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NEW ZEALAND & AUSTRALIAN AMATEUR RADIO



VOL. 7 FEBRUARY 2026

Photograph Phil ZL3PAE

NEW ZEALAND & AUSTRALIAN AMATEUR RADIO MAGAZINE

Activation with ZL1GUD, ZL3PAE & ZL4WX

NEW ZEALAND & AUSTRALIAN AMATEUR RADIO MAGAZINE

A FREE MAGAZINE PUBLISHED BY THE HAM SHACK
AMBRIG LIMITED T/A THE HAM SHACK

Email: ZL1GUD@proton.me

New Zealand & Australian Amateur Radio Magazine is now being sent to every amateur radio club in New Zealand and Australia ... and it's all for FREE

Our aim is to bring you inspiring stories and news of exciting activations and give you ideas to fuel your amateur radio dreams, whether it is a project, review or DX-Pedition.

New Zealand Amateur Radio magazine is free and includes Product News, International Amateur Radio News, DIY projects, Interviews, POTA and SOTA news and DX Pedition news. Club news is for the clubs and will not be included in the magazine.

If you want to be featured or have a project that you want to feature then email me the details and we will include it.

Greg
ZL1GUD

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The views expressed in this publication are those of the individual contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the publisher or editorial team.

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Note: Right click on text for link to website.

www.thehamshack.co.nz

This issue:

- Page 01 Introduction
- Page 02 Australian Orders
- Page 03 From the Editor
- Page 04 Civil Defence
- Page 07 Parg Fest
- Page 08 DX On Air
- Page 09 DX World
- Page 10 NZART Portable
- Page 12 Redfest
- Page 13 AARL News
- Page 14 Sherwood Report
- Page 15 Competition Calendar
- Page 16 Amateur Creed
- Page 17 Morse Patterns
- Page 18 PARG event
- Page 19 VK Summit
- Page 20 Wandersearch
- Page 23 Are Hams Ready?
- Page 25 Morse Code KD2GUT
- Page 26 Garvie Range
- Page 32 Africa Correspondent
- Page 33 Spiderbeam
- Page 34 On The Air - DX Group
- Page 35 Classified





**THE HAM
SHACK**

AUSTRALIAN CLUB ORDERS

**Place a group/club order over \$1500
and we will pay the Fedex costs to get
the goods to Australia.**



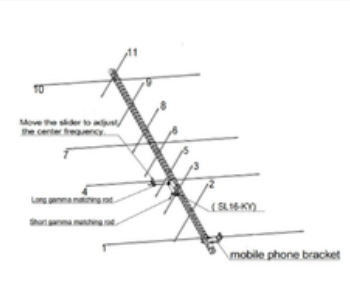
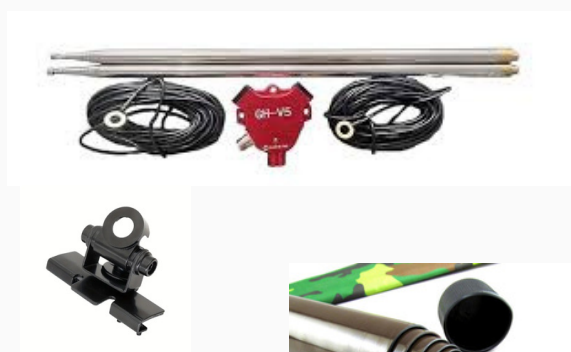
You pay the listed pricing less the 15% NZ GST

Your local tax and clearing costs are for your account.

We check and test every product before it gets packaged!

- Spiderbeam yagi antennas
- Spiderbeam wire antennas
- Spiderbeam 10m and 12m masts
- SOTABEAM Masts 4m, 6m & 7m Tactical
- SOTABEAM 6m Carbon
- Balun/Unun 1:1 4:1 9:1 49:1
- Guohetec PMR171 radios
- SWR meters
- Guohetec Antenna systems
- Antenna building components
- Mast anchors and guy rings
- Winders

and lots more.....



www.thehamshack.co.nz

Official agents for New Zealand & Australia





From the Editor

New Zealand has had a crazy summer, if we can call it that with temperatures of around 9 deg and lots of rain.

I have managed a few activations and it is probably the component of amateur radio that I like the best and many hours are spent looking for parks that have not been activated yet, or at least parks that were activated a number of years ago.

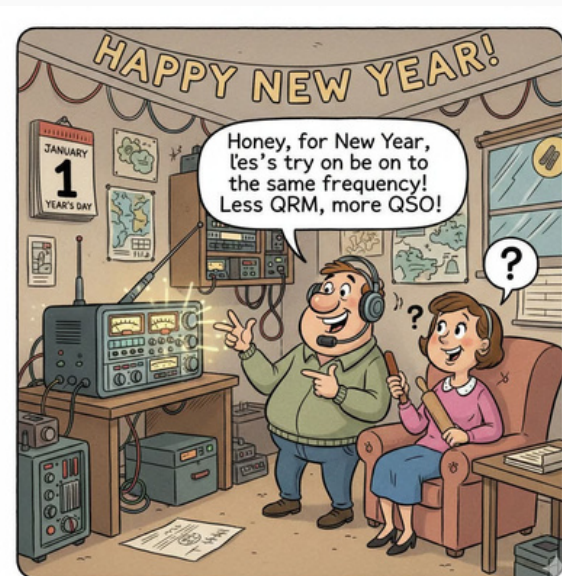
I managed to get to Sydney for a few days which is always my favourite thing to do, especially experiencing Australia Day outside the Opera House.

Notwithstanding the activations I am trying to sort out a DX-Pedition later in the year. logistics are always a drag and in New Zealand every special request for access has been met with a no. Then the fight starts.

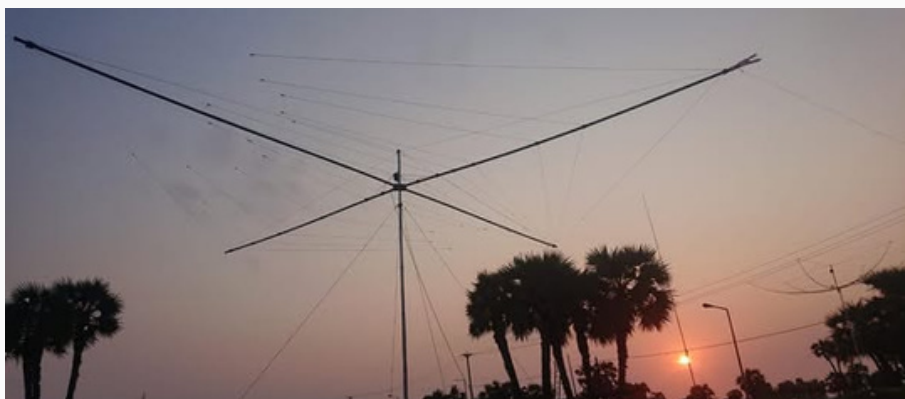
Enjoy summer when it arrives and get out and do something with your radio.

73's

Greg



DON'T BE
AFRAID THAT
YOUR LIFE WILL
END, BE AFRAID
THAT IT WILL
NEVER BEGIN.
- ANONYMOUS



www.thehamshack.co.nz

Civil Defence - It's Time to Join!

The approach that Waimakariri District Council Emergency Management has been developing in the last three years for community involvement in disaster resilience and response is a system of Community Emergency Hubs around the district – the majority of them at the local schools, but there are a few at local community halls.

Communities all around the Waimakariri are made up of such a diverse group that have such an amazing range of skills and interests that can help a community when they need it most – from accountants to zoologists, and armchair enthusiasts to Zumba instructors. We all have a part to play.

It all starts at home – by being at least a bit prepared (it's a ranged target being prepared) as family/home groups, this builds upon itself when communities come together to form larger response groups within their own areas, combining knowledge and resource to help out where it's needed most before support can be sent from local, regional and even central government.

Communications knowledge and knowhow is one of the key parts of any response and community's readiness approach. Whether you are a Ham or a newbie, the wider community of connection that you belong to is invaluable for your community when they need it most – please don't be a secret agent. Get involved in your communities planning & readiness groups and let your local Emergency Management know how you can play your part. Much of this connection is done through AREC in many districts around the country.

Dean Eades | Emergency Management Advisor
Civil Defence Emergency Management

Phone: 0800 965 468 (0800 WMK GOV)
Mobile: +64 27 216 5704
DDI: +64 3 975 5435

- Fill in the forms on the next two pages and be ready for the next disaster.

From ZL1GUD I have just joined Waimac CD because as Dean puts it if you are a "Secret Agent" and you have no designated authority what are you really going to achieve.

MAKE A PLAN



GET READY
.govt.nz

MY HOUSEHOLD PLAN

Your household members details

Name:

Telephone Number:

Name:

Telephone Number:

Name:

Telephone Number:

IF WE CAN'T GET HOME

Our meeting place: Where will we meet if we can't get home (local and out of town)?

Add an address and instructions:

Who will pick up the kids? If you are not able to pick the kids up, who will?

Name:

Telephone Number:

Name:

Telephone Number:

IF WE CAN'T GET HOLD OF EACH OTHER

We will leave a message with: Who will we check in with (someone out of town in case local phone lines are down)?

Name:

Telephone Number:

Name:

Telephone Number:

Where to get updates: How will we find the latest news/alerts (which radio stations, websites, social media pages)?

Radio station/websites/social media:

WHO MIGHT NEED OUR HELP? Think about friends and neighbours who may need our help or who can help us

Name:

Telephone Number:

Name:

Telephone Number:

WHO WILL WE NEED TO CONTACT? (ALWAYS DIAL 111 IN AN EMERGENCY)

Think about council emergency hotline, medical centre/doctor, landlord, insurance company, power company, day care/school, work, family members

Emergency Services

111

Name:

Telephone Number:

IF WE ARE STUCK AT HOME

Do we have emergency supplies? Food and drink for three days or more (for everyone including babies and pets)? Torches and radio with batteries? First aid/medical supplies? They don't all need to be in one big box, but you may have to find them in the dark. Do we know how to turn off water, power and gas.

