



THE SIGNAL



Newsletter of the Bella Vista area Radio Club ARKANSAS' LARGEST AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

- July General License Class Enrollment Now Open
- Ham Definitions Quick Guide
- BVRC participates in 2024 Arkansas QSO Party with club call W5NX
- A Counterpoise for Your Handheld
- How to Spot the ISS
- Contesting Tips
- Getting DXCC and Other Confirmations
- DXCC Den – Jarvis Island



July 2024

Monthly Meetings: 1st Thursdays @ 7 p.m.
Arkansas Law Enforcement Training Academy (ALETA)
3424 S. Downum Road, Springdale AR
(HAM 101 Workshop for Newcomers @ 6pm preceding meeting)

Club Calls: N5BVA / W5NX

(Repeater Nets)

(Contesting & Special Events)

Repeaters: 147.255 +.600 khz offset, pl 162.2

444.100 + 5 mhz offset, pl 162.2

Website: www.bellavistaradioclub.org

WEEKLY NETS:

BVRC HAM 101 Net
Tuesdays @ 7 pm on the
WX5NAS Skywarn Link System:

Bentonville - 146.865, -offset, pl 103.5
 Springdale - 147.315, +offset, pl 97.4
 Fayetteville - 147.315, +offset, pl 110.9
 Huntsville - 443.625, +5 MHz, pl 97.4
 Green Forest - 145.310, -offset, pl

BVRC Legacy Net
Wednesdays @ 7 pm on the
BVRC Dual Linked Repeaters:

N5BVA/Bella Vista
 147.255, +offset, pl 162.2

N5BVA/Springdale
 444.100, +5 MHz, pl 162.2

BVRC 3830 Roundtable
Sunday Afternoons

4 pm during CST
 4:30 pm during CDT
 3.830 MHz



NEXT BVRC MONTHLY MEETING



Thursday, July 11, 2024 @ 7pm
Arkansas Law Enforcement Training Academy
3424 S. Downum Road
Springdale, AR

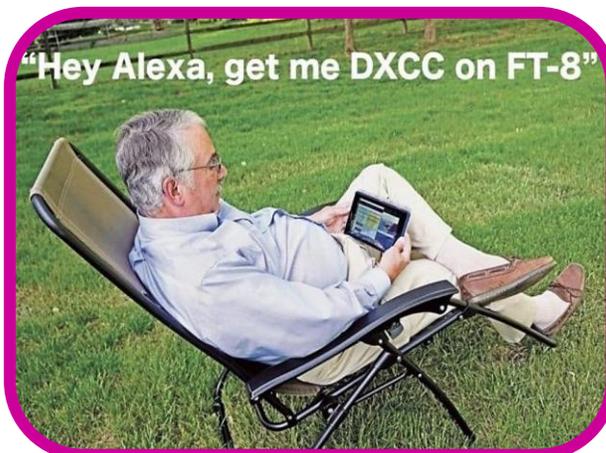
July Meeting Information

HAM 101 Workshop, 6pm preceding monthly meeting – BVRC newsletter editor Don Banta – K5DB will be on hand to speak on a very popular area of amateur radio – “HF mobile contesting operation”. Don has operated in many state QSO parties over the years and traversed thousands of miles in doing so. Don will be sharing how he has setup his HF mobile station to get the most enjoyment and ease of operation from it. He will speak on different types of mobile antennas and what has worked best for him. He will also cover different grounding techniques for a mobile station. He will also share on his planning techniques to successfully participate in the mobile category of a contest and submit a good score.

If you're interested on doing something different for a change in your radio experience, HF mobiling can provide a fun and exciting departure from the norm. Be sure and join us for HF mobiling!

BVRC July meeting, 7pm – For our July meeting, Field Day Coordinator Tom Northfell – W5XNA will be hosting “2024 BVRC Field Day Celebration and Review”. Tom will recap all the logistics and high points of our club's FD extravaganza, and it will be an exciting time to hear the first release of the results from Tom. See you then!

*Ham
Chuckles*





BOARD MEMBERS

President

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Chair: Vinson Carter – WV5C
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Newsletter Editor

Don Banta – K5DB
arask5db@gmail.com

ATTENTION!!!

DUE TO THE BVRC REGULAR JULY MEETING DATE FALLING ON INDEPENDENCE DAY JULY 4,

THE JULY MEETING WILL BE HELD THURSDAY JULY 11

AT THE SAME TIMES FOR HAM 101 AND THE REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING.

SEE YOU ON 7 / 11



UPDATE ON K5YY EQUIPMENT SALE - Due to the very fair asking prices of San - K5YY's equipment in last month's newsletter issue, he has sold all but two items. These items are shown below, and the price of the remaining antenna tuner has been reduced as San would like to move it and the speaker before moving. Again these items are priced to sell and are in like new condition.

If interested in either of the items contact San at:

sanfordhutson@gmail.com



Nye Viking 3KW Antenna Tuner

Comes with original user manual. Excellent tuner.

Cost new: \$2500.00

Selling for \$475.00



JRC NVA-88 Console Speaker

Outperforms onboard transceiver speakers. Great audio.

Currently selling used on E-bay from \$170-200.

Selling for \$50.00

Field Day History and Field Day Preparations Highlight June Meeting

It was another SRO attendance by BVRC members for the June 8, 2024 meeting at ALETA in Springdale. As our President Jan Hagan – WB5JAN termed it, it was “W5XNA Night” as BVRC’s Membership Chair and Field Day Coordinator Tom Northfell – W5XNA conducted both the HAM 101 Workshop and the main June meeting.



Tom first shared an excellent presentation in the HAM 101 Workshop room with “The Rationale of Exchanging QSL Cards”.

This was an excellent topic for newcomers to the hobby, especially those that have, or are planning to, upgrade to the General or Amateur Extra class license and operate the HF bands. Tom pointed out that – even though we are now living in the computer/digital age where electronic confirmations for contacts that you have made on the air can be acquired – there are still many hams worldwide who do not use electronic means for confirmations. *The only way you will get a confirmation from these stations is by a hard copy QSL Card.*

Tom explained how to go about acquiring your own personal card to send to the other station, along with the different avenues and methods you can take to send your card and receive cards from others, among those being the ARRL Outgoing QSL Service, the Online QSL Request Service, the incoming QSL Bureau, and (if you so choose) how to send a QSL directly to the station you wish the confirmation from.

He then showed many QSLs that he has received to illustrate that QSL cards are still a vital part of the hobby.



Tom – W5XNA

For the main June meeting, Tom transitioned over to the main meeting room to review last year’s BVRC Field Day 2023, with slides depicting all the different aspects of the biggest amateur radio event of the year.

We have many, many new members who have not as yet had the opportunity to attend a hamfest, special event station, and especially – Field Day.

Tom’s presentation provided an excellent opportunity for our newcomers to view the happenings of a Field Day event, so they can get excited along with the rest of us who have participated in FD, and look forward to participating in this year’s FD gala.

The Signal will be featuring its annual Special Field Day issue with the August installment.

The main highlight for the June meeting was when Tom presented Certificate of Completion awards to the individuals who were present at the meeting, who completed the spring Technician License Class and who all passed their Technician license exam.



BVRC Spring Technician License Class recipients from L to R: Terry Fitzgerald – KJ5GIR, Ralph Singleton – KJ5GJJ, Charlotte Johnson – KJ5GLB, and Kris Henderson – KJ5GIZ, along with instructor Tom Northfell – W5XNA.

THANKS TOM FOR YOUR GREAT PRESENTATIONS AND A GREAT JUNE EVENING!



FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT

Bella Vista Radio Club has had several wonderful events for our members so far in 2024 with several more to come before the end of the year. Among the many classes, VE testing and other club activities, here are several highlights:

Our **BVRC Solar Eclipse Expedition** to Spadra Park in Clarksville had over twenty members and guests camping out and visiting to experience the 2024 total solar eclipse together while we activated a POTA entity and participated in a NASA HF propagation study.

Our **N5T Train Mobile Special Event Station** train ride from Springdale to Van Buren and back featured a full BVRC train car of members who enjoyed a day of camaraderie and special event station operation while viewing some pretty extraordinary scenery along the way.

BVRC participated in the Arkansas QSO Party with a team of members who worked a multi-station operation at the four-county intersection at Beard's Bluff Campground at Millwood Lake in the Texarkana area of the state.

Upcoming in the future, in September will be the **BVRC Special Event Station W5NX** operation from the highest point in Arkansas while camping at the Mount Magazine Cameron Bluff campground. As with past events, this will be open to all BVRC members and guests and promises to be a fun event.

Of course, our **Year End Banquet and Awards Celebration** at our ALETA meeting facility in December will again be an event not to be missed, with lots of fun, food and festivities that will make for a special night.

As wonderful as these events were and will be, we just had our biggest BVRC event of the year – **BVRC Field Day 2024!** It would be hard to top our past field day events but, I believe this year's event had all the ingredients to make it one of the best ever. Besides the effective propagation that enabled each operating station to beat last year's QSO records, we had more volunteers, more visiting guests, more temperate weather, more activities, and more laughs per minute that combined to make our 2024 field day weekend a record beater. Add in the outstanding Saturday night dinner and Sunday morning breakfast, and this year's field day had it all!

Remember, BVRC is your club to enjoy and get involved in all the activities that the club has to offer. It has been our members who have made each of our exciting events this year so successful!

73 - Jan, WB5JAN



A Ham Radio Definitions Quick Guide for Newcomers

If you're new or still relatively new to amateur radio and BVRC, you're probably reading, and hearing on the air or in BVRC member discussion circles, all kinds of terms and ham jargon that you haven't a clue as to what is being discussed.

Here is a short list of some of the main terms used by ham operators to help you in beginning to decipher "ham language".

73 - Best wishes and regards. A greeting sent by radio amateurs over the air, either by SSB (phone), CW (Morse code), or digital modes.

