

2014 Band Plans

In 2013 we had the rare event of two new additions (472kHz and 5MHz) to the RSGB band plan. This year's update is more typical and is an opportunity to incorporate the various changes from the IARU Region 1 Interim Meeting, Vienna 2013, and some 5MHz usage guidelines.

HF. In the 5MHz 'bandlets' UK usage patterns quickly settled down as the year progressed, as confirmed by the recent 5MHz consultation. The 2014 update reflects this and includes usage designations for QRP, beacons, digital modes and AM. Apart from a few editorial corrections, the only other HF change is the removal of the downlink-only restriction on 29MHz satellites, as agreed at 2013 IARU Region 1 Vienna meeting.

VHF/UHF. Recent efforts by both the RSGB and IARU Region 1 towards a better alignment of FM and digital voice systems led to some changes in the August 2013 edition

of the band plan. Following an outstanding effort by ETCC, the 2014 plan now fully reflects the successful migration of simplex gateways/nodes in the 50MHz and 144MHz bands to IARU-aligned channels. Elsewhere, changes are confined to just a few deletions of unused/obsolete items as agreed at Vienna. Further work along these lines is envisaged as room is sought for newer modes. The 145MHz band for example has seen the WSPR frequency slightly adjusted; Note 14 introduced to remind 144.8MHz APRS users that they must use NBFM; and new Note 15 added regarding a future review of under-used packet assignments.

MICROWAVE BANDS. The current edition of the band plan has no change in the microwave bands pending the final outcome of the Ofcom Spectrum Release process. This will largely affect the 2.3 and 3.4GHz bands. Ofcom have provided an interim update (see separate item below) and we await formal

detail becoming available later in the year.

FINALLY... Band plans are living entities and do evolve over time. There are still cases (not helped by search engines) where outdated ones may still be found on the web. If you have, or are aware of, older RSGB Band Plans on a website, please endeavour to remove them. It is far better to just have a web link to the RSGB website for the latest edition (but do not link too specifically to a file name). The year may see further changes as we have the IARU Region 1 General Conference in September. The Band Plan, including the master files, are on the Operating section of the RSGB website – and if you are unsure, by all means contact the relevant Spectrum Manager (hf.manager@rsgb.org.uk, vhf.manager@rsgb.org.uk or mw.manager@rsgb.org.uk).
Murray Niman, G6JYB
RSGB Microwave Manager

Interim statement on 2.3/3.4GHz bands



In June 2013, Ofcom published a consultation about amateur use of 2300 to 2450 and 3400 to 3475MHz in light of the Public Sector Spectrum Release (PSSR) project. Since then we have been carefully considering the evidence submitted as well as information from the MoD and other government departments.

The majority of responses agreed with our recommendations for the release bands (ie that the release bands would be removed from the amateur radio licence) and we expect to make a statement on this in due course.

In the adjacent bands (ie 2310 to 2350, 2390 to 2400 and 3400 to 3410MHz) there is a need for amateur uses to coexist with the MoD, other government

departments and Programme Making & Special Events (PMSE).

The MoD and other government users have raised some concerns about amateur usage in close proximity to a number of their sites as a result of the retuning and remediation works that they are undertaking in order to move systems out of the release band. We are working closely with the MoD to establish what, if any, additional protections or coordination processes may be required around these sites. In some cases these restrictions may only apply during the remediation works. Careful consideration of the evidence submitted for these bands is still ongoing and we expect our decision to be included in the forthcoming statement. However, on the basis of national security, the MoD has the right to request additional protections or co-ordination at short notice.