Make detailed notes on where these items are stored:

Details on how to turn the water and gas off:

IF WE HAVE NO POWER

How will we cook, stay warm, see at night? Do we have spare cash in case ATMs are not working? Do we have enough fuel in case petrol pumps are not working?

Make notes on what you and your family need to do:

IF WE HAVE NO WATER

Do we have enough drinking water (3 litres per person per day for 3 days or more), change every 12 months. What will we cook and clean with? What will we use for a toilet?

What will you do? How have you prepared?

IF WE HAVE TO LEAVE IN A HURRY

Do we have Getaway Kits* for everyone? At home, at work, in the car?

* A small bag with warm clothes, torch, radio, first aid kit, snack food and water, to get you to your safe place.

Detail where you have stored your getaway kits:

Peel Amateur Radio Group

PARGFEST Swap-Meet Saturday 7th February 2026

Mandurah Bowling Club
89 Allnutt Street, Mandurah WA.

Huge
annual raffle
draw!

Barista
Coffee
Hot Food

PARGFEST
- WA's best!

Lucky Door
Prizes

Doors Open:
0800 – Exhibitors & Sellers
0900 – 1230 Buyers
Entry Fee - \$5.00 per person
See you there amongst the raffles and bargains

Please check www.parg.org.au/whatsnew for last-minute updates.
Call-in to VK6ARG in PARG1 – AllStar & 146.850Mhz with 91.5Hz sub-tone
For more information call Peter 0432718026 or email parg.secretary@gmail.com

FEBRUARY 21-22

WILL BE THE

ARRL INTERNATIONAL DX CONTEST, CW!

If you're going to participate,

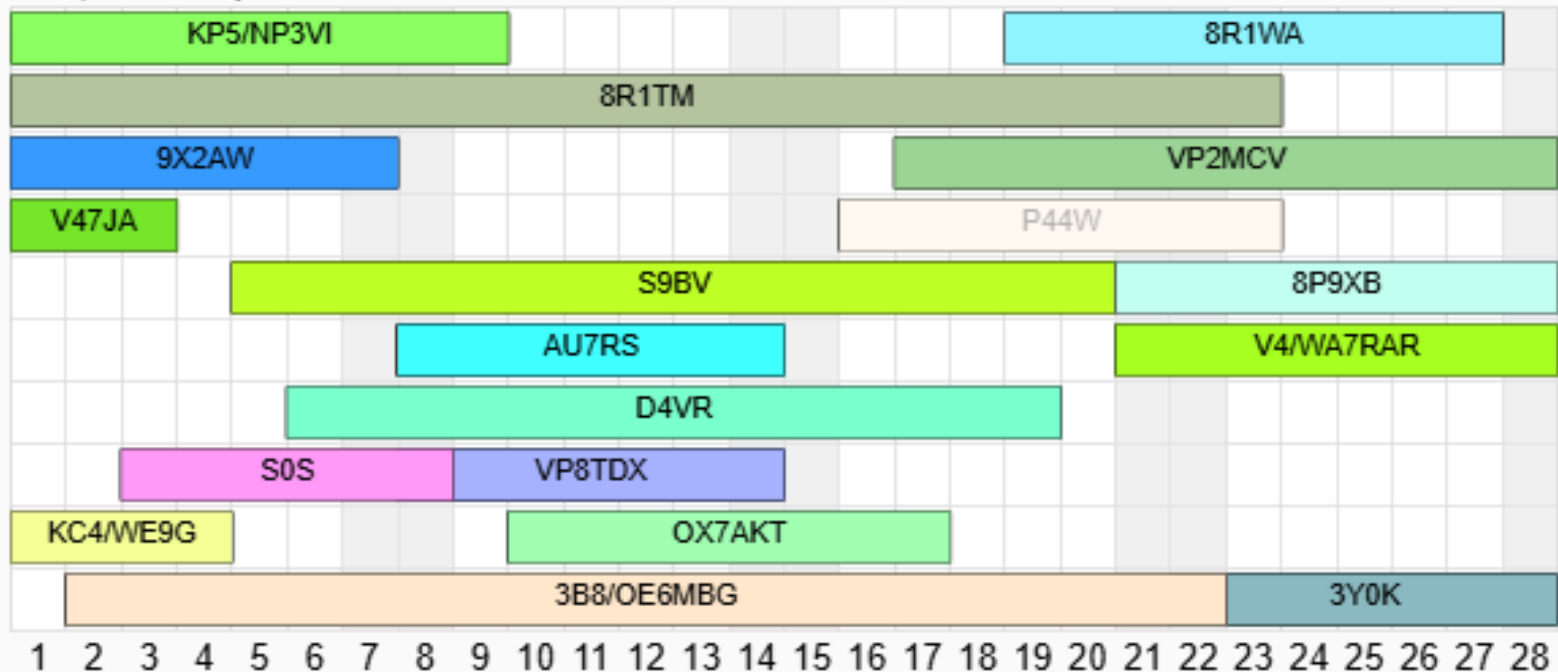
LET ME KNOW

*so I can announce
you'll be QRV in the contest!*



DXWORLD.net **FEATURED DXPEDITIONS TIMELINE**

Last update: January 29, 2026



Edited by MM0NDX

FEBRUARY

© IK8LOV Max Laconca

Western Sahara CQ 33-ITU 46 Tifariti, Grid: IL46rd

الجمهورية العربية
 الصحراوية الديمقراطية

Tifariti . station club . union amateur radio



Courtesy of DXworld.net





- [NEWS UPDATE] – by Rikk, WE9G/KC4.

Having arrived earlier than anticipated, Rikk and his wife are now officially in Antarctica. “Two landings down, both plagued by massive QRN. Hearing stations still, but no one hears me. Two more tries today”, says Rikk.

- [JANUARY 21] –

For the Antarctica trip, my XYL has requested (and I have agreed) to prioritize vacation and sight-seeing over HAM radio work. This is a once-in-a-lifetime adventure and I want her and I both to make life-long memories.

With that said, I will still be attempting operations while on the Antarctic shore, including one overnight stay. Best dates for possible ops are now 30 Jan to 3 Feb (subject to weather). My gear has also changed. I will be taking a lower power rig with two smaller antennas. I do hope to get some QSOs, however, my priority will be fun vs. HAM work. I hope everyone understands.





NZART Portable day 2026 : Gary Lodge ZL1GA



What an epic way to see in 2026! We committed to activating Ferny Gair NZ -0387 early in the week when I put out an alert on the ZL On the Air website. The weather forecast didn't look promising but we thought "Surely it won't be any windier than up the Hooker Valley. It can't be any wetter than that really wet weekend in Kaikoura and it won't be any colder than Mt. Roberts on last New Year's day." Wrong on all counts.

We left the sunshine and the real world behind in the Awatere Valley and headed up into the mist that was the Black Birch Range south of Blenheim. The DOC sign at the gate told us to Act Responsibly. We always act responsibly but today we had probably left sensibly at home. During the three quarters of an hour drive to the summit via a gnarly 4x4 ,hair pin bend track the weather became darker, a thick fog had descended and the temperature dropped noticeably. By the time we reached the summit the rain had turned to sleet, the temperature was 5 Deg C and wind was gusting at 90 kmh.

The original plan had been to set up several antenna, switch between bands and activate Ferny Gair, Black Birch Conservation Area NZ-0387 and time permitting the summit Altmarloch ZL3/MB-093 before rollover on NZST .We would activate all three again after rollover on UTC time. That plan was quickly discarded .(Sorry Greg ZL3 GUD, this was not the time or place to put up our new 10 m Spiderbeam pole).



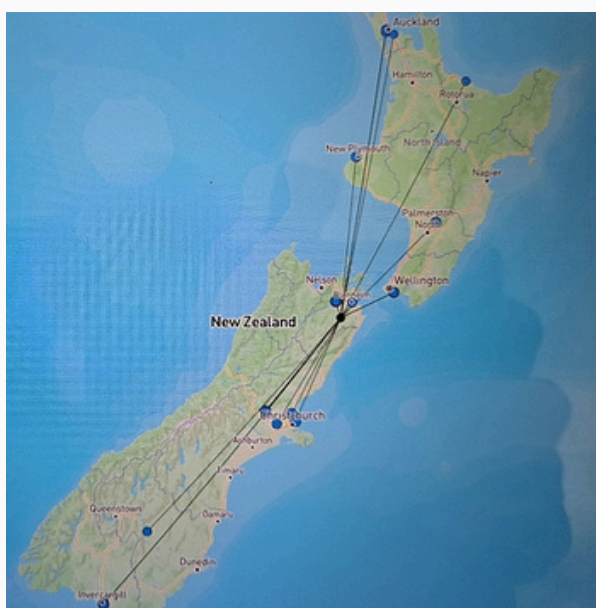


The set up was done with military precision. Face truck into wind. Park truck onto pole stand .Hi- vis es on. Eye contact to be maintained at all times. Stay close to truck. Collect and place boulders for tying antenna wires and guy ropes to. Assemble sections of aluminium pole. Use caribeenner to fix antenna wire to top of pole . I only went to 6 metres as we were already 1673 metres above sea level (1500 m of that was an almost vertical drop to the left of the truck). Raise pole. Fix guy ropes and antenna wire to the rocks we had prepared earlier. Sounds simple doesn't it? Luckily we only needed to shift sites twice today and then not very far. That was far enough. The temptation to just pack up and go home was huge..