88 - Hugs and kisses. A greeting sent by radio amateurs over the air (to a YL or XYL).

Aerial - An antenna.

AF - Audio frequency. A term which denotes the signal only consists of frequencies which have audio frequencies, i.e., below about 20,000 cycles.

AM - Amplitude modulation. A form of modulation which varies the amplitude or intensity of the signal to enable it to carry the audio or other information.

Antenna - The apparatus usually made of wire or tubular aluminum which picks up or radiates radio signals.

Antenna Tuning Unit (ATU) - A unit placed between the antenna and transceiver. Its purpose is to provide a good impedance match between the two items and ensure the maximum amount of the signal is transferred from the transmitter to the antenna or from the antenna to the receiver.

Bandwidth - The amount frequency spectrum or width that a signal requires.

Beam (or Yagi) - An antenna which is direction and beams the power in a given direction. The most common form of beam is a Yagi. Most television antennas are Yagis.

Capacitor - Sometimes nicknamed a "cap". A component which enables AC signals to be passed through but blocks DC. They are also used in power supplies to smooth the voltage.

Communications receiver - A term normally used to describe a high quality radio receiver. Often one used for the short wave bands.

CQ - A general call from a station wanting a contact. In essence it means "I seek you", or "I am calling anyone who would like to answer me"

CW - Continuous wave. A continuous radio frequency signal. Often used to denote a Morse code transmission because it carries no audio modulation.

D layer - A layer of ionization in the ionosphere that reflects absorbs signals, especially low frequency signals.

Discone - A wide band antenna that is popular especially with scanner enthusiasts. Its name is derived from the fact one set of elements are in the shape of a disc, and the others in the shape of a cone.

DX - A long distance signal.

E layer - A layer of ionization in the ionosphere which reflects radio signals. The E-layer can come in very handy in working long distances on VHF frequencies when its characteristics are understood.

ES - "And". This abbreviation is widely used in CW transmissions

FB - Fine Business. This abbreviation really means "ok" and it is normally used in CW transmissions.

Feedline - The cable (usually coax) used for carrying radio frequency signals. It is the cable used to connect a receiver, transmitter or transceiver to the antenna.

FM - Frequency modulation. A form of modulation where the frequency of the signal is varied in line with the instantaneous voltage of the audio signal.

GA - Good afternoon. (Abbreviation used in CW)

GE - Good evening. (Abbreviation used in CW)

GM - Good morning. (Abbreviation used in CW)

Ground plane - A ground plane antenna is a vertical antenna which is mounted above the ground. It has wire or rod radial horizontal elements from the base which form the electrical plane that the signal the antenna generates is reflected from and out to the ionosphere. The radials are normally a quarter wavelength long.

Keyer - A non-manual, electronic key. These items normally have a built-in or external paddle. When one of the paddles is depressed, it generates dashes and when the other is depressed, it generates dots. This enables CW to be sent much faster than by hand using a straight key.

Linear - An amplifier used to increase the output power from a transmitter, resulting in a stronger signal. It used for AM, SSB, CW, or digital transmitters and must be linear to avoid distortion of the signal.

OM: Old man - an abbreviation denoting a male ham operator, also meaning "friend".

Packet radio - A form of data transmission used widely by radio amateurs which sends data in short bursts or "packets".

QSL card - A postcard sized card used to confirm a contact or a report of a station that has been heard. These cards can be exchanged domestic or international hams. They are also frequently sent out by short wave listener (SWL) stations to confirm a reception report.

R - Roger, OK, I acknowledge. (Used in CW and digital modes.)

Resistor - A component widely used in radios and other electronic circuits. It resists the flow of current in a circuit.

RTTY - "Ritty". Radio teletype. A form of transmission which uses teleprinters or software program to print out the data which is sent.

S Meter - A meter on a receiver or transceiver which indicates the signal strength (hence the S) of incoming signals. It is normally marked in "S" units from 1 to 9, and additional 10-100db units.

Scanner - A radio receiver often used primarily for VHF and UHF bands which can automatically scan pre-programmed channels and stop on a channel where a signal is detected.

Selectivity - The ability of a receiver to accept signals on the wanted frequency and reject nearby signals which are not wanted.

Sensitivity - The ability for a receiver to pick up weak signals.

Shack - A radio room, originally a ship's radio room, but now often used to describe a ham operators home domicile station.

Single sideband - Also abbreviated as "SSB". A mode of transmission derived from AM that removes the carrier and one sideband. It is far more effective than AM and is used for long distance communications. (Divided into LSB (Lower Sideband, and USB Upper Sideband.)

Sporadic E - A layer of intense ionization which occurs occasionally in the E-layer of the ionosphere. It enables signals to be heard from other countries when other forms of propagation are not available. This especially occurs on VHF frequencies.

SWR - Standing Wave Ratio. The measurement of a type of impedance mismatch that can cause poor transmission efficiency. Impedance mismatch may cause standing waves along the transmission line. Standing wave ratio is also known as voltage standing wave ratio (VSWR).

TKS or TNX: "Thanks". (Abbreviation used in CW and sometimes on QSL cards.)

UTC - Universal Time Coordinated (also called Coordinated Universal Time) The former term for this was GMT (Greenwich Mean Time). The time used by ham operators worldwide.

Vertical - A vertical antenna.

VFO - Variable frequency oscillator used in the frequency conversion process. Usually the largest control knob on a radio, enabling the user to tune to (change) different frequencies.

VOX - Voice operated transmit. Instead of pressing the mic button to speak (termed "Push To Talk" or PTT), with VOX when the operator speaks into the mic, the transmitter detects the audio and changes from receive to transmit electronically without having to press the mic button. ("Vox" is the Latin word for voice.)

Wavelength - The length of a radio wave normally expressed in meters.

XYL - Wife, or "Extra Young Lady".

YL - Young lady, or unmarried female operator.

BVRC GENERAL LICENSE CLASS RIGHT AROUND THE CORNER! SIGN-UP TODAY!



The Bella Vista area Radio Club General License Class is only a couple of weeks away!
Enrollment is now open!

BVRC GENERAL License Class

(If you recently passed your Technician exam and wish to upgrade, this class is for you!)

Note: You must already hold a current and valid Technician Class amateur radio license to enroll in this class.

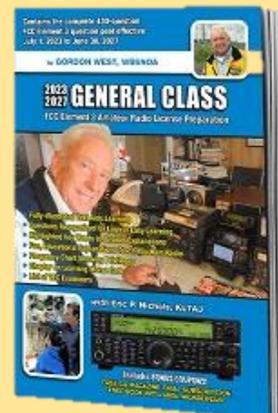
CLASS DATES: Saturday & Sunday, July 13-14 and Saturday & Sunday, July 20-21, 2024

CLASS LOCATION:

Arkansas Law Enforcement Training Academy (ALETA)
3424 S. Downum Road
Springdale, AR 72762

CLASS SCHEDULE:

4 classes on 2 weekends:
9:00am – 12:00pm Morning Session
12:00pm – 12:30pm Lunch Break
12:30pm – 3:30pm Afternoon Session



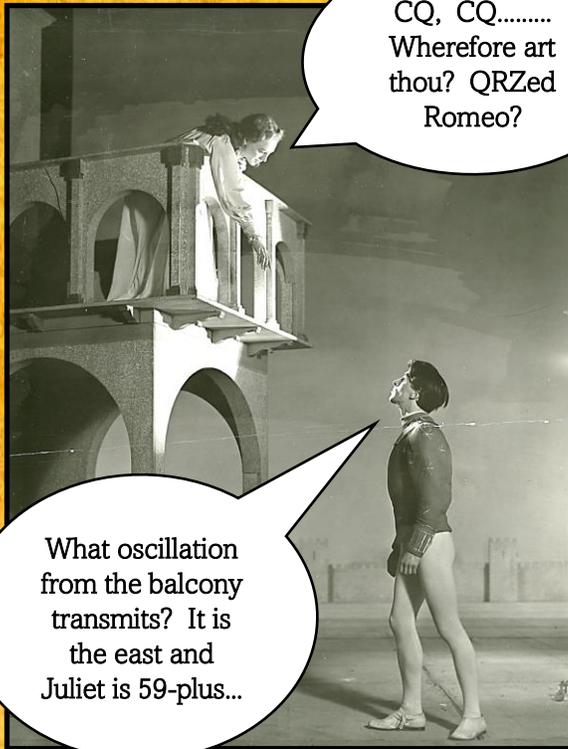
COST: The class is free, but you will need the accompanying license manual. (Normally \$32.95) You can order from: [ARRL](#), [MAIN TRADING](#), or [HAM RADIO OUTLET](#). **(Order now! You need to have your manual in hand no later than one week from the beginning of the first class.)**

TESTING: A special General exam test session will be given at the end of the July 21 class.

INSTRUCTOR: BVRC past president and BVRC webmaster Glenn Kilpatrick – WB5L

ENROLLMENT: The enrollment period of this class is now open! To complete the enrollment form, click [HERE](#) When the page opens, scroll down to view and complete the form.

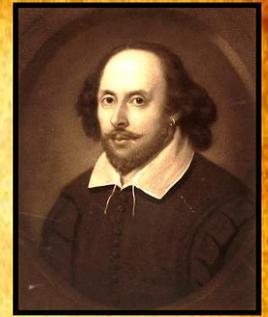
**FOR ANY QUESTIONS OR
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:
Contact Glenn – WB5L at:
wb5l@arrl.net**



CQ, CQ.....
Wherefore art
thou? QRZed
Romeo?

What oscillation
from the balcony
transmits? It is
the east and
Juliet is 59-plus...

You don't have to write like William "Bill" Shakespeare in order to write an article for The Signal. --- In fact, we prefer articles without the words "thy", "whilst", "'tis" and "oft".



Working on a new kit or homebrew project? Have you recently received a rare or interesting QSL card to share? Received a new radio award? Or, you have a cool photo (ham radio related) or some comments to share with other club members? Maybe you have acquired a new piece of equipment or constructed a new antenna! Taken a trip focused around ham radio to share an amateur radio related experience? Why not write an article for The Signal?

