



RSGB VHF Manager's Spectrum Forum Report

October 2017

The VHF Manager, John Regnault G4SWX is responsible for RSGB spectrum matters for the VHF and UHF amateur bands 50-432 MHz.

Highlights

- The temporary spectrum at 70.5-71.5MHz and 146-147MHz will be renewed for another year.
- The NoV process for both temporary spectrum allocations has been simplified and is now hosted by the RSGB.
- A meeting has been held with Ofcom where RSGB proposals to streamline the SRP (Special Research Permit) were tabled. It is hoped that a modified scheme can be trialled soon.
- Ofcom have agreed to permit greater ERP for wide bandwidth modes in the 70.5-71.5MHz and 146-147MHz temporary allocations making long range RB-DATV on this band a more realistic proposition.

Lowlights

- The general level of traditional VHF/UHF amateur activity continues to cause concern. Many amateurs are citing the increase in their noise floor for not coming onto the bands.

General Matters

The VHF Manager's greatest concern is the falling levels of activity which many have linked to the rise in the VHF/UHF noise floor in all parts of the UK. In 2016 Ofcom changed the noise floor criteria used to calculate coverage areas for Band One and Low Band 'Technically Assigned' business radio users. This change from the previous figure of -114dBm, which was based upon old CCIR figures, to -92dBm recognises the increase in man-made noise in this part of the spectrum.

This change resulted after surveys and pressure from business users of this part of the spectrum. Working together with a number of leading radio amateurs and members of PSC, EMCC the VHF Manager is developing a RSGB membership VHF noise survey backed-up with a Radio Communications article and release of the 2017 RSGB Convention presentation given by Professor Alwyn Seeds G8DOH. It is hoped that results of this study can be used to put additional pressure on Ofcom to do something in order to reduce the alarming level of VHF noise pollution.

The VHF Manager again wishes to thank the ETCC, particularly the chairman, John McCullagh for the work done by the ETCC in effectively dealing with the large number of repeater and gateway issues. In particular, in addressing the difficulties and the large amount of work required to deal with the Primary User of the shared bands.



The VHF Manager was particularly pleased to see two presentations describing the latest VHF propagation research at the 2017 RSGB Convention by three members of PSC.

The VHF Manager would again like to thank BATC and Noel Matthews G8GTZ for the ongoing work in supporting the RSGB case being made to Ofcom to renew the temporary VHF spectrum allocations at 70.5 and 146MHz. A presentation showing a clip of standard definition TV transmitted in 450 kHz bandwidth was shown to Ofcom's Business Radio Interest Group (BRIG) in June 2017. The perceived value from such amateur experimentation should not be underestimated as it certainly played a very significant part in the renewal of access to experimental spectrum at 70.5-71.5 and 146-147MHz.

Outlook – WRC-19

Considerable work remains to support IARU Region 1 in making the case at WRC-19 for a harmonised allocation for the amateur service at 50 MHz (WRC-19 Agenda Item 1.1).

Currently the spectrum 47-68 MHz is allocated to broadcasting in ITU Region-1, whereas Region-2 and Region-3 do have formal ITU amateur primary allocations. The proposal is to make 50-54 MHz an amateur allocation - the case for 52-54 MHz is based on the development of new amateur digital services. The RSGB experience in developing temporary experimental amateur spectrum at 70.5 and 146MHz has proved to be very valuable in this context.

John Regnault G4SWX

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