The wind was now gusting to 100kph and visibility had dropped to only 30 metres. That done we retired to the safety of truck and reminded ourselves that this was summer. The truck was rocking like one of the boats in the Sydney to Hobart boat race and the wind was howling like a banshee around the communications tower in front of us.

Amazingly our set up stayed up and held together. During the course of the day we worked radio stations the length and breadth of the country at both NZST time and UTC time. A massive thank you to everyone out there who answered my CQ's whether you were on summits , in parks or at your home QTH, your enthusiasm, perseverance and humour make it all worthwhile. Everyone kept telling us to have fun.

The trip back down the mountain was about as hairy as the trip up. At the bottom the sun was still shining as we enjoyed a very welcome cuppa , mince pies and a debrief. Nothing broke. Neither of us got blown away. We made 95 contacts as well as some NZ100 special call signs and yes we had fun.



Redfest 2026

Digital Communications

Redfest 2026 is set to be an exciting event, kicking off on April 11th at 9 a.m. at **Deception Bay North State School in Queensland, Australia**. Located at 33-49 Old Bay Rd, Deception Bay, this vibrant festival will feature a wide array of new and second-hand items for sale, catering to all interests and budgets.

Enthusiasts will also have the opportunity to attend tech talks, gaining insights into the latest innovations and trends. A highlight of this year's event is the participation of **The Ham Shack**, an esteemed international commercial seller from New Zealand, marking their first appearance at Redfest.

There will be Tech Talks throughout the day on different subjects in the Digital Communications.

Attendees can try their luck in the major raffle, with an impressive Icom 7300 Mk2 up for grabs. To stay informed on event details and updates leading up to Redfest 2026, visit redfest.org.

Don't miss this fantastic opportunity to explore, learn, and connect with fellow enthusiasts!

ICOM



WIN

WIN



Visit redfest.org for more information



New 60-Meter Frequencies Available as of February 13

The new 60-meter frequencies approved by the FCC in December will become available to amateurs as of February 13, 2026, along with new power restrictions on those frequencies. It's a bit confusing, as different rules apply to different segments of the band. The changes result from the FCC's action to approve a worldwide 60-meter amateur allocation made by the World Radiocommunication Conference in 2015 (WRC-15).

As of February 13, FCC-licensed amateur operators holding General Class or higher licenses may operate on a secondary basis anywhere between 5351.5 and 5366.5 kHz, subject to a maximum bandwidth of 2.8 kHz and maximum transmit power of 9.15 watts ERP (effective radiated power). For the purpose of computing ERP, the transmitter PEP (peak envelope power) is multiplied by the antenna gain relative to a half-wave dipole antenna. A half-wave dipole is presumed to have a gain of 1 (0 dBd). Amateurs using other antennas must maintain in their station records either the antenna manufacturer's data on the antenna gain or calculations of the antenna gain.

Here's the confusing part: The existing 60-meter channels centered on 5332, 5348, 5373, and 5405 kHz remain as secondary amateur allocations with maximum power of 100 watts ERP. However, the old channel at 5358.5 kHz is eliminated as it is now part of the new 5351.5-5366.5 kHz subband and subject to the lower power limit.

For all 60-meter transmissions, emission bandwidth is limited to 2.8 kHz or less and amateurs must not cause harmful interference to, and must accept interference from, stations authorized by the United States (NTIA and FCC) and other nations in the fixed service; and all other nations in the mobile service (except aeronautical mobile). Data or RTTY emissions in particular must be limited in transmission length so as not to cause harmful interference. Digital mode operators must be familiar with offsets in order to stay within the authorized frequencies.

ARRL Awards Colvin Grant to Bouvet DXpedition

ARRL The National Association for Amateur Radio® has awarded a \$5,000 Colvin Award grant to the Delta-Xray Group, organizers of the upcoming 3YØK DXpedition to Bouvet Island, scheduled for February and March, 2026. Bouvet is a remote island in the Southern Ocean, populated only by seals and penguins, and known for treacherous weather and surf conditions. It is a territory of Norway and nearly all of it is covered by glaciers. The most recent amateur radio operation from Bouvet was the 3YØJ DXpedition in 2023, which moved the island from #2 on the Club Log most wanted list to #10.

Two camps are planned, according to team leaders, operating all HF bands, with one camp focusing on high band propagation to North America when conditions allow. Each camp will consist of three tents serving as operating, sleeping, and communal spaces. These tents have previously been used on Bouvet Island and team leaders say they have proven capable of withstanding the extreme conditions expected.

Plans call for the team to leave for Bouvet from Cape Town, South Africa, on February 1. Weather permitting, 3YØK plans to use helicopter airlifts to transport personnel and equipment between the vessel and the island. The group expects to spend three weeks on and around the island and will attempt to contact as many other ham radio operators around the world as they can, using up to 8 stations operating on CW, SSB, FT8, RTTY and the QO-100 geostationary satellite.

The 3YØK DXpedition is perhaps the most expensive ham radio expedition ever mounted, with a budget of \$1.7 million, most of which (\$1.2 million) is for what the team refers to as a "reliable commercial Arctic / Antarctic vessel," noting that "(s)afe and reliable ship transportation continues to be a challenge for such remote island expeditions, and the cost continues to rise." Team leaders note that "the foremost priority of the 3YØK expedition is the safety of the operating team, support personnel, and the vessel and helicopter crews."

The team consists of 24 operators from 14 countries. Two of the team members are young hams, 21-year-old Max Freedman, N4ML, an ARRL staff member; and 26-year-old Alex Schengber, DL2ALY, an aviation engineer currently working at a German research station in Antarctica.

The Colvin Award is funded by an endowment established by the legendary DX couple Lloyd Colvin, W6KG (SK), and Iris Colvin, W6QL (SK), both now deceased. The award is intended to support amateur radio projects that promote international goodwill in the field of DX.

Other major financial support for the DXpedition has come from the Northern California DX Foundation, the International DX Association, and the German DX Foundation.

Sherwood Engineering Inc.

1268 South Ogden Street Denver, Colorado 80210 USA

email Phone: **303-722-2257**

9 a.m. - 5 p.m. MST Monday - Friday

Receiver Test Data

(Terms Explained: [PDF](#))

Sorted by Third-Order Dynamic Range Narrow Spaced - or- ARRL RMDR (Reciprocal Mixing Dynamic Range) if Phase Noise Limited

The term RMDR has only existed since 2012. To convert column LO Noise to RMDR, subtract 27 dB. Example: an LO Noise of 127 dB would be an RMDR value of 100 dB

Note: The term blocking only applies to a superhet radio. For a direct sampling radio the value in the blocking column is the ADC overload point reference receiver noise floor.

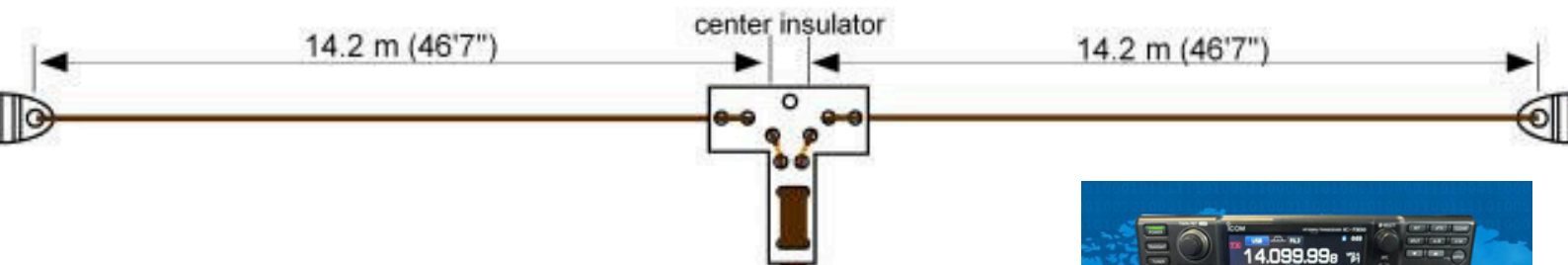
Updated 10 January 2026. Added Icom IC-7300Mk2

Sherwood Engineering review, test and rate amateur radio receivers, follow the link (click on this post) and see how your receiver rates.

This in extraction from the page.

LO Noise Corrected 05/10/19 Yaesu FTdx-101D/MP	-127 -136 ^b -141 ⁶	4.5 1.6 ^b 0.58 ^{b1}	3	>147	0.60 0.20 ^b 0.12 ^{b1}	154 155
Added 12/30/20 Yaesu FTdx10	-126 -135 ^b -140 ⁶	4.2 1.46 ^b 0.54 ^{b1}	3	141	0.63 0.21 ^b 0.15 ^{b1}	152 153
Added 10/01/22 Yaesu FT-710	-127 -135 ^b -140 ⁶	4.0 1.40 ^b 0.38 ^{b1}	3	129	0.66 0.23 ^b 0.13 ^{b1}	150 154
Added 02/11/18 Icom IC-R8600 Second sample S/N 02001177	-131 -142 ^b -130 ^{ab}	2.40 0.67 ^b	3	125	0.40 0.12 ^b 0.49 ^{ab}	144 148
Added 11/10/15 Elecraft K3S	-135 -138 ^b -145 ¹⁰	1.5 0.45 ^b	3	150	0.27 0.20 ^b 0.08 ¹⁰	144 146
Added 3/17/17 Elecraft K3S 2nd Sample 10 meter data	-135 -138 ^b -145 ¹⁰	1.5 0.45 ^b	3	150	0.27 0.20 ^b 0.08 ¹⁰	144 146
Added 02/23/15 Elecraft K3 (RX Gain Recal) New Synthesizer	-136 -139 ^{bq}	1.0 0.3 ^b	3	141	0.27 0.20 ^b	145 147
Added 04/25/16 Icom IC-7851	-123 -135 ^b -141 ^{b1}	8.5 1.85 ^b 1.16 ^{b1}	3	149	0.65 0.16 ^b 0.11 ^{b1}	148 153
Added 10/15/18 Kenwood TS-890S	-131 -140 ^b -141 ⁶	2.1 0.53 ^b 0.14 ^{b1}	3	>151	0.39 0.13 ^b 0.10 ^{b1}	155 156
Added 10/02/12 Hilberling PT-8000A Hardware Rev 2.00	-128 -141 ^b	5.4 1.0 ^b	3	142	0.45 0.11 ^b	144 149
Added 08/10/12 Elecraft KX3	-123 -138 ^{b2}	12 1.3 ^{b2}	3	138	0.9 0.09 ^{b2}	144
Added 06/24/24 Apache ANAN-G2	-131 -131 ^{ad} -141 ⁶	1.0 adjustable 2.2 ^{ae}	3	129	0.40 0.40 ^{ad} 0.14 ⁶	144 148

Note: There is no Copyright statement on the Sherwood Engineering site showing the Receiver Test Table and this was shown and linked in "good faith".