The article can be short or long, simple or elaborate. Please include pictures! We're always looking for material for the BVRC newsletter and feedback from our readers goes a long way toward keeping the newsletter interesting. So why not give it try? Write an article and send it to the newsletter editor, and we'll get it in there! It's fun, and at the same time your contribution helps support BVRC and our hobby! Articles can be submitted electronically or on paper, whichever way you feel most comfortable with. Send pictures, too!

As The Signal editor, I particularly look forward to putting a new issue together when I have material submitted by our club members. Hope to hear from you soon & 73! (Send it in!)

Submit your material to:

Via e-mail: arsk5db@gmail.com

Via regular mail: Don Banta, K5DB
3407 Diana St.
Springdale, AR 72764



NCVEC Releases 2024 – 2028 Amateur Extra Class Question Pool

The National Conference of Volunteer Examiner Coordinators ([NCVEC](#)) Question Pool Committee has released the 2024-2028 Amateur Extra Class question pool into the public domain. It is available as a [WORD](#) document or [PDF](#). The graphic required for the new General question pool is available within the documents, or separately as PDF or JPG files.

**The new 2024 – 2028 question pool is effective
July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2028**

ABOUT THE NEW AMATEUR EXTRA EXAM

1. Incorporates carefully checked accuracy for technical accuracy and relevancy to today's amateur radio practices, syntax, grammar, style, format, and clarity and redundancy within and between the pools.
2. As a result, 82 new questions were created, and 101 questions were eliminated, resulting in a reduction of the number of questions from 622 to 603. Over 350 questions were modified.
3. The modified questions resulted in improved wording, with distracting answers being replaced.

If you are planning to take the Amateur Extra exam in 2024, be advised if you're using the current question pool you will need to take the exam before June 30, 2024. Otherwise, if you take the exam on July 1 or after, you will have studied the current question pool but will be faced with the new questions from the new 2024-2028 pool. This could cause problems for you when taking the test. If you plan to test after July 1, you will need to study the questions in the new question pool.

**BVRC VE REPORT
FROM DON COOPER – KC7DC
BVRC VE COORDINATOR
JUNE 8, 2024**



Congratulations!

Daniel Hayes – Call pending – Farmington – New Technician!

Charles Watts – KFØQWK – Powell, MO – New Technician!

Ryan Faber – KJ5GUH – Bentonville – New Technician!

Jerry Bell – KD5UHF – Bentonville – New General!

Curt Porter – KK5HNX – Farmington – New General!

Ralph Singleton – KJ5GJJ – Prairie Grove – New Amateur Extra!

Next month's test sessions:

- July 13, 10 am – Shiloh Museum, 118 W. Johnson Ave, Springdale**
- July 13, 2 pm – Concordia Retirement Facility, 1 Concordia Drive, Bella Vista **This is for the July session ONLY.****

BVRC GROUP PARTICIPATES IN ARKANSAS QSO PARTY FOR FIRST TIME WITH NEW CONTESTING CLUB CALL W5NX

By Don - K5DB

A small group of some of BVRC's avid contest-type operators traveled to Millwood Lake near Ashdown, AR on May 18 to participate in this year's 2024 Arkansas QSO Party. This location (to my knowledge) is the only location in the state where not two, not three, but four county lines intersect. The 4 counties activated by the group were Hempstead, Howard, Little River, and Sevier.

BVRC has now activated the club's new contest and special event callsign, W5NX, for the ARRL November Sweepstakes contest and, after receiving permission from callsign trustee Jay-W5JAY, we were very excited to do the same for the 2024 Arkansas QSO Party. W5NX will also be used this coming September for a Special Event Station from the highest point in Arkansas – Mount Magazine. (More info on that operation in future issues of The Signal...join us on September 14-15!) It was also used in the recent 2024 Field Day.

The operators included two of our club officers, President Jan Hagan – WB5JAN and Secretary Dana Hill – W5DGH, along with Robert Hill – K5NZV, Vinson Carter – WV5C, and Don Banta – K5DB.

The scoring system in the Arkansas QSO Party consists of receiving points for each contact made, then multiplying those points times the number of Arkansas counties worked during the event. – The more counties you work, the much



higher score you can attain. Hence, since we were on a quad-county line and activating 4 counties at once, each QSO that stations made with us received not only 4 contacts at once, they also received 4 multipliers at once. Likewise, we were able to log 4 contacts simultaneously on our end of the QSO as well.

We used two stations – SSB and CW. The SSB station consisted of the club's Yaesu FT-991A, while the CW station ran a Yaesu FT-450D. The antennas were two Windom Off Center Fed Dipoles. The operating location was at the Millwood Lake overlook pavilion, which is surrounded by those wonderful, TALL pines of lower Arkansas. We were able to hang each antenna at around 70-80'.

The weather was ideal for the event – sunny skies and daytime temps in the upper 80s. We also got our money's worth out of the insect repellent we brought along to ward-off the kingdom of gnats and mosquitoes we invaded. We also got to see a gator!



The SSB station dipole at around 70'

Our efforts in traveling to southwest Arkansas were rewarded very well as propagation was in fair to good shape. – We made 1,596 phone QSOs and 540 on CW. We worked 44 out of 50 states, 5 Canadian provinces, and 6 DX countries. We were especially excited to be able to work some of the folks back home in NW Arkansas during the event! Most of those contacts were able to be made on 40 meters later in the day.

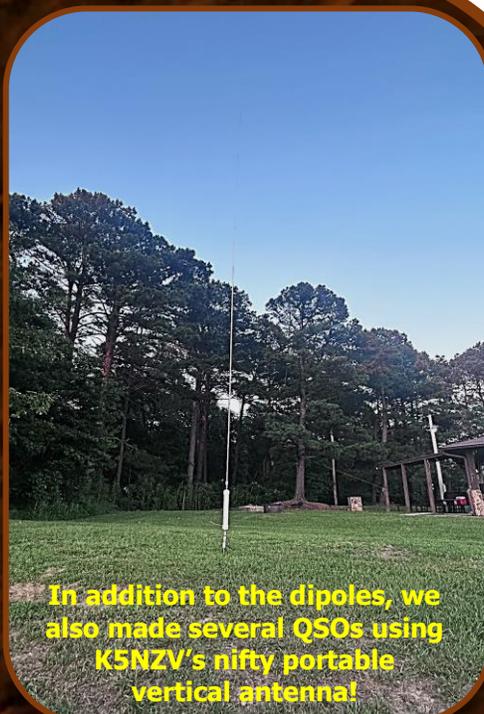
Please enjoy the photos on the following pages to view our fun and gratifying portable operation, courtesy WV5C, K5NZV, and WB5JAN.

Our portable station setup was located at the Millwood Lake Overlook pavilion. SSB station on the left, CW station on the right.





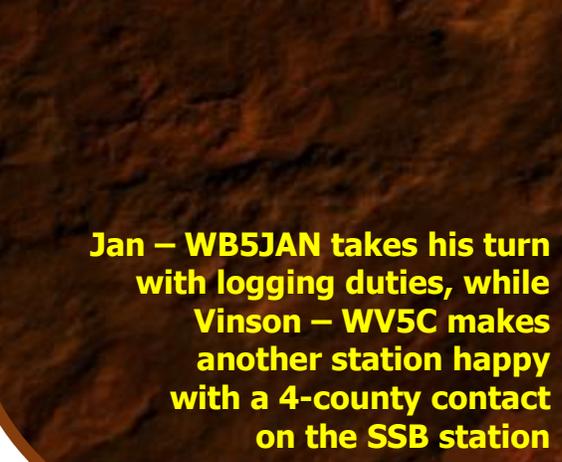
Jan -WB5JAN working a SSB QSO with Dana – W5DGH logging



In addition to the dipoles, we also made several QSOs using K5NZV's nifty portable vertical antenna!



Robert – K5NZV makes a W5NX QSO at the CW station

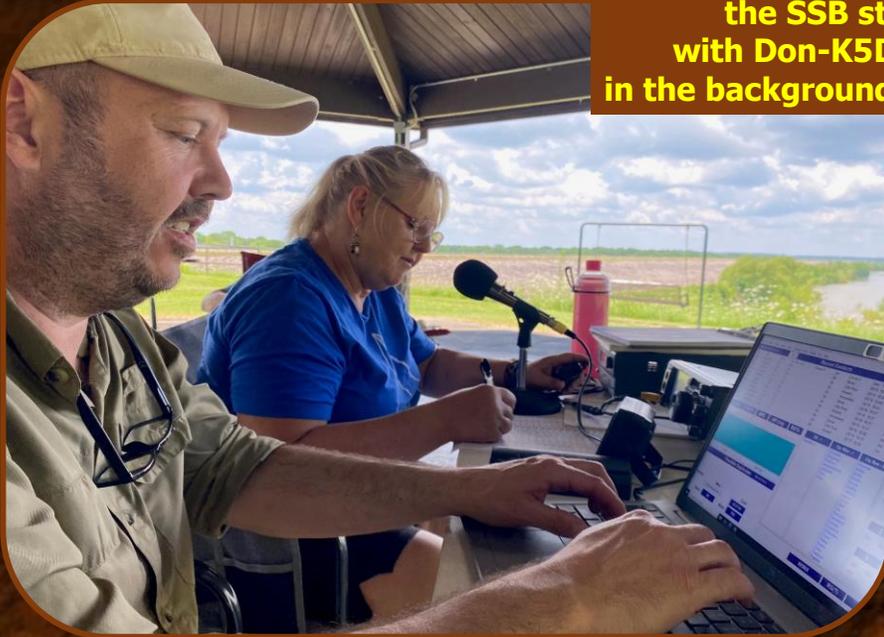


Jan – WB5JAN takes his turn with logging duties, while Vinson – WV5C makes another station happy with a 4-county contact on the SSB station





Dana and Vinson tag team on the SSB station, with Don-K5DB on CW in the background of top photo



Beautiful sunset on Millwood Lake



During the waning hours of the 2024 ARQP, Jan and Dana enjoy a breathtaking sunset while keeping pace with the pileups on SSB.



