

Amateur Radio Observation Service

Report of Coordinator to Spectrum Forum 2014

General

Keith Bassett G7NBU retired as the AROS Coordinator in 2014 and Mark Jones G0MGX, the deputy coordinator, was appointed to the role of AROS Coordinator.

Mark Jones G0MGX is now solely responsible for coordinating the monitoring activities of the AROS Observers across the country.

The Amateur Radio Observation Service is an advisory and reporting service of the RSGB which is intended to assist radio amateurs and others who may be affected by problems which occur within the amateur bands or which develop on other frequencies as a result of amateur transmissions.

The service investigates reports of licence infringements, or instances of poor operating practice which might bring the Amateur Service into disrepute. Reports, complaints and associated supplementary information are accepted from any source and the contents of each communication are regarded as confidential.

Ofcom have assisted AROS this year in a number of cases and official visits have been made to licenced amateurs and formal warnings issued.

Dialogue with Ofcom is on-going to further improve the way we work together as a united team.

Observers

The number of observers registered with AROS continues to increase and following the presence of AROS coordinators at the Hamfest in September the number continues to rise and now stands at 104.

Although the Observers are spread across the country there is still a need for more observers to effectively cover the UK particularly the south east of England.

Cases

Since the beginning of 2014 there have been 28 unique subjects of complaint. In some cases there have been many complaints about the same event. A few of these were resurrected cases from previously reported incidents which had not been resolved or their history was known to AROS.

So far this year, 6 of the 28 cases have resulted in letters being sent by AROS to suspected culprits advising them that their behaviour is subject of complaint. They are advised that AROS has reasonable cause to believe that their call sign/identity is associated with the bad behaviour and has been recorded by Observers.

Reported cases have included:

- Misuse of 5 Mhz bands (out of band slot transmissions);
- Pirated call signs;
- Sending offensive SSTV / Easy Pal images;
- Abuse of 2 metre repeaters;
- Abuse of 70cm metre repeaters.

2 Metre Repeaters

The vast majority of the reported nuisance activity is taking place on 2 metre repeaters and appears to be involving the same abusers on a regular basis. The reported behaviours include apparent drunkenness and foul language; abuse aimed at fellow amateurs; silent keying and jamming frequencies with music or verbal ranting.

During 2014 there has been far more cooperation between AROS and the ETCC informing and involving repeater keepers with the complaints received that are associated with their NoV.

Some repeater keepers have turned off the repeaters for a period of time in an attempt to discourage the abuse; however, other repeater keepers appear hard to get hold of and perhaps only repeater keepers by name. This can lead to unwillingness or an inability to take any action to control the problems. This may give an impression that the bad behaviour is condoned.

The apparent failure to deal with this behaviour causes feelings to run high amongst the dedicated amateurs and unfortunately the RSGB are often criticised for the failure to act. However as RSGB is not an enforcement body we have to confine ourselves to an advisory role.

Mark Jones, G0MGX

AROS Coordinator

E-mail: aros@rsgb.org.uk