COMPETITION CALENDAR

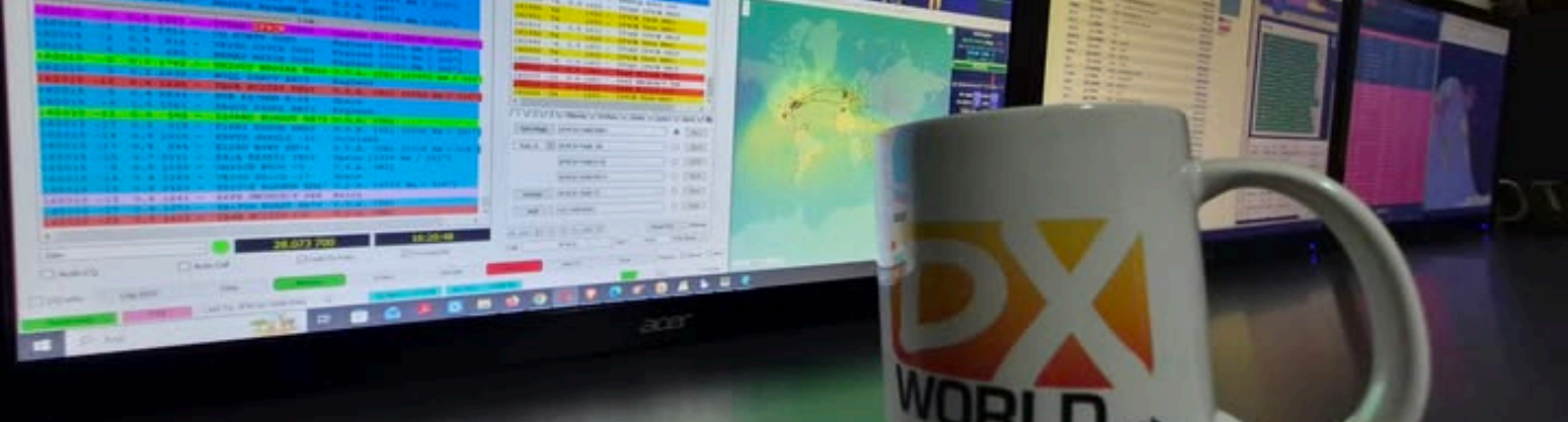


Competition consol
for the Icom IC 7300
available from
www.thehamshack.co.nz



	Jan 29 Thursday	Jan 30 Friday	Jan 31 Saturday	Feb 1 Sunday	Feb 2 Monday	Feb 3 Tuesday	Feb 4 Wednesday	Feb 5 Thursday
NAQCC CW Sprint								
CWops Test (CWT)								
CWops Test (CWT)								
NCCC FT4 Sprint								
Weekly RTTY Test								
QRP Fox Hunt								
NCCC Sprint Ladder								
K1USN Slow Speed Test								
Feld Hell Sprint								
UBA DX Contest, SSB								
North American SSB Sprint Contest								
Marconi Club ARI Loano Slow CW QSO Party								
Real Time Contest								
K1USN Slow Speed Test								
ICWC Medium Speed Test								
OK1WC Memorial (MWC)								
ICWC Medium Speed Test								
RSGB 80m Club Championship, SSB								
ARS Spartan Sprint								
Worldwide Sideband Activity Contest								
ICWC Medium Speed Test								
QRP Fox Hunt								
Phone Weekly Test								
A1Club AWT								
CWops Test (CWT)								
VHF-UHF FT8 Activity Contest								
Mini-Test 40								
Mini-Test 80								
CWops Test (CWT)								
UKEICC 80m Contest								
Walk for the Bacon QRP Contest								
CWops Test (CWT)								
CWops Test (CWT)								
NRAU 10m Activity Contest								
SKCC Sprint Europe								

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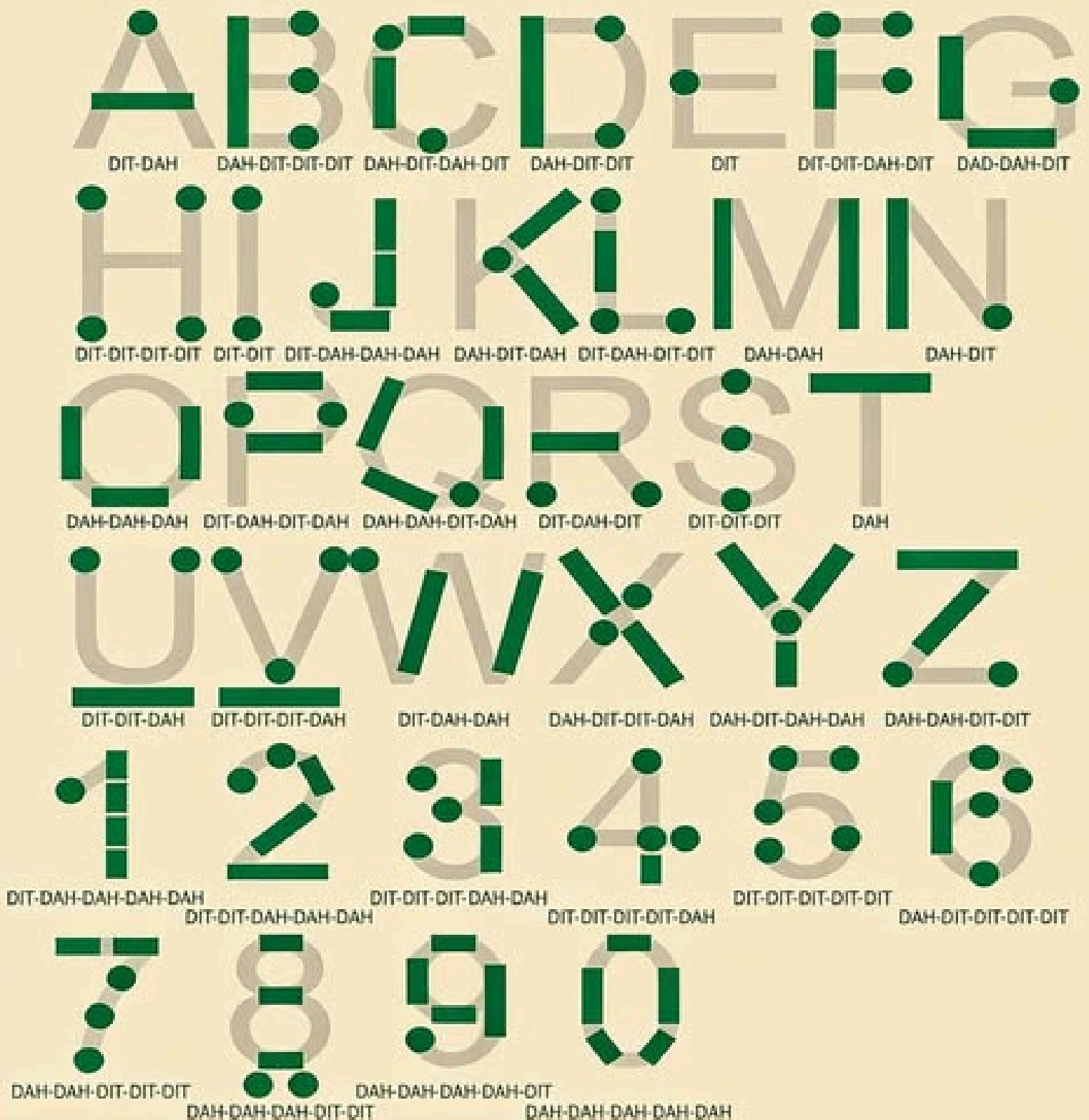


THE CREED OF AN AMATEUR RADIO OPERATOR

1. This is my antenna. There are many like it, but this one is mine.
2. My antenna is my best friend, just ask my wife. I must master it as I must master my life.
3. My antenna, without me, is useless. Without my antenna, my radio is useless. I must tune my antenna true. I must shoot RF to my fellow ham who is trying to contact me. I must copy him before he copies me.
4. My antenna and myself know that what counts in this hobby is not the watts we transmit, the noise we receive, nor the smoke we make. We know that it is the QSOs that count.
5. My antenna is human, even as I, because it is my life. Thus, I will learn it as a brother. I will learn its weaknesses, its SWR, its parts, its insulators, its radio and its feedline. I will ever repair it after the ravages of weather and damage as I will ever guard my tubes, my transistors, my photocells and my power supply against damage. I will keep my antenna taut and ready. We will become part of each other.
6. Before FCC, I swear this creed. My antenna and myself are the defenders of my shack. We are the masters of our bandwidth. We are the saviors of my Watts.
7. So be it, until bedtime, then ZZzz..

