL (10)
%e = esc (27)\sqrt[k]{F} = flush the receive queue
%$xx = send hex byte xx - must include both characters (00 - ff)
\frac{1}{2} = wait for an arbitrary sequence of characters. Characters between the
      brackets can include any ASCII character. To wait for % use %%. To wait
      for ] use %]. Use %r and %n to wait for CR and NL, respectively.
      Use %$xx to wait for an arbitrary hex byte. Several commands use the
      string gathered while waiting for this sequence as output. For example,
      the final captured output of the stop= command is reported on the finish
      line of the data file trailer.
\lambda(n) = wait for an arbitrary number of milliseconds (n = 1...99999)
\frac{1}{2} = interpret characters as a strftime specification for current time
\%% = \%
```
### <span id="page-10-0"></span>3.2 scicon.att

The attach file defines the specific instruments that are currently configured and how they are connected to scicon. There is one entry per instance of an instrument type, defining which class of instrument (this must be a type defined in scicon.ins), which hardware channel it is attached to, any instance specific configuration data (calibration coefficients for example), and directives to average or decimate samples, and drop or derive new columns for files that are telemetered. Raw data (all columns at the original sample rate) are always stored on the scicon filesystem.

#### <span id="page-10-1"></span>3.2.1 example

```
ct = \{type = legatoPoll
    hwchan = 2}
optode = {type = aa4831hwchan = 1}
ad2cp = \{type = add2cphwchan = 3
    drop = attitude
    avg = 4}
```
#### <span id="page-10-2"></span>3.2.2 syntax





type= and hwchan= are required and are often the only properties provided in a typical installation. Any class property (e.g., warmup, timeout) may also be specified to override the value in a given instance.

#### <span id="page-11-0"></span>3.2.2.1 expressions

Columns derived with new= must include the mathematical expression used to calculate the derived value. Components of expressions are:

```
Variables referencing the latest data from any instrument:
    instanceName.columnName
```

```
Operators:
```
}

```
standard operators: +, -, *, /, %, ()
binary operators: <<,>>,|,&,~
logical operators: >,<,&&, | |, ==, !=, <=, >=, !
if-then-else operator: a ? b : c
```

```
Math functions:
    sin, cos, tan, sinh, cosh, tanh
    pow, exp, log, log10,
    sqrt, hypot, ceil, fmod,
    fabs
```

```
Symbolic constants:
    pi
oceanographic functions:
    salinity(C, T, P) (psu)
    potentemp(S, T, P, RefP) (degC)
    soundspeed(S, T, P) (m/s)
    density(C, T, P) (kg/m^3)potendens(C, T, P, RefP) (kg/m^3)
    C=mMho/cm, T=degC, P=dbar, S=psu
Other functions:
    distance(lat0, lon0, lat1, lon1) (meters)
    time() (RTC time since epoch)
    epoch(yyyy, mm, dd, HH, MM, SS) (converts calendar time to epoch time)
```
For example, to reduce payload size, a CTD instrument could be configured to report density only, dropping the original temperature and salinity (conductivity) channels with the following in the instance definitions in the attach file:

```
drop = temperature
drop = conductivity
new = density(1000,0):potendens(ct.conduc, ct.temp, ct.pressure, 0)
```
### <span id="page-12-0"></span>3.3 scicon.sch

The scheme file defines how each instrument is sampled. Sampling intervals can be controlled as a function of depth bins, profile (dive, climb, loiter), and dive number. Per scheme configuration information can also be specified (for example to change ADCP parameters on dive and climb). An attached instrument can have multiple schemes defined. The active scheme will be chosen in order of decreasing specificity of profile and dive definitions.

#### <span id="page-12-1"></span>3.3.1 example

```
ct = \{50, 4.0
   200, 7.5
   1000, 14.0
}
optode = {dive = 2200, 5
   500, 12
   1000, 45
```

