

NERG Nov 2011 - Chasing DX

This presentation is a quick overview of how to chase DX
At our February meeting we will be having a presentation
from Dave VK3JMB that will cover the issue in a much
deeper way.

What do you need?

- ✓ *Radio*
- ✓ *Antenna*
- ✓ *Log*
- ✓ *List of countries*
- ✓ *Great circle map*
- ✓ *Some understanding of propagation*

What we will be covering

- ✓ *All of the above*
- ✓ *QSLing and confirming contacts*

Any working radio will do!

As long as it covers the bands you want to work on then any radio will be suitable. The guy at the other end cannot tell if you are using an old FT101 or the very latest FT Wizz bang. All he hears is a signal!!

Try for the best antenna you can!

A beam is usually best but it can be hard to beat a dipole at a reasonable height. We are looking for a low angle of radiation in the direction you are trying to work. A vertical will provide a low angle and “A good weak signal in all directions”

Check the pattern of the antenna you plan on using. The better the antenna the better the results.

A radio with two VFOs is handy!

Nearly all Dxpeditions will operate “split” they receive on one frequency and transmit on another. Often their receive frequency is higher and you will hear the operator say “TU2T listening up” often they will give a hint like “up 5” or “up 5 to 10”. That means they are listen 5 KHz higher than their receive frequency.

So you set your second VFO 5 KHz higher and hit the “Split” button. That way you transmit on one VFO frequency and receive on the other. Many of us have got it wrong and transmitted right on top of the DX. I guarantee you will do this, probably more than once!!

Computer or paper log?

Computer is easier but paper can be just as effective. If you have a computer in the shack and it does not cause interference use it. Otherwise rule up an exercise book and get going. If using a computer then interface your rig to it to record the frequency and mode you are operating on. Have a look at DXLabs, Logger32, HRD (all free) DX4win (costs) No where near an exhaustive list!!!

Operating resource are available on the net.

The list of countries can be found on the WIA web site, plus lots of other places, will be included in most logging programs. Lots of maps etc are available – DXAtlas is good, but costs.

Propagation

The following table is from Dave JMB and may assist.

<i>Time</i>	<i>Destination</i>	<i>Path</i>
<i>AM</i>	<i>America – South America & Caribbean</i>	<i>Long</i>
	<i>Europe & Middle East</i>	<i>Short</i>
<i>PM</i>	<i>America – South America & Caribbean</i>	<i>Short</i>
	<i>Europe & Middle East</i>	<i>Long</i>
<i>11PM</i>	<i>Europe</i>	<i>Short</i>

Choosing a band on which to operate

Several programs available – some on line look great such as VOACAP There are others that you can use on your computer and most logging programs include one.

What to do once they are worked – QSLing

Most operators want to get their DXCC (DX Century Club) award from the WIA or the ARRL. The WIA requires QSL cards to verify these QSOs.

*Two ways to get cards – direct or vis the bureau.
Direct take from a few days to a few weeks (usually)
bureau can take months up to years!*

QSLing Direct

*Get address and QSL details from www.qrz.com
Send card to the QSL manager if there is one. Post your card with a self addressed envelope and some form of payment for return postage. “Green stamps” (\$US \$1 bill) is one form of payment, usually 2 are required can be more. The other is an International Reply Coupon these can be purchased from the post office and cost \$3.30 – (effective from 4 July 2011)*

Try to hide money in the envelope and do not use stamps – can buy postage on a sticky label – stops theft of letter. Such thefts are worse in developing countries.

QSLing via the bureau

*Only available to WIA or ARVic members. Members should send their cards **sorted in DXCC country order** to the WIA Outwards QSL Bureau addressed as follows:*

WIA Outwards QSL Bureau

PO Box 3073 Teralba NSW 2284

Inwards QSL Bureau

Cards for all VK3 amateurs are handled by the ARVic Bureau – you must register your callsign with them and indicate the collection point you would like to have your cards delivered to.

The NERG is a QSL collection point so if you indicate to the bureau that you want your cards sent to the NERG, we will get them and then distribute them at a club meeting or directly to you.

Non WIA and ARVic members can collect cards from ARVic – need to make arrangements with them and there is a charge of 10c per card.

Uncollected cards are destroyed after 6 months.

Inwards QSL Bureau

*Registration must be in writing and the form is available at
<http://amateurradio.com.au/sites/default/files/inwards.pdf>*

Where to get QSL cards

*There are several overseas sources – I am not aware of
any specific QSL printing companies in VK*

*<http://www.ux5uoqsl.com/> Seems a good source with a
1000 Double sided cards from US\$69.*

*Another is <http://www.coolqsl.com/> who have 1000 Double
sided for 35euro (US\$48.00)*

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Ordering QSLs on-line

Many Dxpeditons do not want to receive thousands of cards so they set up an on-line facility that allows hams to order a QSL for their contact. You can usually search the log and it will tell you what bands and modes they have worked you on but not the time and date. You then provide the time and date and some form of payment, many use paypal.

They then send you your card.

On-line QSL Bureaus

There are a number of on-line QSL services and these include eQSL LOTW (Logbook of The World) and eHam. The only one that Provided credit for DXCC is LOTW and that is for the ARRL DXCC.

There is no on-line service accepted by The WIA DXCC awards programme.

Come back in February and hear more!

Dave VK3JMB will be along to give you more detail on operating and chasing DX. We will also set up an on-air demo so you can see how its done.

73

Greg VK3VT