MORSE CODE:

A visual guide



2026 Annual PARG

Amateur Radio Raffle Prizes

1st Prize valued at \$2,000

Icom voucher to the value of \$2000

2nd Prize valued at \$700

Icom voucher to the value of \$700

3rd Prize valued at \$300

Icom voucher to the value of \$300

Draw Date: 7th of February 2026 at PARGfest Swap Meet.

Cash sale of tickets available on the day.

Tickets are for sale now online in NSW, QLD, SA, TAS, WA at \$5 each.



<https://rafflelink.com.au/parg2026>

<https://www.parg.org.au/>

Peel Amateur Radio Group

PARGFEST Swap-Meet
Saturday 7th February 2026

Mandurah Bowling Club
89 Allnutt Street, Mandurah WA.

Doors Open:
0800 – Exhibitors & Sellers
0900 – 1230 Buyers
Entry Fee – \$5.00 per person
See you there amongst the raffles and bargains

Please check www.parg.org.au/whatsnew for last-minute updates.
Call-in to VK6ARG in PARG1 – AllStar & 146.850MHz with 91.5Hz sub-tone
For more information call Peter 0432718026 or email parg.secretary@gmail.com

Handwritten notes on the flyer:
- Top left: "Raffle prizes \$2000"
- Bottom left: "Raffles, Games, Hot Food"
- Top right: "PARGfest - 2026 Event"
- Bottom right: "Lucky Draw Prizes"

Free Entry

VK SUMMIT

2nd – 3rd May 2026
Albury, NSW

Free Entry

The largest radio exhibition of its kind in Australia.

Only persons registered can enter the VK Summit exhibition area.
Registration is free and the organisers ask you to pre-register as early as possible.

The registration button will take to TryBooking which handles VK Summit registration.
You will have 2 registration options:

Exhibition attendance only (\$0)

Exhibition attendance + VK Summit Dinner (\$39 + \$0.50 booking fee)

If you select the VK Summit Dinner ticket you will have the option of specifying dietary requirements.
If you are a WIA member you will also have the option to register your AGM attendance.

Largest Australian radio exhibition of its kind

Date

Saturday 2 May 2026 9:00 AM - Sunday 3 May 2026 1:00 PM (UTC+11)

Location

Commercial Club Albury
618 Dean Street, Albury NSW 2640

[LINK TO REGISTER](#)

WANDERSEARCH: USING RADIO TO FIND VULNERABLE PEOPLE QUICKLY AND SAVE LIVES

By Phil ZL3PAE

Last week, at about 10 PM, I received a Land Search and Rescue (LandSAR) page for a WanderSearch Missing Person Search. Within minutes, I was driving to Christchurch Central Police Station to collect the equipment and head to the missing person's last known location.

The search was successful, and on the way home, it struck me—while WanderSearch isn't technically Amateur Radio, it operates in the UHF radio-frequency spectrum, using many of the same skills amateur radio operators are familiar with. So, what exactly is WanderSearch, and how does it work?



Tracking Kit in a Tough Box – Ready to Go

What Is WanderSearch?

WanderSearch is a lifesaving programme using small, robust RF radio-frequency devices worn by people at risk of going missing—those with dementia, cognitive impairments, or frail health. Hundreds of these devices are issued nationwide. They transmit a constant, unique radio signal, which is logged in a database linking the frequency to the wearer.

Trained New Zealand Police, Amateur Radio Emergency Communications (AREC), and LandSAR volunteers use specialized equipment to detect these signals, even in remote or challenging terrain.



A WanderSearch Pendant – Found During a Training Session

Why Use Radio Frequency Devices Instead of GPS?

GPS trackers are popular and accurate, but they come with challenges:

- They require frequent charging (every few days).
- They rely on cellular or satellite networks, which often don't work well in New Zealand's bush, hills, or rural areas.

WanderSearch devices, on the other hand:

- Don't rely on mobile or internet networks.
- Have batteries lasting over six months without charging.
- Are small, durable, and waterproof.
- Have no buttons or switches, preventing accidental deactivation.
- Can be worn as wristbands, pendants, or keyrings—wherever the wearer prefers.

This simplicity and reliability make them perfect for vulnerable people who may wander off anywhere.



One of the Receiver Units, into which the RF Beacon's frequency is programmed to begin the search process.

How Does the Search Work?

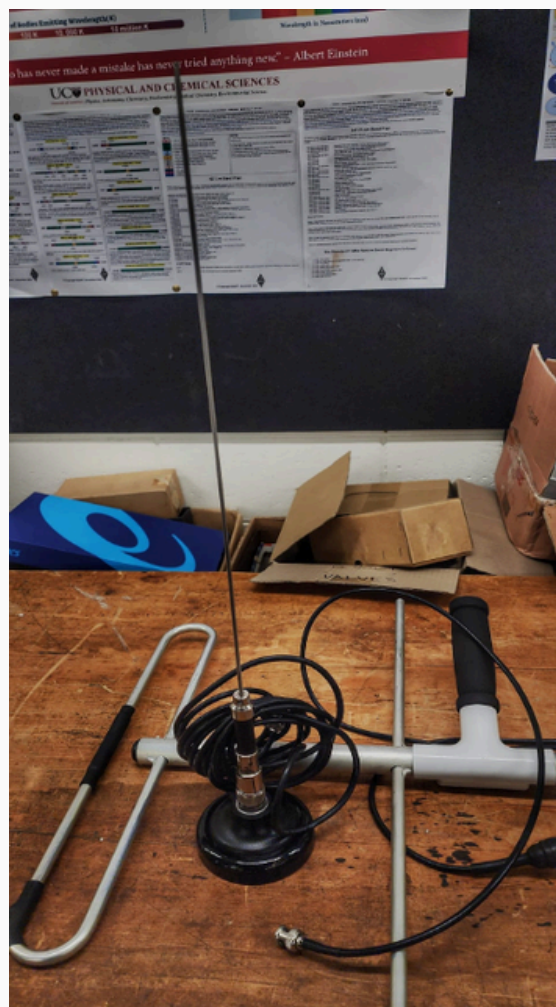
When someone wearing a WanderSearch device goes missing, family or caregivers call 111. Specially trained LandSAR, AREC, or Police personnel are dispatched.

Search techniques depend on when and where the person was last seen and the terrain. Signals from an elevated position can be detected 5 to 8 times farther than from ground level. Some devices have external antennas, extending the detection range.

Searchers input the missing person's device frequency into a receiver paired with a vehicle-mounted omnidirectional antenna to locate the initial signal. They then narrow down the location by moving purposefully toward stronger signals. Finally, a handheld directional Yagi antenna is used on foot to pinpoint the beacon—and hopefully the person.

For many at-risk individuals, wandering off can quickly become dangerous due to injury, exhaustion, or exposure to the elements. Every hour saved in a search reduces these risks significantly.

You can learn more and read real-life stories about WanderSearch's lifesaving impact at wandersearchnz.org.nz.



The Omnidirectional Roof Top Mobile Antenna and the Handheld Directional Yagi Antenna

The Role of Amateur Radio and Volunteers

LandSAR, Police Search teams, and AREC members often rely on the same radio skills honed by amateur radio operators for decades—using directional antennas and signal detection techniques to find these devices accurately.

This is a perfect example of how simple, reliable radio technology combined with skilled people can save lives—especially when modern technologies fail due to limited coverage or battery life.

If you want to give back to the community, learn practical radio skills, and join an amazing group of volunteers, visit wandersearchnz.org.nz/volunteer to find out how to get involved.





HOW MANY HAMS WILL BE READY IN AN EARTHQUAKE?

There she goes!

In the initial hours we would have felt the earthquake, power is off, reports make their way that bridges are down, we turn on the radio in the car and some stations from North Island are still coming through but the local FM stations are down.

We turn on our amateur radios and only one repeater is still working.

The Alpine Fault has a 75% chance of rupturing in the next 50 years. The rupture will produce one of the biggest earthquakes since European settlement of New Zealand, and it will have a major impact on the lives of many people. www.gns.cri.nz

We are woken by the house shaking, the dogs barking and the sound of crockery shattering. We all experience the quake differently and depending on the location to the fault line we might have more or less damage.

First things first are taking stock of our unique situation. We check on the family members, the animals. We fill the bath with water and if rural we switch off our tanks so that they don't run dry.

We don't have power and switch off the main, while switching on our battery/solar power and invertors. If the quake happens at night we can start the generator. Rumours are that the main supply lines are down and we must expect a few weeks with no power.

If the house is damaged and is unsafe we pitch a tent in the garden away from any structure that might fall.

As dawn breaks we assess our situation and make sure we have basics. All the years of being prepared means that we have food, water, purification's tabs, essential medicines, at least one full tank of petrol/diesel.

Once our situation is safe we check with neighbours. At least 80% won't be ready and will have done no preparation. The neighbours band together and clear the road of trees and make it passable. One neighbour volunteers to drive into town to check accessibility. He reports back that the bridge over the river is down, but that the river can be crossed by 4x4. He reports that there is no power in town and that unless you have cash the petrol station cannot dispense fuel. The banks are closed as the internet is down and only people with Starlink seem to have access.

Within a few days "authorities" or local councils will get in on the act and they will fall short with their own communications and there will be some coordination for their operation emergency centres and there will be a huge resource of Army, Police and possibly army and police from Australia.

By day 5 you are in a routine and the rural families nearest town are reporting that people are coming around looking for food. (Statistics suggest that the average city dweller had food for 3 to 5 days). Agencies are likely to provide welfare and food to drop off points.

By day 10 the urban environment has been stabilised and water tankers are providing water. Supermarkets are very limited since there is no credit card or eftpos available and only cash transactions are happening. Rural communities are on their own as local authorities have been supporting urban families as access is easier.