```
}
ad2cp = \{profile = a
   conf = SETAVG, CH=124\pi\%n\% [OK]
   conf = SAVE, ALL\r\n[OK]1000,15.000000
}
ad2cp = \{profile = b
   conf = SETAVG, CH=234\%r\%n\% [OK]
   conf = SAVE, ALL\r\n[OK]1000,15.000000
}
```
#### <span id="page-13-0"></span>3.3.2 syntax



At least one depth, rate pair must be specified. Other values are optional. A value of zero for rate turns the instrument off in any bin. To turn an instrument completely off use 2000,0 or remove the instrument from the attach file.

Depth bins are specified as in the glider science file, in order of increasing depth. The specified depth values indicate the bottom of the bin. The top of the bin is implied by the depth of the preceding bin, with an implied zero at the beginning of the list. Sampling rates for all instruments are independent of each other.

### <span id="page-14-0"></span>3.4 Parameters

In addition to the configuration files there are five glider-level control parameters to affect the gross behavior of scicon. These are:



## <span id="page-15-0"></span>Glider menu controls

With scicon configured on the glider, the hw/loggers/sc menu will be available. The following options (with optional arguments) are available:

```
------ SciCon ------
    1 [on ] Turn on controller
    2 [off ] Turn off controller
    3 [selftest] Selftest
    4 [sample ] Report a sample
    5 [readclk ] Read controller clock
    6 [syncclk ] Synchronize controller clock to TT8
    7 [command ] Execute controller command
           string="command string to send"
           string="command string to send"
            ...
    8 [get ] Get file from from controller
           name=filename to retrieve from scicon
    9 [put ] Put file onto controller
           name=filename to send to scicon
    10 [firmware] Put firmware onto controller
           name=filename to send
   11 [action ] Execute logger action
           action=number (see below)
   12 [edit ] Edit configuration
           param=value
           param=value
            ...
   13 [config ] Show configurable params
   14 [direct ] Direct comms
           file=script
           string="string to send"
           string="string to send"
```

```
binary=0|1 (default 0)
        addlf=0|1 (default 0)
        stroke=0|1 (default 0)
15 [capture ] Capture comms
       file=script
        string="string to send"
       string="string to send"
       seconds=timeout
16 [loader ] Bootloader access
       timeout=seconds
17 [stream ] Stream sensor data
        sensor=name
18 [ct ] CT sensor data
```
These options can be used to verify basic scicon and sensor functionality after maintenance or assembly. They are also helpful when developing and debugging new sensor integrations. Note that the selftest option is not the same as the sequence of tests performed during the autonomous pre-launch (whole glider) selftest. Use action action=16 to reproduce those tests.

### <span id="page-16-0"></span>4.0.1 action numbers

The Seaglider operating software communicates with logger devices through a series of action messages at various points of the operational cycles. For testing purposes, these messages can be sent through the action menu option with the argument action=N where N is one of the numbers from table [4.1](#page-17-0)



<span id="page-17-0"></span>Table 4.1: Available action points and their assigned number for messages that can be sent from Seaglider to scicon.

### <span id="page-18-0"></span>Selftest results

The autonomous selftest function of the glider menu (launch/autotest) runs a series of diagnostic commands on scicon, results of which are reported in the selftest capture file. Many of these report on the basic functionality of the scicon hardware (real-time clock, oscillator speeds, fuel gauge configuration, firmware version). Selftest results also include the current instrument, attachment, and scheme files as parsed by scicon, a data sample from each instrument, e.g.,