**Welcome
New BVRC
Members!**

Daniel Hayes – Call pending – Farmington

Ryan Faber – KJ5GUH – Bentonville

Charles Watts – KFØQWK – Powell, MO

Mark Hulger – Bella Vista

James Walls – Siloam Springs

Jonathan Pinto – Pea Ridge

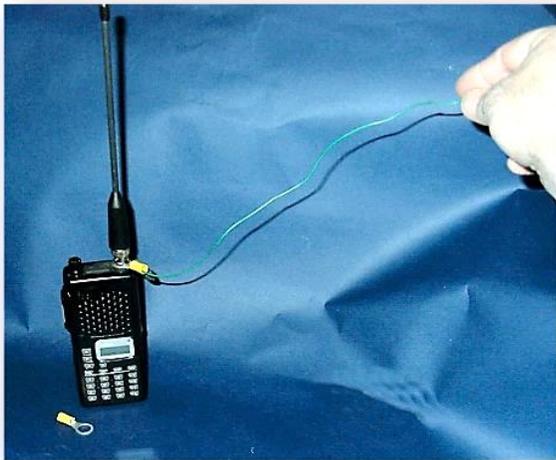
Mark Huber – Bella Vista



Double your range A COUNTERPOISE FOR YOUR HANDHELD

By John Schouten - VE7TI

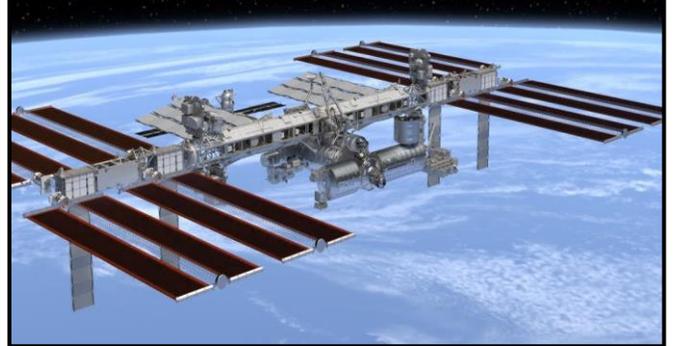
The counterpoise (sometimes referred to as a 'Tiger-Tail') is typically used in antenna systems for radio transmitters where a good earth-ground connection cannot be constructed. In this application, it is simply a 19-inch length of common wire attached to the ground of your hand-held transceiver antenna terminal.



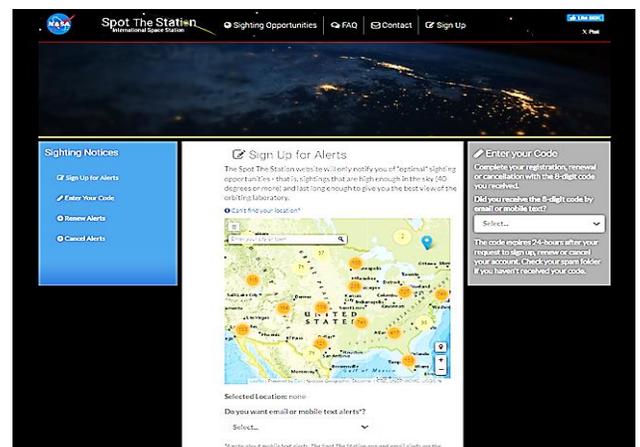
In the above photo, it is attached to a ring terminal with sufficient diameter to fit under the antenna. Alternatively, it can also be stripped of insulation and simply be wrapped around the antenna base, as long as it makes a good electrical contact.

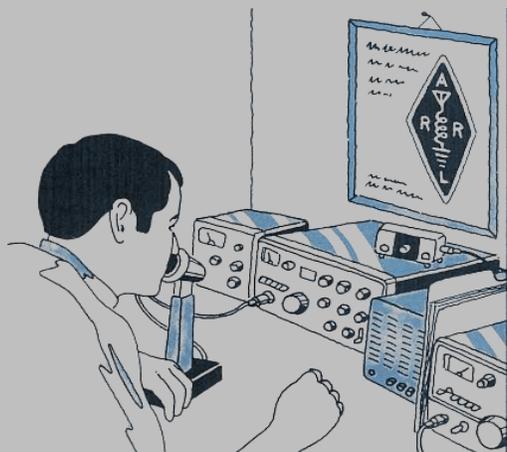
It is very effective in extending the range of a handheld transceiver in that it provides the 'missing' half of the dipole antenna for 2m or 70cm operation. In order to keep antennas short and manageable, radio manufacturers coil the antenna wire into a rubber covered spring—half the antenna. The transceiver body is the other half but is not very effective from an RF perspective. Those little rubber antennas can have a very high SWR, power reflected back to your radio rather than radiating out. The counterpoise left hanging straight down beside the radio on receive and transmit provides a much more efficient solution. Try it with a weak station. – You WILL notice the difference.

Spot the International Space Station



For those interested in an email notification of when the ISS will be visible you can go to NASA's website using this link: <https://spotthestation.nasa.gov/signup.cfm> Just pick a "blue pointer" that is closest to your location instructions. This service will only notify you of "good" sighting opportunities - that is, sightings that are high enough in the sky (40 degrees or more) and last long enough to give you the best view of the orbiting laboratory.





CONTESTING TIPS

If you operated in the BVRC 2024 Field Day just concluded, you are now warmed-up for the major amateur radio contest season that will be starting-up in just a few months in October. If you enjoy contesting, then be pro-active with the 24 tips below so that you'll be fully prepared when the events you are planning to participate in roll around!

- 1. SCHEDULE YOUR CONTESTS** – The really great thing about contesting is they are regularly scheduled.
- 2. CREATE A CONTEST GOAL** – Goals are good and help motivate you while participating.
- 3. CONTEST ON YOUR TERMS** – Contest for and be motivated by your reasons. Not everyone is out to win the contest; it could be you want to learn a new mode, work toward an award, etc.
- 4. HAVE AN OPERATING PLAN** – Having a plan provides you guidance for the contest and a baseline to compare against reality in the midst of battle.
- 5. TEST EQUIPMENT BEFORE THE CONTEST** – You do want your equipment to work, right? Make sure your station is in good working order. The last thing you want is a component failing right in the middle of an event that you've been planning for months to participate in.
- 6. UPDATE MULTIPLIER FILES** – Downloading the latest software version of the contest you'll be participating in ensures you won't miss a juicy multiplier during the contest.
- 7. STUDY THE CONTEST RULES!** – You'd be surprised how often this bites operators – even experienced testers. They get points deducted or possibly even their entire log entry dismissed because they failed to know the contest rules.
- 8. WORK A CONTEST ONE MONTH BEFORE THE *REAL* CONTEST** – The sun rotates once a month (27 days)...so work a contest the month before to experience the propagation you will have before the one you really want to concentrate on later.
- 9. TEST ERGONOMICS** – Sitting in a chair while contest operating a long while will test how well your station is laid out for operating.

10. **COMPETE WITH A PARTNER** – Work a contest with someone in your club (together or at your individual stations). Discuss what worked and what didn't about the contest.
11. **REVIEW PERIODICALS FOR CONTEST DXPEDITIONS** – Lots of people travel for contests. Make sure you take a look at the list from your favorite ham radio publication(s).
12. **HAVE A PROPAGATION PLAN** – Propagation software programs can suggest what bands will be open when and where. Having a propagation plan can provide you with a guide while contesting.
13. **ULTRA-IMPORTANT: ACCURATE LOGGING** - A contest is about working stations *and logging them accurately*. If you don't, you get penalized.
14. **SEND IN YOUR LOG** – Even if you didn't work many stations, you can help the contest by sending in your log to help enable log checking. And, you never know...you might still win an award!
15. **LotW (Logbook of the World)** – Want to reduce your QSL'ing chores for contests? Submit your log to Logbook of The World for instant confirmations for you, and the people you contact who also use LotW.
16. **REVIEW ANY "UBN's" (UNIQUE CALLSIGNS, BUSTED CONTACTS, & NOT IN THE LOG)** – It's how your log is viewed for accuracy.
17. **HAVE A QSL SYSTEM** – Even if you use Logbook of the World, contesters get a lot of QSL card requests. Have a system for processing them.
18. **USE A GREY LINE MAP** – Grey line propagation is the cat's meow. Having a visual representation of where the grey line is right now can help you point your antennas the right way.
19. **LEARN A SINGLE BAND** – Want to learn propagation on a band fast? Participate in a contest on a single band. You'll learn.
20. **PERFORM A POST-CONTEST REVIEW** – Did you achieve your goal, what went right, what could be improved. Record the results for the next contest.
21. **IF POSSIBLE, JOIN A CONTEST CLUB** – Amp-up your contesting knowledge and motivation.
22. **LEARN FROM CONTESTING PRO'S** – They are out there. They can teach you a lot.
23. **LEVERAGE YOUR STRENGTHS** – Great CW, SSB, or PSK operator? Great antennas? Whatever your strength, leverage it for the contest.
24. **FIND JOY IN CONTESTING** – It's there. You know it. Go find it.

How to Get DXCC and other QSO Confirmations

BY DON – K5DB

This is a lengthy article, but for those who have made, or may make, working DX countries, states, and/or grid squares a personal passion and enjoyment, it should provide you with a good start in the area of awards confirmations.



