

HF Manager's Report, October 2012

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The following are the main ongoing activities and issues related to HF matters.

IARU Interim Meeting Vienna C4 Committee

This will take place in April 2013 and the RSGB has the opportunity to submit a number of papers on HF matters. The HF Manager would welcome inputs from interested parties as to the topics for submission. Currently it is planned to address the DX Code of Conduct with a particular emphasis on the DX station operating techniques, 7MHz band planning in the data mode segment, and the 10MHz band plan.

WRC15

Agenda item 1.4 in WRC15 concerns the possibility of an allocation for the amateur service within the 5.25 to 5.45MHz spectrum. An IFPG (International Frequency Planning Group) meeting at Ofcom, held on 22/10/12, has placed item 1.4. on the agenda for the UK delegation. We will continue to work with the IFPG in Ofcom to maintain support for this agenda item, as well as encouraging other Region 1 societies to do the same with their regulators.

The RSGB has informal representation at ITU, ETSI, & CEPT meetings through the involvement of several members within the IARU and professional activities and we will continue to leverage these efforts as best we can at minimal cost to the society.

Band Planning

The data modes segment of the 40 metre band plan was set from 7040-7060kHz at Cavtat in 2009 and it has taken several years of continued pressure to encourage adherence to this plan. In particular, PSK31 activity on 7035kHz has continued. Special footnotes were added to the RSGB band plans earlier this year to encourage PSK31 operators not to operate below 7040kHz. As part of a wider IARU C4 initiative, similar efforts have been made by other member societies. There have been fewer complaints recently about PSK31 operation in the CW segment, but the problem still persists.

On 30 metres, the inconsistency between Region 1, 2 and 3 band plans in the data modes segment continues to encourage operation outside the recognised band plan, especially in Region 1. This is apparent by the increasing data mode traffic below 10.140MHz. Given that 30 metres often has world-wide propagation for much of the day, we invite proposals and inputs from interested groups in an attempt to align the 30 metre band plan via a paper at the interim IARU Region 1 meeting in April 2013.

Remote Operation

Remote station operation is expressly not permitted under TR61-01. At Sun City in 2011, a recommendation was passed that all societies make their members aware that TR61-01 applies only to visiting amateurs operating in that country. There continues to be a number of cases of suspected operation of remote equipment supposedly under TR61-01. It needs to be made clear that this is in breach of licence conditions. Contest operators in the extreme category of certain contests are permitted to use remote stations, but the licensing of these stations must be in line with, and approved, by the appropriate regulator; they cannot be operated under TR61-01.

HF Operating Standards

Behaviour on the HF bands continues to be a major source of concern to members. The RSGB, in conjunction with CDXC and GMDX in the UK, continues to be a strong supporter of the DX Code of Conduct and encourages all members and DXers to read and abide by its guidelines.

Until recently, the focus of the DX Code of Conduct has been on the behaviour of the DX chaser. Some recent high profile DXpeditions have highlighted the need to ensure that a similar expectation for operating behaviour lies in the hands of the DXpedition operators themselves. It has been very apparent that cases of deliberate interference occur much more readily with poor or inexperienced operators at the DX station, and cases of infrequently identifying, or failing to maintain control of the spread of the pile-up, is contributing to frustration and unruly behaviour. A task force is currently investigating how to encourage expedition leaders to endorse a DX Code of Conduct for their operators, possibly via incentives linked to financial sponsorship.

Beacons

There continues to be several uncoordinated amateur beacons on 10MHz and 7MHz in Region 1, in contravention of the IARU policy to discourage such beacons. In particular, a number of complaints have been received regarding IK1HGI/B which currently operates in the centre of the 30 metre data modes segment at 10.142MHz.

The issue of these beacons continues to frustrate as, although operating against IARU guidelines, they are often not in contravention of their licence conditions.

5MHz

Although progress has been slow, work is proceeding with Ofcom and the primary user on increased access to 5MHz frequencies. We are hopeful that a new NoV will allow access to additional frequencies. The issues over antenna height and power level measurement within the initial proposal are being addressed and, again, we remain hopeful of a positive outcome.

With Agenda Item 1.4 at WRC15 offering the possibility of a more permanent amateur allocation at 5MHz, sensible and disciplined activity on 5MHz in the run up to WRC15 can only help our case.