```
--checking ct legatoPoll
ct: -0.001 21.928 9.876 21.945
avg mA=10.17, J=2.5
--checking wl wlbb2flvmt
wl: 54.000 60.000 70.000 537.000
avg mA=45.69, J=1.4
--checking optode aa4831
optode: 256.757 93.949 21.939 28.929 30.992
avg mA=40.53, J=0.7
```
and metadata from each instrument (if meta= is defined in *scicon.ins*). These latter two are particularly important to review to verify correct instrument operation and configuration.

These test results can be viewed either by direct reading of the selftest capture file (ptGGGNNNN.cap) or using either the command line (selftest.sh) or visualization server (/selftest/GGG) based selftest viewers that are part of the basestation. The latter provide more formatting and error highlighting for easier readability.

# <span id="page-19-0"></span>File formats and basestation handling

Scicon creates a directory for every profile, with separate files for each sensor inside the directory. Directory names are in the form  $scNNNp$  where NNNN is the dive number and p is the profile indicator (a=dive, b=climb). Loiter data is included as part of the climb. At the end of each dive, the glider transfers a gzipped tarball of each of these directories from scicon to its own filesystem and then during the Iridium call uploads these files to the basestation.

The format of individual data files within the directories is similar to the glider's own engineering file. Header and footer lines are marked with %. Data lines are represented as the sample-to-sample difference written in plan ASCII text. The first column is always the elapsed time in milliseconds from the start of sampling. Filenames are "instanceName.dat" for each instrument within the directory. If there is any data reduction or manipulation specified (averaging, decimation, dropping or adding of columns) then the raw data is written into "instanceName.dao" and the changed data for telemetry written into the .dat file.

#### <span id="page-19-1"></span>6.0.1 .dat example

As an example, this is the beginning and ending of a file from a legatoPoll CTD attached with the instance name "ct" for a dive profile. The header lines indicate that the pressure sensor latched 10240 as the pressure at launch when the glider sent the "log sealevel" command, that this file belongs in the directory sc0030a (which gives both dive number and dive direction), column names and how they are scaled, and that sampling for this file started at 06-June-2023 at 16:39:58.346 UT.

```
% instrument: ct legatoPoll
% sealevel: 10240
% columns: elapsed_t(1,0) conduc(10000,0) temp(10000,0) pressure(1000,0) conducTemp(1000
% container: sc0030a
% comment: SG236
% start: 6 6 123 16 39 58 346
9367 381421 136429 10308 130109
```

```
1129 414 -107 197 0
5012 40 167 88 87
4994 57 43 137 130
...
20000 7 2 275 27
20000 -41 -49 289 -27
% stop: 6 6 123 19 46 35.437
% finish: powerexternal used = 4.135e+000
% samples: 830
% ontime: 5803704
```
Trailer lines indicate how many samples were recorded during this profile, the total powered on time in milliseconds, and for this instrument (because there is a stop command defined in the .ins file), the results of that command in the "finish" line. For a Legato CTD, the "powerexternal used" command returns the energy used in Joules.

Scicon does real-time fuel gauging at the whole board level, not per instrument. The glider uses the fuel gauge results in its power modeling for battery consumption, but there is no per instrument breakdown. The average current consumption over the entire dive is reported in \$SENSOR\_MAMPS in the log file. Per instrument power usage can be deduced by looking at the samples count and ontime in the trailers of individual files as above along with knowledge of the energy per sample of a given instrument. Some instruments (Legato CTD, Nortek AD2CP) can provide their own usage numbers (either measured or modeled). Selftest results include the results of the "log test" command which include average current and Joules used during the test. This can be a good indicator of per sample current consumption, but be aware that these single sample numbers may not be representative for instruments with a long warmup-time, that stay on between samples, or with a shutdown procedure, as with a a typically configured Legato CTD for example.

#### <span id="page-20-0"></span>6.0.2 .eng example

After uploading and unpacking the tarballs, the basestation converts the .dat files into .eng files named pscGGGNNNN class instance.eng where GGG is the glider number, NNNN is dive number, p is profile (a or b) and class and instance are as defined in the .ins file (class) and .att file (instance). Header and trailer lines are copied through. Data lines are summed to remove differencing and have scale and offset applied. Column 1 is now absolute epoch time in seconds.