Day 15 power is still down, the supermarket has been looted of the remaining food and the friendly soccer mom is now looking for food to feed her hungry family. Sheep on farms closest to town are being stolen.

Starlink are passing on news to their communities. Starlink is proving to be the backbone of information transfer.



The radio amateur nets, have been chatting about damage sustained and what they are doing daily.

After two weeks the majority are no longer on the air as their batteries are flat and they cannot use the car to charge the batteries as they don't have any more fuel to spare. The amateur operators that remain, i.e. those that are preparedness minded, made themselves known to the authorities, and those that have power and charging options will emerge and provide communications as requested. With repeaters having sustained damage there is only a simplex option for the few that can charge their batteries. After two weeks of no power the radio amateurs have realised that being able to call into a net doesn't make them the backbone of emergency communications.

Everybody who wants to make a difference needs essentials for their family but they also need a method of charging batteries and solar panels with regulators are essential. Generators are great but used conservatively will still burn 6 litres of fuel a day while running essentials such as the fridge/freezer and charging batteries. Conservatively that is 200 litres of petrol every month.

Rumours are rife that power will only be restored in another four to six weeks.

The handful of radio amateurs that are known to Civil Defence and that have power options are still on the air are providing essential communications on VHF and HF.

In this fictitious scenario consider the following:

In the Alive TV series very few people managed to stay in a survival scenario for longer than 30 days, so you will need:

- Clean water and purification tablets.
- Food and a way to cook food.
- Medical supplies for current conditions and emergency situations.
- Shelter.
- Heating.
- Petrol/Diesel - keep your petrol tank topped up at all times.
- Solar panel and an inverter OR a generator and lots of fuel.

For the radio hams (in addition to radios, masts, antennas, coax, etc.)

- Make yourself known to Civil defence BEFORE the earthquake - otherwise you have no credibility.
- Batteries and solar or another reliable method of charging batteries.
- Agree before hand what frequencies on each band are to be used as well as the time e.g. on the hour and monitor for 5 min.
- Learn how to pass messages and use the Phonetic Alphabet.
- Learn map reading and how to determine coordinates (Latitude and Longitude) in case you need to arrange an extraction.
- Meet your neighbours.

Being part of an emergency net means that you need to be prepared.

Having an amateur radio and thinking you are going to save the world is like wearing a camo jacket and believing you are SAS.

THIS IS A FICTITIOUS SCENARIO

THE INTENTION IS TO MAKE YOU THINK AND PLAN BEFORE THE EARTHQUAKE.





MORSE CODE - STORIES

CARYN KD2GUT

"Squirrels are the best thing to grow on trees."

In the midst of an oppressive summer season Down Under, read this and chill out: It is -13C in this part of the northeastern United States – and it is atypically arctic.

To put it simply, we CW ops are freezing our dits and dahs off.

There are, of course, exceptions: nature's own CW operators - birds not native to New Zealand and Australia - the red-headed woodpecker and its petite relative, the downy woodpecker. (The little downy is the same species, operating QRP). I love woodpeckers: Their beaks have good fists. They engage in enviable rhythmic discourse with everything from trunks of trees to suet feeders. Housebound by an epic snowstorm for several days, I have observed them and become obsessed with their ongoing QSOs at the suet feeders.

Weather aside, what these birds know instinctively is that January is traditionally a good month for CW. It brings us a recommitment to our practice of this honoured mode. The ARRL kicks the year off with Straight Key Night, the Straight Key Century Club follows with its more extended counterpart, Straight Key Month. (This year I am convinced that these activities were created solely to keep our extremities from freezing.) When the ARRL launched its America250 WAS multi-mode activity to mark the 250th anniversary of our nation, I signed up for a CW shift as W1AW/2, a portable counterpart of the headquarters' callsign. (At present, there is no alternative to POTA except SNOWTA and so this is the adjustment we make.)

It is still a good start to the year as we move into February and toward CW adventures not yet planned.

The woodpecker still takes to the air under challenging conditions - and so too can we.

CARYN

KD2GUT





SOTA OPERATORS

MATT ZL4NVW

A Traverse of the Garvie Range

The Garvie Mountains run south from the Old Woman Range, dividing the Nevis from the Waikaia valleys and petering out to rolling foothills north of Riversdale. Over the last 20 years working on the surrounding land I've gazed across at the range from all directions and dreamed of walking what looks like perfect tramping country. The Glenary Station land east of the divide has been in the final stage of Tenure Review for several years now, much of it poised to enter the conservation estate. But with Eugenie's decision to scrap the Tenure Review process it's unclear if that will now ever happen.

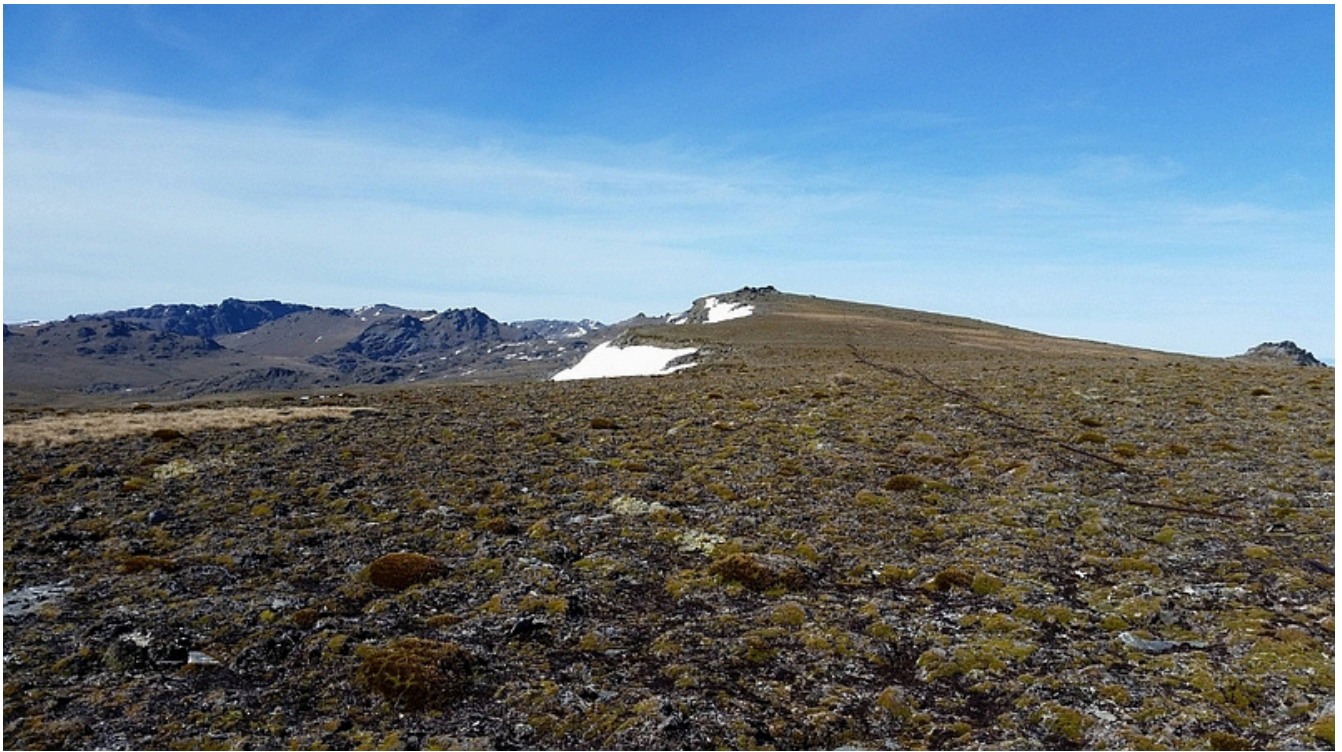
A handy string of 9 SOTA summits, divided by gentle passes provided the final motivation to stop waiting to see if the land will every become public and pick up the phone and ask the cocky for permission to walk the range. The Garvie Station owners were very positive and gave permission both to walk the full length of the range, and to stay at their musterer's huts at Blue Lake. A further call to Nokomai Station to the west resulted in permission to exit to Garston via My Tennyson – avoiding the long return road-journey from Waikaia Bush. Both stations put stock out on the high country some time in December-January, so if you're contemplating a trip then access is likely to be easier before those dates.



Garvie range from Old Woman

A good 4WD track runs along the Old Woman Range from Duffers Saddle to the start of the Garvies. Packed and ready on Tuesday night, I decide to spend the night at Old Woman Hut and avoid the early start the next day – a decision that proved wise for a long day of tramping. Old Woman Hut is a tidy ex-musterer's hut, now on DOC conservation land. Spacious, but sleeping only 4 it's a lovely spot, but popular with 4WDers, especially at weekends. Thankfully I had the hut to myself.

Abandoning the truck at the DOC boundary I climbed the fence and started the long walk along the broad flat tops of the northern Garvie range. Tall tussock and the unique cushion-fields of Central Otago high country made for slow progress on the marshy flat tops, but after an hour or two the range becomes better defined and a steep escarpment develops to the east. Tussock and cushionfields cede to rock and lichen and travel becomes fast, easy and enjoyable.