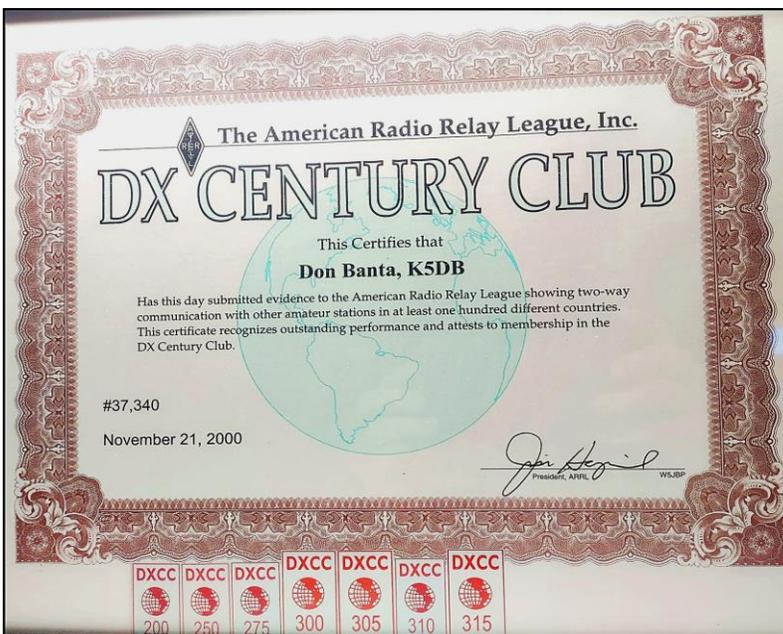
For decades, thousands of radio amateurs worldwide have pursued the ARRL DX Century Club award and its endorsements. Club wise, BVRC has many new General and Amateur Extra class licensees who have joined the ranks in “chasing” and acquiring this most prestigious award in amateur radio.

To obtain the award you must not only work, **but confirm** each QSO (contact) that you wish to submit to ARRL for either a new DXCC entity, endorsement, or DXCC Challenge points. This is also true for any of the other ARRL awards: Worked All States, Worked All Continents, 5-Band Worked All States, 5-Band Worked All Continents, and VUCC (VHF/UHF Century Club). For your first DXCC award, you will have to work and confirm 100 DXCC entities (countries), hence the name “DX Century Club”.

You’ll need to prepare yourself for a nominal amount of bookkeeping you’ll have to perform in keeping-up with your DXCC record, but that’s part of the fun with being involved in DXCC pursuit!

Now, 100 countries may sound like a lot, but it’s not. Many of our club newcomers have already acquired DXCC or are getting close to it.

When you do acquire your first DXCC award, it will look like this:



Afterward, you can if you wish (as MANY of us have), make a lifelong pursuit in adding to, and improving, your DXCC record – which is permanently kept in the ARRL DXCC database – by acquiring additional endorsement stickers to your award for working and confirming additional entities from the DXCC list. You then affix these endorsement award stickers to your original award.

The endorsement stickers are issued as additional DXCC credits. For the Mixed, Phone, CW, Digital, 40, 30, 20, 17, 15, 12 and 10-Meter DXCC award, the stickers are provided in exact multiples of 50 (i.e., 100,

150, 200, 250) between 100 and 250 DXCC credits. Then in multiples of 25 between 250 and 300, and in multiples of 5 above 300 DXCC credits.

The endorsement stickers for the other bands (160, 80, 6, 2, etc.) are issued in a different format. See the full information on endorsement stickers in the DXCC section of the ARRL website.)

The endorsement stickers look like this:



For the full information on the DXCC award rules, endorsements, entities list criteria, and other information, click [here](#).

For the list of the current 340 DXCC entities, click [here](#).

I have provided just a small bit of information on the basic workings of the award, which brings us up to the topic of this article – *QSO CONFIRMATIONS*.

To acquire any of the DXCC awards for band(s), mode(s), Five-Band DXCC and Five-Band Worked All States (and medallions that are awarded for acquiring DXCC on additional bands), etc., and as we have stated before, you must not only work the entities you are needing, **YOU MUST CONFIRM THEM.**

Confirming DXCC entities can become challenging and tedious at times but again this, along with those bookkeeping duties, it is part of the fun in participating in the DXCC program and chasing those DX entities, especially (of course) the rare ones.

So – You have worked an entity that you need and you know that they are in your log and you are in theirs. Now, what do you do to get this QSO (and many others you will have as well) confirmed so that you can submit it to ARRL for award verification and credit?

There are two types of QSO confirmations: Electronic and QSL card.

STEPS IN ACQUIRING ELECTRONIC CONFIRMATIONS –

- The first step in making yourself available to obtain electronic confirmations is to open an account in ARRL's Logbook of the World (LotW). You can view the information on how to do this [here](#). If the information seems confusing for you, you can contact any of our club members who are DXCC oriented and they will be happy to assist you. (There is a lot of information on LotW, but it's actually pretty easy to open an account and get started. Just read through the instructions and you should be good-to-go.)
- While you are working on getting your LotW account opened, you will also need to choose a computer logging software program to use (one that generates what is called an "ADIF" file) if you have not done so as yet. Some of the more popular programs are:

- **HAM RADIO DELUXE** (<https://www.hamradiodeluxe.com/features/logbook/>) – This is an excellent logging program with many features, however there is a \$99.95 fee for the initial sign-up and download, plus a \$49.95 annual renewal fee. It is, however, jam-packed with many outstanding features that can be valuable to the DXer.
- **N3FJP AMATEUR CONTACT LOG** (<https://www.n3fjp.com/>) – ACL can be obtained for a one-time/lifetime fee of \$39.95. It also contains many, many features that Scott Davis-N3FJP developed in 1997 and is still going strong. Scott and his son continue to make refinements and upgrades (all upgrades are free for life). If you also want to purchase Scott's contest logging package, which covers ALL the major ARRL and CQ contests, state QSO parties, etc., you can purchase Amateur Contact Log plus the contests package for an additional \$20, making your total purchase \$59.95, also a one-time/lifetime fee.
- **DX LAB SUITE** (<https://dxlabsuite.com/>) – This software has been around for over 15 years and is constantly being refined and improved. DXLAB is a suite of 8 different interoperating programs that you can install on your computer in any order. When you have multiple applications running, each senses the other's presence and automatically interoperate to support your DXing activities. This suite is quite remarkable. It has just about every feature imaginable to help your DXing be exciting and bookkeeping easy and accurate. *The best part about DX LAB is..... IT'S FREE.*

(As with getting setup for LotW, if you need any help with the logging programs, just let one of our club DX enthusiasts know and we will be happy to assist you.)

- After installing and getting used to using whichever software logging program you have chosen and after getting your LotW account setup, you are now ready to start “talking” to Logbook of the World and also have it “talk back” to you, meaning that you will begin to upload and download your log information. This will enable you to keep track of your progress toward whichever DXCC award or endorsement interests you and confirm your QSOs electronically. (LotW will also track your progress for Worked-All-States and VUCC awards as well. You can use the database to keep up with these other awards for you in the settings of your LotW account.)

UPLOADING QSOs TO Logbook of the World:

The first thing you need to do is create a folder on your hard drive for transferring your logbook

- There are two ways to upload your new QSOs to LotW:
 - o Use the LotW website using the “Your Account” and “Upload Files” tabs (this is where that ADIF file comes in), or
 - o Upload to LotW directly from your logging program

You will probably conclude (as most of us who pursue DX and other awards) uploading directly from your logging program is the easiest and quickest method. This is not hard and only take a few mouse clicks.

- First, find the tab in your logging program for LotW. This will either be under a “Logs” or “eLogs” tab, or may be in a drop-down menu. (See illustration, next page.)

Search	Awards	eLogs	Recall	Net	View
		Club Log	Recent		
Time		eQSL	cy	Mo	
2024	23:00	LoTW	68	SS	
2024	22:16	QRZ Logbook		CV	
2024	22:12	ZU		SS	

- After finding this option, it is simply a matter of clicking it and following the prompts from that point.
- After uploading your new QSOs, in very basic terms this is how you obtain an electronic confirmation on Logbook of the World: Whenever you upload your QSO (or QSOs) to LotW and the station(s) you worked also uploads their QSO with you, LotW will match the QSO(s) and you will receive instant confirmation for that QSO. This electronic confirmation in LotW is called a “QSL”, but it is NOT referring to a QSL card. We will discuss QSL card confirmations in just a moment. (The ham term “QSL” actually means “an acknowledgement”, so in using LotW this translates into an *electronic* acknowledgement.) You can check your confirmed and unconfirmed QSOs in your LotW account:

If the station's entity (country) does not appear here, these are non-confirmed QSOs only. They are still awaiting confirmation from the other station.

K5DB - UNITED STATES OF AMERICA							
Prev	Call sign	Worked	Date/Time	Band	Mode	Freq	QSL
Details	K5DB	JS6SCO	2024-04-24 10:11:30	20M	FT8	14.07516	
Details	K5DB	YB2MBO	2024-04-24 10:10:15	20M	FT8	14.07516	
Details	K5DB	JH4PNG	2024-04-24 10:08:45	20M	FT8	14.07516	JAPAN
Details	K5DB	JA0HXV	2024-04-24 10:07:15	20M	FT8	14.07516	JAPAN
Details	K5DB	C21TS	2024-04-24 09:56:30	40M	FT8	7.07502	NAURU
Details	K5DB	R3MBV	2024-04-24 03:55:30	17M	FT8	18.10112	EUROPEAN RUSSIA
Details	K5DB	UN6T	2024-04-24 03:54:15	17M	FT8	18.10112	KAZAKHSTAN
Details	K5DB	JH8WGT	2024-04-24 03:53:30	17M	FT8	18.10112	JAPAN
Details	K5DB	VE6KZ	2024-04-24 03:52:45	17M	FT8	18.10112	CANADA
Details	K5DB	K6DDS	2024-04-24 03:50:45	17M	FT8	18.10112	UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
Details	K5DB	RC0AT	2024-04-24 03:50:00	17M	FT8	18.10112	ASIATIC RUSSIA
Details	K5DB	RK3DSW	2024-04-24 03:49:47	17M	FT8	18.10112	
Details	K5DB	AG7OO	2024-04-24 03:48:30	17M	FT8	18.10112	

By clicking “Details”, this will give you the details of that particular QSO (which is what you uploaded to LotW from your log, and showing when the QSO was QSL'd (confirmed by LotW).