```
%instrument: ct legatoPoll
%sealevel: 10240
%columns: legatoPoll.time legatoPoll.conduc legatoPoll.temp legatoPoll.pressure legatoPo
%container: sc0030a
%comment: SG236
%start: 6 6 123 16 39 58 346
1686069607.713 38.142 13.643 0.068 13.011
1686069608.842 38.184 13.632 0.265 13.011
```
1686069613.854 38.188 13.649 0.353 13.020 1686069618.848 38.193 13.653 0.490 13.033 ... 1686080757.271 32.197 3.621 994.448 3.747 1686080777.271 32.193 3.616 994.737 3.744 %stop: 6 6 123 19 46 35.437 %finish: powerexternal used = 4.135e+000 %samples: 830 %ontime: 5803704 %timeouts: 0 %errors: 0

# <span id="page-22-0"></span>Firmware commands

Beyond use as the glider science controller, the scicon board is a powerful general purpose data logger. When in direct communications with scicon or via the "command" menu options, the following commands are available at the scicon > command prompt. Only a small subset of these are used by the glider during normal operations.



```
quit reboot
time command args measure execution time of command
repeat N command args loop repeat command N times
print string1 string2...[\rangle] \triangleright \text{dest} echo string(s) to console or file
ver [long] [set] program version information
sysclk show clock speed
sysclk N [hse] set system clock speed
hscal [N] calibrate system clock
rtcclk show RTC config
baud N set console baud rate
echo on \left| \text{off} \right| turn console echo on or off
fgwd calibrate calibrate FG slope/offset
fgwd wd show wd value
fgwd wd N set wd value to N
fgwd volts read battery voltage
fgwd current read instantaneous current draw
fgwd read \qquad read accumulators
fgwd clock reconfigure wd clocks
fgwd save save wd value to NVRAM
fgwd clear clears accumulators
fgwd temp read MSP430 internal temp
fgwd vlo calibrate vlo
fgwd fire fire fire wd (reset)
fgwd offset OFFSET SLOPE set FG slope and offset
fgwd zero zero FG offset
fgwd config read configuration
fgwd ad read AD rate register
fgwd ad N write N to AD rate register
fgwd register X n read n-byte value at reg X
fgwd write X n write n-byte value at reg X
fgwd reboots report watchdog reboot count
batt read RTC batt voltage
vee clear re-init VEE header
vee clear N re-init end pointer to N
vee format zero out VEE
vee read string|float|long|byte var read var from VEE
vee write string|float|long|byte var value write var to VEE
```
flash status read protection status flash protect on of  $f$  iap app change protection status flash boot iap.bin flash write IAP region xr filename receive file via xmodem xs filename [N] xmodem send file cat filespec [>|» dest] cat file(s) to console or file rr filename raw receive file rs filename raw send file firmware filename md5sig xr receive file for firmware ys filespec [path] ymodem send file(s) service N service N service logging loop for N sec compass init [calfile] init auxp compass compass coeff report compass coefficients compass raw stream raw compass results compass cal stream cal compass results compass calibrate collect attitude cal data dir root directory contents dir filespec dir with globbing dir filespec dirname dir in dirname with globbing dirfile capname root dir saved to capname dirfile capname filespec glob results saved to capname dirfile capname filespec dirname glob results to capname del filespec delete in root dir (recurses) del filespec dirname delete in dir gzip filename gzipname compress file gunzip gzipname filename uncompress file md5 filename compute md5 checksum cp src dest [size] [start] copy file ren src dest rename file mkdir dirname make directory filesdirs report file and direcunt trunc filespec len truncate file to len bytes tar  $t|c|x[yz]$  tarname filespec dir create tarball vi filename edit filename with vi stream instrument stream data direct from inst term N [addlf] [stroke] [script file] direct terminal port N power N 0|1 power control port N power report power state of all ports gpio read Xnn read state gpio port X, pin nn gpio set Xnn set bit gpio port X, pin nn

gpio reset Xnn clear bit gpio port X, pin nn freq N [1|2] [cyc] [samples] frequency count port N cardinfo [long] report SD card info mem report malloc stats sleep N seconds N low-power sleep N seconds sleep\_ms N low-power sleep N millisec delay N busy wait N millisec clock read RTC clock  $HH:MM:SS$  set RTC time clock MM/DD/YYYY HH:MM:SS set RTC date and time epoch report epoch time epoch N set epoch time launch pre-mission setup and house cleaning