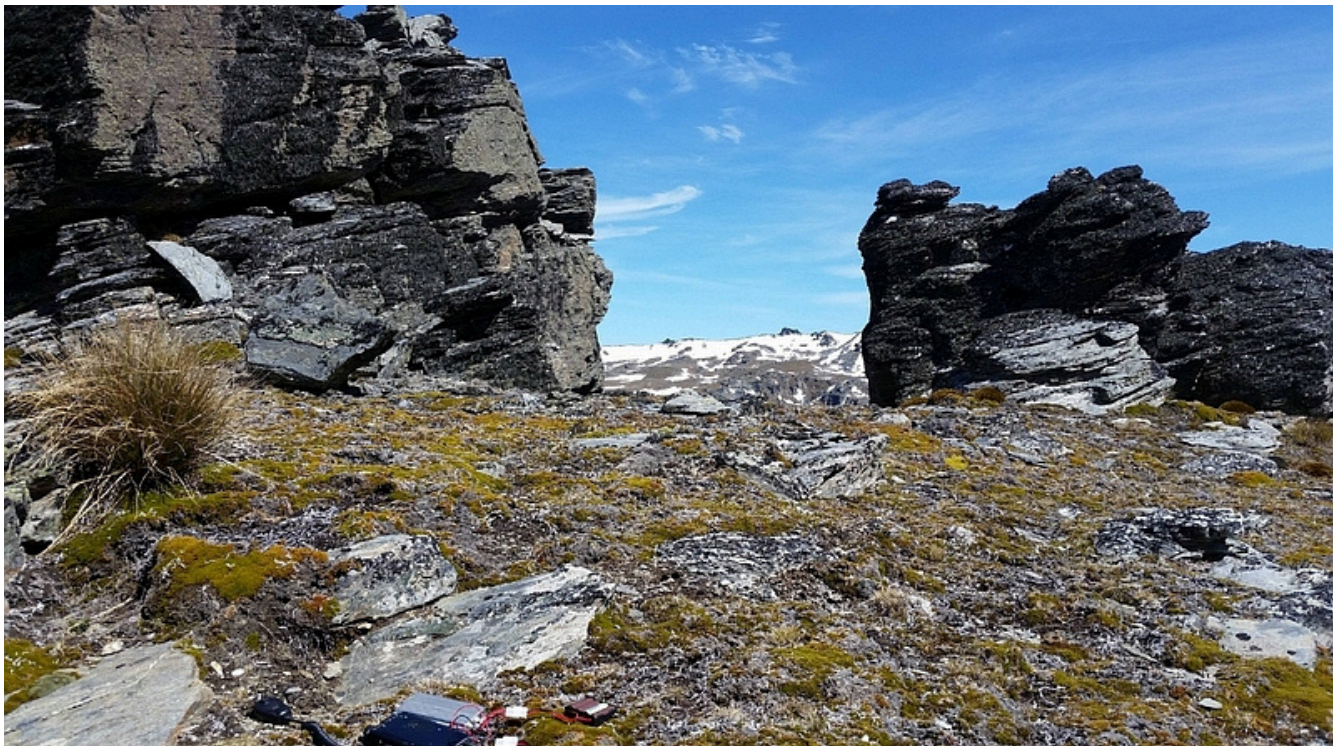
Garvie Range

It's about 15km from the DOC boundary to the first SOTA summit – by far the longest walk of the trip. But stunning scenery and reasonable going had me at the first peak at around 11am.

Had I studied the map a bit more closely I'd have noticed that the string of 9 SOTA summits do not in fact lie on the Garvie Range, but instead are mostly isolated peaks 1-2km west of the main range. This means that to reach each peak means dropping east off the range, passing through a saddle and climbing the outlying peak, then returning the same way. Double the saddle crossings for each peak: UNFAIR! But at least they're mostly minimal SOTA-saddles of little more than 150m descent and climb.



The Garvie peaks are crowned by impressive rock tors, many conveniently spaced a 40m half-wave apart – and as such the SOTA-pole remained mostly in the pack. The resulting horizontal dipole was probably not the most efficient antenna, but it sure made for easy deployment!



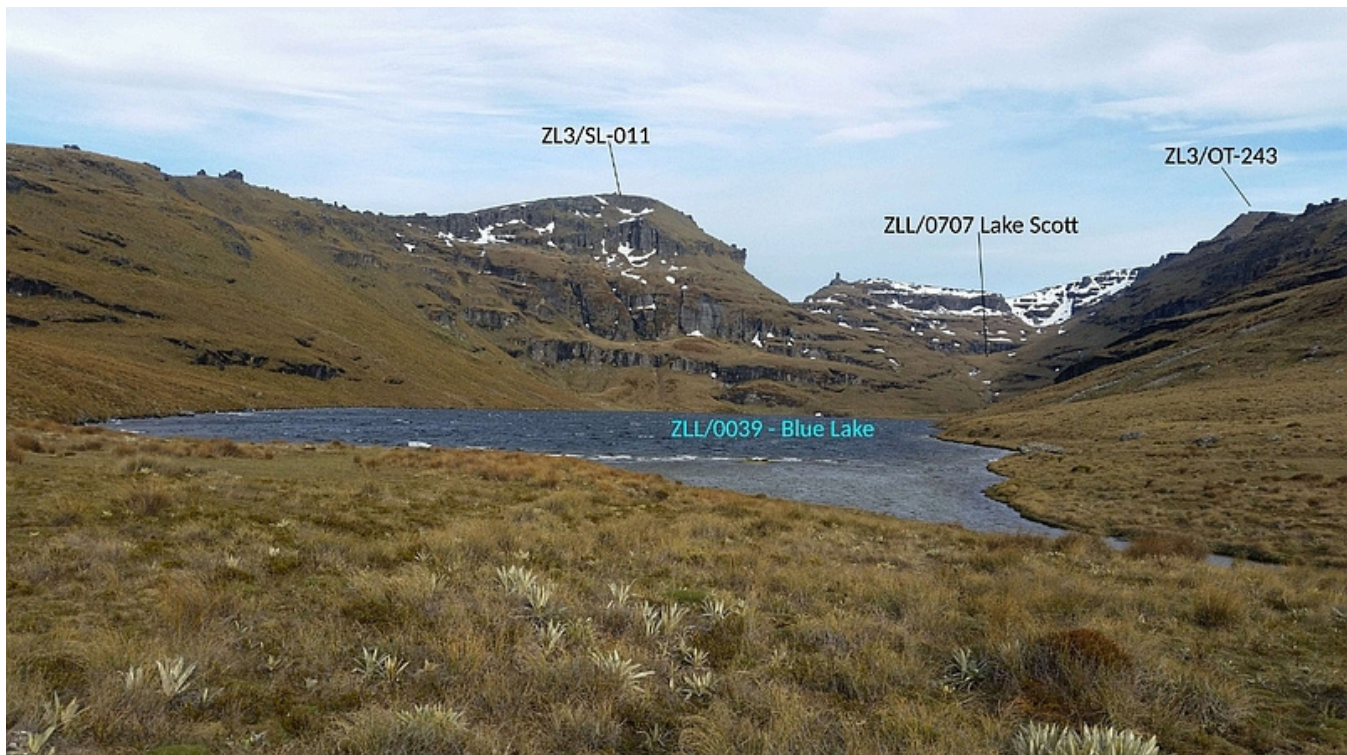
ZL3/SL-010

After the long walk in, the summits now came thick and fast – the second (ZL3/OT -230, 8 points) being on the same side-spur, about 1200m from the first through gentle saddle – probably the easiest 8 points I've ever earned!

Returning to the main range, we head south. The range becomes more interesting. Basins east of the divide are steep-faced corries. Sheer head-basins of tiered bluffs, crystal-blue tarns at their base. Classic U-shaped valleys draining east, coalescing to form the Waikaia River.



The afternoon consists of a series of 4-5km ridgeline wanders – broken by easy activations sprawled on soft, dry lichen-bed summits. Easy travel along gentle tops with simple 200-250m climbs to successive summits. We cross and activate ZL3/SL-002 and ZL3/OT-234 before we finally come into sight of our destination of Blue Lake. We climb our 5th and final SOTA summit for the day - ZL3/OT-243, just as the cloud starts to pile up against the east of the range. Somewhere the day has gotten away from us, and it's nearing 7pm as I pack away the antenna for the last time and sidle the 4km of steep, tricky spur down to Blue Lake Huts – the spur south of Blue Lake would be far easier travel.



Day 2:

Having pushed hard on Day 1 to reach Blue Lake Huts I now have the luxury of leaving the overnight gear at the hut and carrying just a light pack of day-activation gear for Thursday's activations. This must be how 'normal' activator's packs feel! ZL3/SL-011 is only 2km from Blue Lake hut and an easy tussock climb. Early-morning quiet it takes 20 minutes to gather the needed 4 contacts, battered by a bitter nor-wester, and having reached the target I do not linger.



ZLL/0425 – Lake Laura

The southern end of the range is truly beautiful : easy ridgelines separated by bluff-ringed tarns. ZL3/SL-019 is the southern-most 6-pointer of the range, though a final 4-point peak ZL3/SL-069 lies a further 5km south. However, after a 13 hour day yesterday and with an early start Friday to avoid forecast rain, I pass up on the final 4 points and loop back over ZL3/SL-032 to reach the hut at a civilized time of 5pm. I do find time to activate Lake Gow on the way as compensation for the missed peak!



Day 3:

The alarm is set for 4:45am on Friday morning – as near to an alpine start as I ever manage. We're out the door by 5:30 in the first usable light in a battering westerly. I stumble, crouch and struggle up the valley past Blue Lake and Scott Lake – literally crawl over the wind-blasted Garvie tops and over into gentler country to the west.



The landscape changes immediately west of the divide. Bluffed post-glacial valleys are replaced by rolling tussockland and marshy flats. Thankfully the ground proves stable and easy going and we're at Mt Tennyson ZL3/SL-030, 12km west of Blue Lake by 9:15am and relieved to find an eager crowd of chasers waiting.



An easy tussock spur leads down to the Nevis road at the Otago-Southland boundary. I'm planning on reaching Garston Skifield hut 6km further south before the rain hits to await an evening pickup from Sim in the shelter of the hut – but after less than 1km a 4WD stops and a couple of American ex-pats offer me a lift back to civilisation. The Frankton curry-house lives up to that description.



