HF Manager's Report, November 2014
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IARU Region 1 General Conference, Varna

Committee C4 discusses HF matters during the conference.

The issue of remote operation created much discussion, mainly concerning the legality of operation and identification of the station. The recommendations advised operators to ensure that remote operation is permitted in the country where the transmitter is located, noting that CEPT TR 61-01 does not cover this. It also notes that the callsign used should be that issued by the regulatory authority of the country in which the transmitter is located, irrespective of the location of the operator.

It was also suggested that the participation of remote controlled station on contests or award programmes are a matter for the various contest or award programmes organisers.

The RSGB presented a paper to address the issue of malicious QRM on the HF bands. It was agreed that a Region 1 AROS coordinator be appointed to coordinate the establishment of independent AROS operations in about 6 other countries which would be tasked with monitoring and possibly identifying the source of malicious QRM during DXpeditions.

Other papers on band planning were discussed, in particular noting the overcrowding of the digital segments on some bands as well as in contest-prefered segments, but no significant changes were made to any of the HF band plans. Two minor changes were the elimination of the 29MHz downlink only restriction to the amateur satellite service, and an extension of the 6kHz bandwidth all-mode section of the 28MHz band plan down to 29.0MHz in recognition of AM activity in the 29.0-29.1MHz section of the band.

CEPT

Three PTC meetings were attended during the year to support Agenda Item 1.4 at WRC15, the establishment of an amateur allocation at 5MHz. With the help of Ofcom and the MoD, the UK was able to support a position in favour of considering a 5MHz allocation to the amateur service on a secondary basis, although there is still strong opposition to this from a few other CEPT countries. There are two further PTC meetings in 2015 to finalise this before WRC15 in the Autumn of next year.

A CEPT position in favour of a 5MHz allocation would be of significant value at WRC15.

5MHz and 472kHz

The recent Ofcom licence review has proposed adding the current UK 5MHz frequencies and the 472kHz allocation to the licence schedule for holders of full licenses. This is considered to be a positive move, although there is some concern about specific wording on the 472kHz NoV being carried over to the licence schedule as a whole which needs to be addressed.

The publication showing current useage of the 5MHz band in each of the segments in both RadCom and on the RSGB website seems to have helped the initial problems of misuse of the 5MHz band and operation through this year has been notably problem free compared to the first few months of operation last year.

A simple plan showing current useage of the 472kHz band was also agreed at the Region 1 general conference, which is a precursor to a band plan for 472kHz once more countries gain access to the band.

Region 2 Band plan

The IARU Region 2 band plan at 7MHz was revised at the end of 2013 and is now in line with the Region 1 band plan. This is particularly significant at 7MHz as the data segments are now fully aligned, which is hoped will end some of the persistent problems of data mode activity outside the current Region 1 plan. The 30m band plan and the data mode segment of the 80m band plan now remain the only significant differences between the Region 1 and Region 2 band plans at HF.

Awards

The two main awards for HF are presented at the RSGB Convention. This year the following awards were made:

ROTAB Trophy: Lionel Parker G5LP
G5RP Trophy: Jack White G8DX

Other Items

The RSGB received requests for the establishment of 2 28MHz beacons, both in the north of England, which are still in progress.

A complaint was received concerning the operation of digital mode stations below 10.140MHz, which is outside the Region 1 band plan on 30m.

An application for a 28MHz APRS gateway was made and approved.