If the station's entity appears here, this means that the other station has uploaded their end of the QSO and this is a QSL (confirmation).



- As is illustrated on the previous page, you can access your Logbook of the World account and view your QSOs (unconfirmed contacts in which you have uploaded your QSO information to LotW, but the other station has not as yet) and your QSLs (a confirmed contact in which both you and the other station have uploaded the QSO information and it has been confirmed by LotW). After viewing your QSOs and QSLs you will want to download them to your logbook, so that you will match LotW's records. (It's always good to have your log match LotW.)
- Electronic confirmations are by far the most economical way to obtain a QSO confirmation in that LotW is free to use for that purpose. Remember, however, when you get ready to apply for and be credited with and awarded a DXCC award or endorsement, you will then have to pay the appropriate award fee(s). Also remember you **MUST** be an ARRL member to apply for and receive DXCC awards and endorsements (and other ARRL operating awards).
- Most electronic confirmations remove the burden of having to snail mail a QSL card and SAE (Self Addressed Envelope) to the DX station which currently costs \$1.60 for an air mail (USPS 'Forever Global') stamp, plus having to usually enclose \$3-5 USD for return postage. You're also running the risk of some of the crooked international post offices in some countries illegally opening your envelope, stealing the money you've enclosed and trashing the QSL card (they know what a "ham radio envelope" looks like).
- Notice the first word in the preceding paragraph was "most". – Not all stations you work will freely upload their half of the QSO you had with them to LotW. Some of them will require you to submit a fee to confirm your QSO with them, most of these type stations being DXpeditions. The reason for the fee is to cover the postage expenses for the DXpedition. (The overall cost with some major DXpeditions runs upwards toward \$750,000.) Do not be disheartened at this, because in the "old days" the only way to get a confirmation was to exchange hard copy QSL cards in which you had *to pay the postage both ways* and also include a self-addressed envelope (the international post offices weren't as theft-minded back then, but that has drastically changed over the decades). In other words, if a particular station you work requires a payment of some kind to confirm your QSO with them, or they are NOT a Logbook of the World user (some still are not), you'll have to pay to get the confirmation if you want it...it's just the 'nature of the beast'.
- If you choose to pay for the confirmation, the easiest way to see which payment method the station wishes is to go to their QRZ.com page and look in the remarks section or on their "Details" tab. Normally, they will tell you how to request and submit payment for QSO confirmation. (DXpeditions sometimes also have their own websites with this information.) The most popular method in submitting payment for a QSL request is through a system known as the OQRS (Online QSL Request Service), which can be found on the ClubLog website: <https://clublog.org/loginform.php>. You will need to open an account there:

The screenshot shows the ClubLog website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Settings, Upload (circled in green), OQRS, Donate, Expeditions, and Livestreams. On the left side, there is a sidebar menu with links for Your Log, DXCC Charts, Satellite Charts, Timelines, Grid Squares, QSL Charts, Zone Charts, Log Inspector, and Log Matching. The main content area is titled "Login To Club Log" and contains a "Login Form" with fields for "Email or callsign:" and "Password:". Below these fields are "Login" and "Register new account" buttons. The "Register new account" button is circled in red, and a red arrow points to it from the right. Below the login form is a red-bordered box with the text: "If you have registered a Club Log account but cannot remember your password, please click here to reset your password."

ClubLog is a great website and tool to help you with your DX pursuits. Not only can you use it to pay fees for electronic confirmations if required by the station you are needing to confirm, but it also has many other features to help you with your DX bookkeeping.

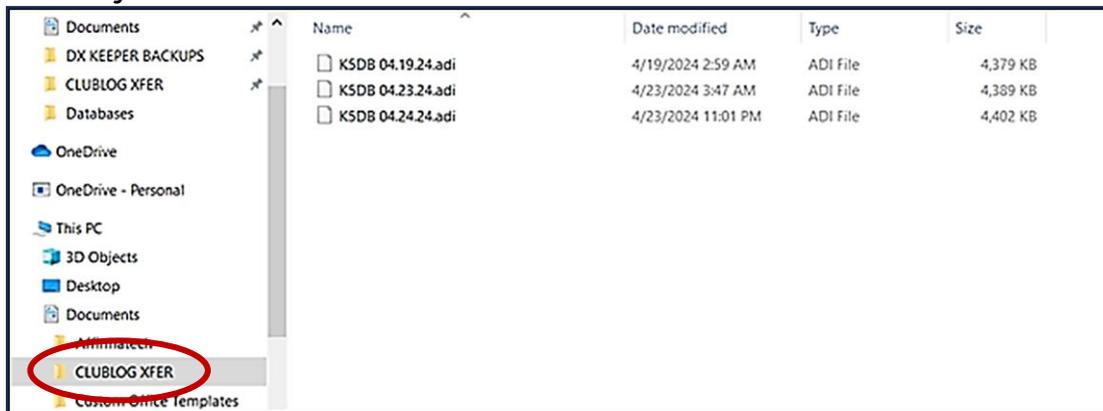
After you get your account opened, a good “housekeeping” practice is to – in addition to uploading your new QSOs to Logbook of the World – *also upload those new QSOs to Club Log*. This isn’t hard at all and takes only a few mouse clicks.

You can either manually upload your QSOs, or you can upload them directly from your logging program, the same as LotW (most good logging programs have this feature). If you wish to upload from your logging program, find the tab for Club Log, click it, and follow the prompts from that point.

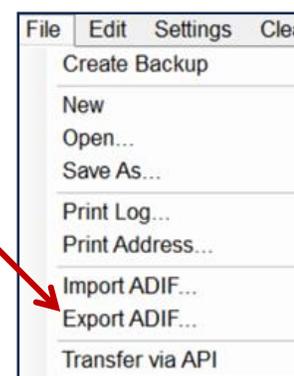


I personally prefer to upload my QSOs to Club Log manually, the reason being with my PC, it's much faster than uploading them from the logging program. If you end-up with that same preference, here's how you do it.....it's easy (but use whichever method is the best for you):

The first thing you need to do is create a folder on your hard drive for transferring your logbook information to Club Log. I named my folder “CLUBLOG XFER” (meaning Club Log Transfer) and placed it under “My Documents”.



You then go to your logging program and create a file called an ADIF file, by finding the “Export File” option in your logging software. The option will either be a tab or drop-down menu choice.



Click this option and follow the prompts in which you will choose where to put the file and the name you want to give it (I use my callsign and the date I am exporting the file to my transfer folder as shown above).

After exporting the file to the transfer folder, I then go to the Club Log website and login to my account. I click the “Upload” tab at the top of the Club Log home page (see green circle in the illustration at the bottom of page 27) and follow the prompts to upload my QSOs to Club Log.

NOW – You might be asking “I can understand uploading my log to Logbook of the World, but why duplicate this effort by having to also upload it to Club Log? What does Club Log have to do with anything?”

Because this is going to save you a LOT of time and trouble should you decide to pay for a QSO confirmation. Keep reading.....

GETTING AN ELECTRONIC CONFIRMATION THROUGH CLUB LOG:

So now, you’re ready to pay the fee the station you’re needing is asking for in order to get a confirmation from them:

- Login to your account in Club Log.
- To find the callsign of the station you’re needing confirmation from, you can either:
- Click the “Expeditions” tab at the top of the page which will list all the recent major DXpeditions. You should find your station there, and click it.

CLUBLOG Home About Most Wanted **Expeditions** Livestreams

DXpedition Logs Hosted on Club Log

- To request this service for your next expedition, use this form.
- If you are a registered Club Log user, you can search all recent logs simultaneously.

📍 Callsigns with a duration of more than 6 months are moved to the Special Callsigns page.

Latest/Current Expeditions

Callsign	Location	Days	First	Last	QSOs	Uniques	Dupes	OQRS	Live	Donate
3G0YA	EASTER ISLAND	15	2024-04-18	2024-05-03	122,775	30,624	7.7%	🛒	🔗	Donate
TX7W	AUSTRAL ISLANDS	14	2024-04-16	2024-04-30	60,591	17,228	12.2%	🛒	🔗	Donate
KH0/JA6REX	MARIANA ISLANDS	40	2024-03-21	2024-04-30	4,113	2,353	4.5%		🔗	Donate
A8OK	LIBERIA	13	2024-04-05	2024-04-18	122,379	22,420	5.0%	🛒	🔗	Donate
VP6G	PITCAIRN ISLAND	8	2024-04-05	2024-04-13	16,250	7,421	4.3%			
YJ0VK	VANUATU	14	2024-03-28	2024-04-11	23,739	9,530	8.2%			
TX5XG	AUSTRAL ISLANDS	6	2024-03-28	2024-04-03	5,946	3,025	4.7%	🛒	🔗	
7P8EI	LESOTHO	8	2024-03-21	2024-03-29	58,564	16,608	12.1%			
TY5C	BENIN	26	2024-03-03	2024-03-29	45,933	13,090	24.9%		🔗	
T32EU	EASTERN KIRIBATI	13	2024-03-13	2024-03-26	40,284	13,981	4.3%	🛒		Donate
J38R	GRENADA	13	2024-03-04	2024-03-17	92,693	21,703	4.3%			

- Or, you can manually search for the station’s callsign using the “Log Search” tab on Club Log’s home page. This feature (shown on the following page) is really handy if you’re looking for a station that was a solo operator or a small team and not a major DXpedition station:

3G0YA	170	115,665
CT3MD *	150	4,104
TX7W	149	49,223
3D2CCC	143	43,854
OJ0T	142	20,412
SZ0WARD	140	17,530
CS7AUT	137	1,735
SP9APA	137	1,384
SP5LST	133	4,940
US2YW	133	4,219

Logs must agree closely with Club Log matches to be included in this table

Your last login: 2024-04-23 08:47:10Z — United States (See Settings > Access Log)

So, we have now found the station we're looking and wish to request a QSL (confirmation) from them. Let's say I want to receive a confirmation from an Easter Island station I worked on several bands and modes, 3GØYA. I click the callsign or fill the call in the search box if I am using the Log Search option, and am taken to the below page. I then click "Find QSOs":

CLUBLOG | Home | About | Most Wanted | Expeditions | Livestreams

3G0YA Donate

Dear Visitor,

3G0YA is active between 18-Apr-2024 and 06-May-2024.
 More information on: <https://www.qrz.com/db/3G0YA>.
 For any message, please send an E-Mail to 3g0ya@gmx.de.