ZR1AAH - Africa Correspondent

KALKBAY PEAK SOTA ZS/WC-063

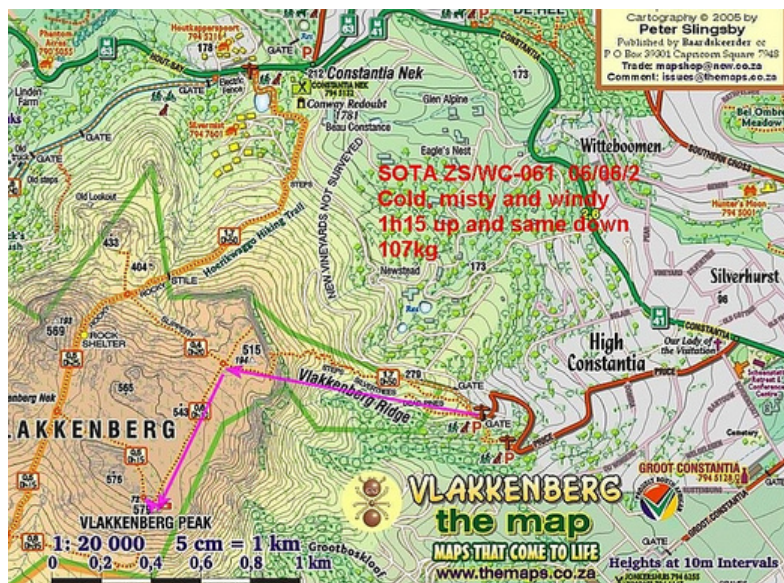
ALLEN WOOD

This is short and sweet...

My SOTA (Summits On The Air) activation of this peak was combined with my activations of Upper Steenberg and Muizenberg peaks



VLAKKENBERG SOTA ZS/WC-061



Official NZ Agent



Official NZ Agent



Official NZ/OZ Agent



Official NZ Agent



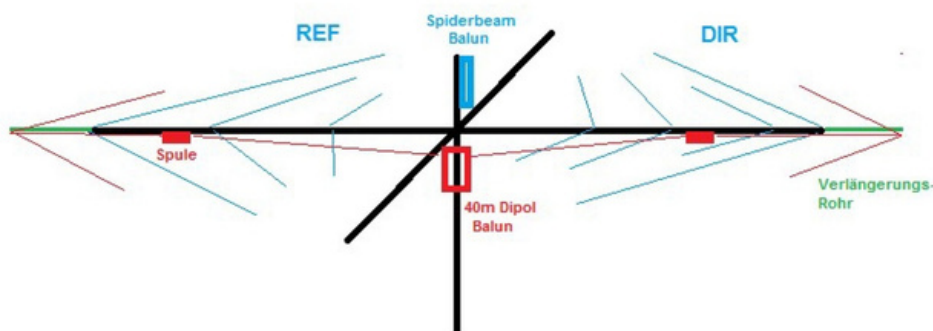
OFFICIAL AGENTS FOR NZ

spiderbeam
high performance lightweight antennas

Spiderbeam was founded in the year 2000 by DF4SA, sparked by his passion for highly competitive radio contesting during portable, outdoor operations, fielddays, DXpeditions, etc. Simple wire antennas are quite alright, but using them to do well in a contest is pretty hard.

The spider beam is a full size lightweight tribander yagi for 20-15-10m, made from fiberglass and wire. It has been specially developed as a highly efficient antenna for portable use - a DXpeditioner's dream with excellent gain.

The Spiderbeam Yagi antennas are probably the most used antenna on any DX Expedition.



Current Stock of Spiderbeam Antennas

5 Band HD yagi - assembled components

5 Band yagi (Portable version)

GoPak (12m pole +404 antenna + guy kit)

404 Asymmetrical Antenna - 6 Band

807 8 Band dipole

40m (7Mhz) Add-On dipole (fits on yagi)

Enroute from Germany (arriving late Feb)

3 Band yagi

Additional 5 Band yagis

Current Stock of Spiderbeam Masts

12m masts (incl. guy ring and clamps)

10m masts

Enroute from Germany (arriving late Feb)

Mast bags - we do have some in stock.

Other masts - SOTABEAM

7m Tactical

6m Tactical

6m Carbon

4m Lightweight



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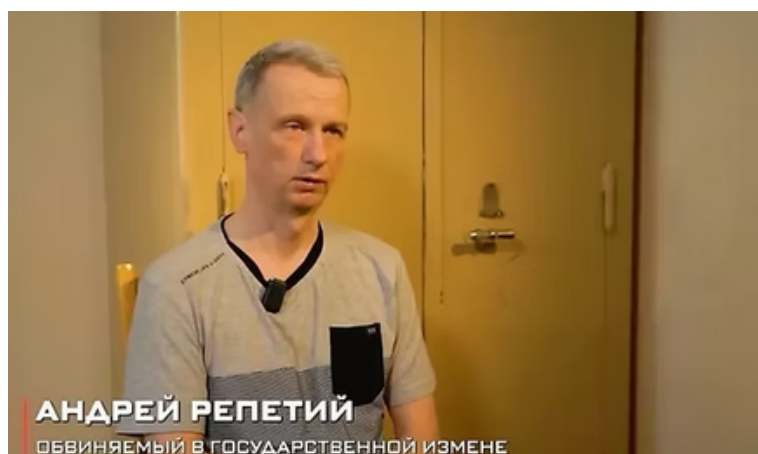


thehamshack.co.nz

Proof of Amateur Licence required for all radio purchases



AMATEUR RADIO OPERATORS IN BELARUS ARRESTED, FACE THE DEATH PENALTY



The Belarusian government is threatening three ham radio operators with the death penalty, detained at least seven people, and has accused them of "intercepting state secrets," according to Belarusian state media, independent media outside of Belarus, and the Belarusian human rights organization Viasna. The arrests are an extreme attack on what is most often a wholesome hobby that has a history of being vilified by authoritarian governments in part because the technology is quite censorship resistant.

The detentions were announced last week on Belarusian state TV, which claimed the men were part of a network of more than 50 people participating in the amateur radio hobby and have been accused of both "espionage" and "treason." Authorities there said they seized more than 500 pieces of radio equipment. The men were accused on state TV of using radio to spy on the movement of government planes, though no actual evidence of this has been produced.

State TV claimed they were associated with the Belarusian Federation of Radioamateurs and Radiosportsmen (BFRR), a long-running amateur radio club and nonprofit that holds amateur radio competitions, meetups, trainings, and forums. WhatsApp and email requests to the BFRR from 404 Media were not returned.

On Reddit, Siarhei Besarab, a Belarusian amateur radio operator, posted a plea for support from others in the hobby: "MAYDAY from Belarus: Licensed operators facing death penalty."

"I am writing this because my local community is being systematically liquidated in what I can only describe as a targeted intellectual genocide," Besarab wrote. "They have detained over 50 licensed people, including callsigns EW1ABT, EW1AEH, and EW1ACE. These men were paraded on state television like war criminals and were coerced to publicly repent for the "crime" of technical curiosity. Propagandists presented the Belarusian Federation of Radioamateurs and Radiosportsmen (BFRR) as a front for a 'massive spy network.'"

"State propaganda unironically claims these men were 'pumping state secrets out of the air' using nothing more than basic \$25 Baofeng handhelds and consumer-grade SDR dongles," he added. "Any operator knows that hardware like this is physically incapable of cracking the modern AES-256 digital encryption used by government security forces. It is a technical fraud, yet they are being charged with High Treason and Espionage. The punishment in Belarus for these charges is life in prison or the death penalty."

The Belarusian human rights group Viasna and its associated Telegram channel confirmed the detention and said that it spoke to a cellmate of Andrei Repetsi, who said that Repetsi was unable to talk about his case in jail: "The case is secret, so Andrei never told the essence of the case in the cell. He joked that his personal file was marked 'Top secret. Burn before reading,'" Viasna wrote.

Most hams operate amateur radios for fun, as part of competitions, or to keep in touch with other hams around the world. But the hobby has a long history of being attacked by governments in part because it is resistant to censorship. Amateur radio often works even if a natural disaster or political action takes down internet, cell, and phone services, so it is popular among people interested in search and rescue and doomsday prepping. Amateur radio has been used to share information out of Cuba, for example, and in 2021 the Cuban government jammed ham radio frequencies during anti-government protests there.

Source: <https://www.404media.co/ham-radio-operators-in-belarus-arrested-face-the-death-penalty/>



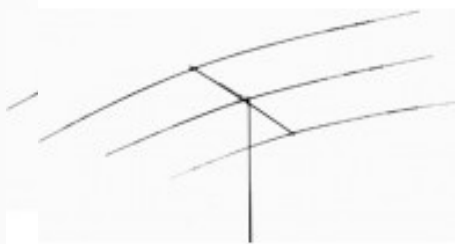
CLASSIFIED

FOR SALE.

SPE Expert 1.3K-FA, 1.3KW Solid State fully automatic Linear Amplifier, \$4,000.
Previously owned by Tony ZL3HAM and hardly used since I have owned it.
Current new price in Australia AS8485.00.
Geoff ZL3AL
Geoff@gooch.co.nz



FOR SALE - TH3 3 element yagi for 10, 15 & 20m Pre-Owned



Gain: 5.8 dBd (avg.).
F/B Ratio: 25 dB (avg.).
Max Power: 600 Watts PEP.
Boom Length: 12 Feet.
Longest Element: 27 Feet 3 inches.
Turning Radius: 14 feet 9 inches.
Mast Diameter: 1.25 - 2.0 inches OD.
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Net weight: 21 pounds.
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Cost \$500

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