

# HF Manager's Report, January 2024

## Ian Greenshields G4FSU

### Summary

Activity on all the higher bands has significantly increased as we approach the peak of the sunspot cycle. It is very noticeable how effective modes such as FT8 and FT4, not yet introduced at the peak of the last cycle, are in allowing world wide propagation with sometimes very low power levels. This increased activity in digital modes is somewhat at the expense of the more classic modes and it's often very visible on a waterfall that much of the HF bands' activity is compressed into the digital segments.

### IARU Digital Modes Band Plan Review

The IARU HF band plan review for digital modes has had considerable discussion this year and following the IARU Region 1 conference in November, it was acknowledged that the proposal falls short in a number of areas. As such, the implementation of the plan as it currently stands will not be implemented in Region 1. It seems likely that this will also be true of the other IARU regions before further review. It is clear that digital activity is expanding out of the current recognised segments and, with the band planning process being slower than the software development for new digital modes, some conflict does occur. There is concern that digital modes may expand into the exclusive CW segments on some bands and declining CW activity, especially near the top end of the CW segments, does not help this.

### IARU Region 1 General Conference

This conference took place in Serbia in November 2023. Band planning takes up much of the discussion and this was no exception but, as mentioned above, the decision not to implement the new digital mode plan was taken. The RSGB will be a member of a working group to review this in more detail. The overriding principle is to try and maintain common band plans across all regions, local regulatory issues notwithstanding. Other topics discussed at the conference included Field Day contest rules across the region, coexistence of contest and non-contest stations and protection of QRP operators. Low activity levels on many bands outside of the digital segments continues to be a concern.

### 5 MHz

Discussions with Ofcom and the primary user continue over access to the full WRC-15 allocation, which will probably require some compromise with access to the current UK allocation. At issue is the 15W eirp power limit versus the 100W permitted power in the UK and access to significantly more spectrum than the 15kHz WRC15 allocation.

## WRC23

There were no agenda items at WRC23 that directly affected our HF allocations and the next few years also do not look likely to have any relevant HF agenda items. Whilst this helps in the protection of the bands, it also means there is almost no chance of any further allocations at HF to the amateur service in the foreseeable future.

## HF Awards and DXpedition Fund

The HF Manager is a de facto trustee of the RSGB DXpedition Fund, which raises money for DXpeditions through sales of raffle tickets at the RSGB Convention and individual donations. The DXpeditions supported in 2023 are listed here:

<https://rsgb.org/main/operating/hf-dxpedition-fund/dxpeditions-supported/>

The two awards for HF are presented at the RSGB Convention, held on-line this year. The nomination process and committees are managed by the HF Manager. For 2023, the following awards were made:

ROTAB Trophy 2023: Andy Brown G4EZT

G5RP Trophy 2023: Stephen Armstrong 2E0SUG

Ian Greenshields G4FSU

RSGB HF Manager