73 from the 3G0YA Team (DL6FBL, DK9IP, DM6EE)

Beam heading: 195° SR/SS: 13:43Z / 00:46Z Last QSO in database: 2024-05-03 19:48:00

Map | Statistics | Leaderboards | Spots | **Geo Propagation** | Soapbox

This screen then appears, showing what band and modes I am in 3GØYA's log for. This also confirms to me that I am – *without a doubt* – in their log. I then click "Request QSL":

K5DB has worked 3G0YA on 7 out of 28 band slots

Propagation from **UNITED STATES OF AMERICA (Z4) / USA W5 / STATE:AR / ZONE: 4 / Geo Propagation Map**

Leaderboard for zone **4 / UNITED STATES OF AMERICA (Z4) / NA** or in Club: **ADXA - Arkansas DX Association**

	6m	10m	12m	15m	17m	20m	30m	40m	60m	80m	160m
CW	NEW	✓	NEW	NEW	NEW				NEW	NEW	NEW
FT8	NEW	✓	✓	NEW		✓	✓	✓	NEW	NEW	NEW
SSB		NEW	NEW		✓	NEW		NEW			

The next screen shows **why I uploaded my log to Club Log**. – When you reach this screen, you will see that Club Log has read your log, and all the data fields have already been completed for the QSOs on the bands and modes that you contacted the station. – You do not have to manually enter each QSO's date and time; they're already done for you. And again, it also confirms to you that you are definitely in their log (like you, they also uploaded their log to Club Log):

Every DIRECT 10 QSOs cost €5.00 to QSL
 NO Buro cards offered
 Contact: 3g0ya@gmx.de directly for any QSL enquiries.

 Empty QSL Card

New	Band	Mode	Year	Month	Day	HH	MM	LoTW	QSL options
	40	FT8	2024	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>		
	30	FT8	2024	04	23	07	49		<input type="button" value="+Direct"/>
	20	FT8	2024	04	23	07	31		<input type="button" value="+Direct"/>
	17	SSB	2024	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>		
	12	FT8	2024	04	23	22	03		<input type="button" value="+Direct"/>
	10	FT8	2024	04	23	18	52		<input type="button" value="+Direct"/>
	10	CW	2024	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>		

I would then select the band and mode contacts that I want to confirm with them by clicking the blue “+Direct” tabs, and follow the prompts from that point to send the payment to them.

NOTE: This is where paying for electronic confirmations is *VERY* advantageous. Not only is the confirmation electronic, so is the payment. Your payment cannot be stolen as in the case of sending dollar bills via snail mail in an S.A.S.E to the operator of the entity you're needing.

Also notice at the top it says, “Every direct 10 QSOs cost €5.00 (5 Euros which is about \$5.35 in US dollars) to QSL”. So, here's another big advantage of confirming electronically – whether you choose 1 confirmation or up to 10 confirmations, the cost is the same. (I usually check them all whether I need them or not.....after all, I worked them and I'm paying for it!) The DX station will then confirm you in LotW (provided you have already uploaded your log to LotW). The cost of electronic confirmations varies slightly with each station.

Very important to remember: After sending your payment, ***be patient*** with these DX stations. They receive thousands of requests to process. They may confirm you fairly quickly, or in a few days, or it may take several weeks or even months sometimes. Just keep watching your account in LotW (as shown at the bottom of page 26) to see when you've been confirmed.

Additionally, some stations use *independent* OQRS's (Online QSL Request Service). These services have their own website and you simply go there (you do not have to have an account) and complete their form much like Club Log's OQRS.

GETTING CONFIRMATIONS WITH QSL CARDS:

We now come to our final topic, which is the second method in getting QSO confirmations – QSL cards. This method is slower and the “old fashioned” way to get confirmations, but many stations still use QSL cards and do NOT use the electronic method. Sooner or later, you're going to have to deal with this method – whether you like it or not – to get a confirmation. But hey! – You're going to end up with some great memorabilia and great conversation pieces with QSL cards.

Using QSL cards is very simple. Here's how you do it:

- First, you need to have your own personal QSL cards printed. – You can download templates for creating your own off the internet and print them on your own printer, or you can have custom cards printed by a commercial QSL card printer. Just go to your browser and enter “QSL card printer”, which should return you many results, then place an order with the commercial printer of your choice.
- You then will exchange these hard copy QSL cards with the station(s) you're needing confirmation from either by:
 - **DIRECT** – Mailing your QSL card along with a Self-Addressed Envelope (SAE) and whatever amount of \$1 bills you need to include for return postage. (*You can't send a foreign amateur US stamps for return postage. Their country will not accept US stamps. They can however exchange US currency for their own currency.*) The person you're sending your card to will usually state on their QRZ.com page how much money you need to include with your card. Why the return postage? Because they do not need your confirmation, you need theirs. Remember again, you are risking the possibility of your money being stolen and your card never reaching them. The decision to use this method or not is yours, of course.
 - **QSL BUREAU** – A safer way to exchange QSL cards is by using the QSL bureau (DX operators usually spell it, “buro”). There are two bureaus – the outgoing bureau and the incoming bureau.
 - **OUTGOING QSL BUREAU** – The actual name of this is the ARRL Outgoing QSL Service. ***You must be an ARRL member to use this service.*** You can send up to 10 cards to ARRL and enclose a check for \$2.00. The ARRL will then send your cards in a bulk mailing container, along with hundreds of other ham's cards, to the bureaus of the countries you're sending them to. (Whichever country your card goes to is determined by the callsign prefix of the station you're sending the card to.) *This will only cost you 20¢ per card*, as opposed to \$16.50 (air mail stamps are currently \$1.60 each) for ten cards, plus enclosing return postage for each, by sending them direct! That's all you need to do. Here is the form to use when sending cards through the outgoing bureau:

<https://www.arrl.org/files/file/QSL/QSL%20Bureau%20Submission%20Form%20-%202019-05-15-RevA.pdf>

To fully understand the outgoing QSL bureau and how it works, go here:

<https://www.arrl.org/outgoing-qsl-service>

An important item to remember about the outgoing QSL service. – There are a few countries who do NOT have an incoming QSL bureau. Consequently, the ARRL cannot forward your card to those countries. So, make sure the countries you're sending your QSL cards through the bureau are on the served countries list. Both the “served” and “not served” countries lists can be found by using the above link.

- **INCOMING QSL BUREAU** – This would obviously be the reverse process, right? You use the incoming QSL bureau not to *send* QSL cards, but to *receive* them. Each U.S. call district has its own incoming bureau. Ours is the W5 INCOMING QSL BUREAU. To use the incoming bureau, you need to have self-addressed-stamped-envelopes (SASE) on file with them. The SASEs cost \$1.00 each. (I usually order mine in quantities of 5.) Each envelope will have your address on it with one unit of postage, which will usually accommodate 8-10 cards at a time. To get your SASEs on file with the bureau, simply go to their website and order them:

<http://www.w5incomingbureau.net/>

If DX stations you have worked receive your card through *their* bureau that the ARRL Outgoing QSL Service sent to them, they'll probably return QSL by *sending their card to you* through this incoming bureau (or vice versa). After the bureau receives around 8-10 cards for you, they will send you those cards using one of the SASEs you have purchased and have on file with them.

You never know when you'll receive an envelope from them because it is impossible to determine when 8 or so cards will collect there and when they will send the batch of your cards to you. It's always exciting to pull an envelope from them out of your mailbox, because you never know what cards and which countries are in there.

The drawback to using the bureaus is – the process is slow. Sometimes you may receive cards for QSOs that you had with another station 2-5 years ago or more. Again, that's the 'nature of the beast'. Incoming QSL bureaus have their own card sorters and you will have your own personal sorter. All the sorters are fellow hams and they do this totally as volunteers.

And also, let me emphasize: Do not let all this information put your head in a spin. – After you perform the steps we've described to acquire a confirmation several times – whether it be by electronic means or QSL cards – you'll get used to the procedure of these methods, they will not be difficult at all, and you'll go through the steps with ease.

In closing, I have one last item to address. That item is for those who might ask:

“What's the big deal about the ARRL and Logbook of the World? I see QRZ.com also has many DX and other awards, as well as e-QSL. And, it also seems like it's a lot easier to sign-up to receive those awards and participate in their award programs...what about those ?”

Well, here's where I'm going to editorialize a little. – In my opinion these are “copycat” award programs. They are copying the 'granddaddy of them all' – the ARRL DX Century Club (along with Worked-All-States, etc).

The ARRL was the first to construct and implement the DXCC award in 1945, as well as the Worked-All-States, Worked-All-Continents, and several other awards. Personally, I choose to pursue the original award(s). Also – and this is what makes the DXCC award all the more intriguing for me – the ARRL is ULTRA-STRICT in the security of DXCC award and Logbook of the World record keeping and accreditation.

There are no loopholes for “cheaters” to try and manipulate the system, attempting to acquire credits they have actually NOT earned – it ain't gonna happen. If you get a country confirmed for DXCC, there is NO DOUBT YOU HAVE *HONESTLY* EARNED THAT CONFIRMATION. That is the reason for it being a little challenging in going through the procedure they have setup when you first open your account and begin using LotW. – It keeps EVERYBODY honest.

However, if the awards in QRZ.com and e-QSL appeal to you, go for it. It's your choice, of course.

Happy DXing, Worked All States hunting or whatever is to your liking but above all, best wishes in getting those QSOs confirmed.



THE DXCC DEN



By Don – K5DB

This month's featured country:

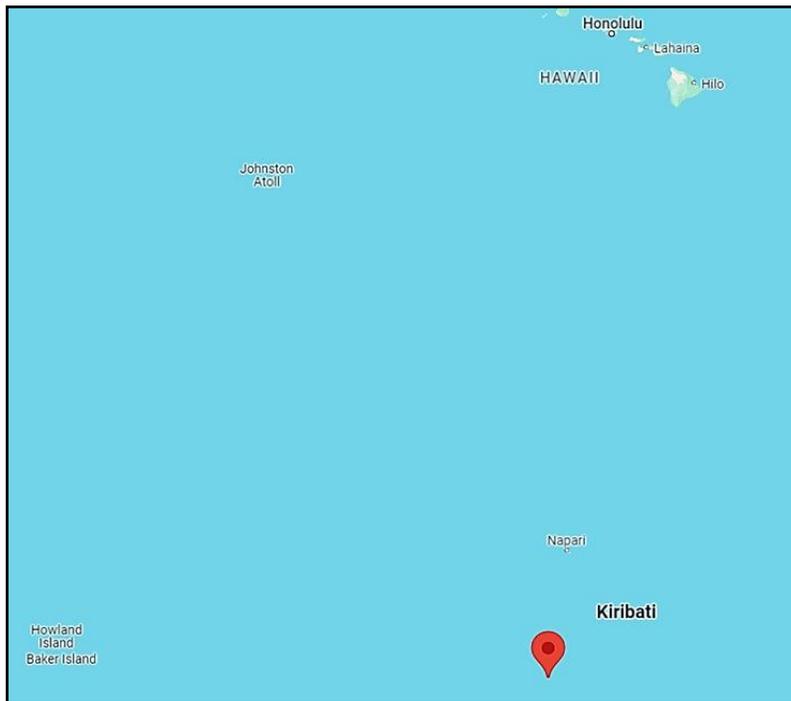


Jarvis Island

Primary Callsign Prefix: KH5

On the ARRL DXCC List, there is an entity (country) that is one of the few *combined* entities on the list: Palmyra and Jarvis Islands. The primary callsign prefix for these two islands is KH5.

They are both unincorporated, unorganized territories of the United States, administered by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service of the United States Department of the Interior as part of the National Wildlife Refuge system.



Location of Jarvis Island

For the past several years another amateur radio team has been exerting efforts on activating Jarvis Island, with success. More about that later in this article, but first, let's take a look at Jarvis Island proper:

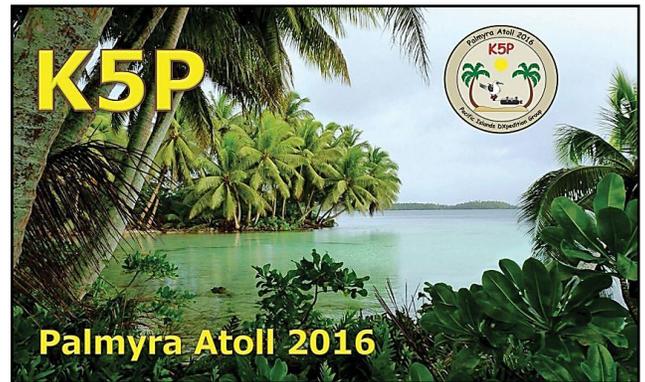
Jarvis is about 455 miles southeast of Palmyra Island in a group call the Line Islands. It is also about 1500 miles south-southwest of Hawaii and almost directly on the equator, so needless to say the climate there is tropical. The only access to Jarvis is by boat.

Jarvis Island is the largest of three U.S. equatorial possessions, which include Baker Island and Howland Island (the island Amelia Earhardt was trying to find for refueling when she and her navigator Fred Noonan disappeared in 1937 and remains one of the biggest mysteries of the 20th century). It was claimed by the US in the 19th century and mined for guano. In the 20th century, Jarvis was the subject of a small settlement. It was attacked during WW2 and evacuated leaving some buildings and a day beacon. The buildings have since eroded and blown away, however the remnant of the old beacon is still there. As stated previously, it is now managed as a nature reserve by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

While a few offshore anchorage spots are marked on maps, Jarvis island has no ports, harbors, or aircraft runways. Swift currents are a hazard. There is a boat landing area in the middle of the western shoreline near the crumbling day beacon, and another near the southwest corner of the island.

Public visitation to either of these wildlife refuges is restricted, and there are no permanent residents there which of course makes either location very rare to work and confirm for your DXCC list.

The last DXpedition to Palmyra Island (which of course had to be approved by the USFWS) operated in January, 2016 with the callsign K5P. The DXpedition team was given permission to operate from January 11 – January 26, and made 75,210 QSOs.



2016 QSL card from the Palmyra DXpedition



Jarvis' old day beacon

The center of Jarvis Island is a dried lagoon where deep guano deposits accumulated, which were mined for about 20 years during the nineteenth century. The island has a tropical desert climate, with high daytime temperatures, constant wind, and strong sun. Nights, however, are quite cool. The ground is mostly sandy and reaches 23 feet at its highest point. This low-lying coral island has long been noted as hard to sight from small ships and is surrounded by a narrow fringing reef.

Jarvis Island is one of two United States territories that are in the southern hemisphere (the other is American Samoa). Located only 25 miles south of the equator, Jarvis has no known natural freshwater runoff and scant rainfall. This creates a very bleak, flat landscape without any plants larger than shrubs. There is no evidence that the island has ever supported a self-sustaining human population. Its sparse bunch grass, overpowered vines, and low-growing shrubs are primarily a nesting, roosting, and foraging habitat for seabirds, shorebirds, and marine wildlife. The Sooty Tern is the main bird of residence on the island.



Sooty Tern population

As was stated earlier, Jarvis and Palmyra Islands are one of the few entities on the DXCC list that are counted together as 1 country. Recently, the ARRL DXAC (DX Advisory Committee) was petitioned to separate the two islands and make Jarvis a new, separate DXCC entity. The petition cited several viable and logical reasons for the separation, but just as it is very difficult to gain authorization to operate on U.S. wildlife refuges, it is also very difficult to modify the DXCC countries list.



The DXAC ruled against the petition, rejecting the notion that Jarvis should be separated from Palmyra. This was published in the January 2024 DXAC minutes, along with the explanation about how Palmyra and Jarvis ended up being joined. A portion of the minutes states, "Again, there is no path for Jarvis to be a separate entity except for a rule change to accommodate it, just like what was done with Swains and Kosovo. That practice should continue to be rejected by the DXAC, PSC, and ARRL Board. However, there will be another ARRL board meeting in July, one month before the N5J Jarvis Island DXpedition." Therefore, Jarvis and Palmyra islands will continue to be listed together, at least for the present.

The main ruling of the Committee stemmed from one of the foremost rules in the DXCC rules, that being that an entity must be a minimum of 800 km (500 miles) from another 'parent' island to be counted as a separate entity. Palmyra and Jarvis are 455 miles apart which does not meet that criteria. Hence, they are considered a single island chain country.



Obviously and since Jarvis Island is uninhabited and visitation restricted, the only way you will be able to work this rare DXCC jewel is for a DXpedition to be granted authorization to go there. Over the past decades there have not been that many ham radio teams activate the island, the last being *34 years ago* in 1990. Being granted permission to visit and operate there has been difficult.

However, this year operating authorization has been granted to a small group of operators called the Dateline DX Association, the operating permit costing \$27,000!

The group did consist of only 4 operators up to this past April 17, those ops being George-AA7JV, Don-N1DG, Tomi-HA7RY, and Mike-KN4EEI.

However, on April 17 the group added a fifth operator, one who is known to many members of BVRC. They announced they have added Adrian Ciuperca-KO8SCA to the team. A well-known and experienced DXpeditioner, Adrian works as an IT consultant, a much needed component to any remote operation. He is a newly inducted member of the CQ DX Hall of Fame and a YASME Award of Excellence winner. Adrian is a keen DXer with 318 lifetime DX entities confirmed, 9BDXCC, IOTA, as well as

being a passionate contester. He competed in WRTC 2018 in Wittenberg, Germany as well as at the 2023 edition of WRTC in Bologna, Italy. Adrian has taken part in over 30 DXpeditions to destinations, the most recent being W8S Swains Island.

Many BVRC members had the pleasure of meeting Adrian at last November 2023's Arkansas DX Association annual conference in Russellville, as well as hearing the first public report/program from him on the Swains Island DXpedition.



On March 5, the group stated, “We have received permission from the US Fish and Wildlife Service to land on Jarvis Island for a 13-day DXpedition, **which will start around August 1, 2024** (the date may change due to weather). We will have 6 RIBs (remoted ‘Rig In a Box’) stations on the island, including a 160-meter station. While August is not



ideal for the low bands, we are grateful for the permit to operate. The time of the year was not our choice. 160m will be very challenging for Europe (near impossible) as there is no common darkness but we will install a good RX antenna. The TX antenna will be a 45-ft tall vertical without top loading (wires can hurt birds). While this is a compromise antenna, it will be standing in salt water at most tides and should put out a decent signal. EU stations on 80m will have a better chance, albeit still small. We will also have a 6-meter station with a 6 element Yagi. We will be accompanied to Jarvis by a team of 3 USFWS biologists conducting science. We wish to thank the staff of the USFWS in Hawaii for their hard work in approving this minimally invasive operation on Jarvis Island NWR.”



Currently Jarvis & Palmyra Islands rank quite high on the Club Log Most Wanted List at #18.

The team will be using the callsign N5J.

Mark your “DX watch” calendar and be ready to pursue and work this rare DXCC country.

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