

DX KORNER

DON JENSEN REPORTS ON THE INTERNATIONAL SHORTWAVE SCENE

Send SWL reports to:

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A warm breeze, scented with the fragrance of frangipani . . . the pulse-pounding throbbing of drums, the strum of ukeleles . . . the surf rolling whitely over the coral reef as the twinkling points of light of the Southern Cross dot the sky . . . this is the Pacific of song and story, legend and reality.

How much is legend and how much is reality? Frankly, I don't really know. I've never been west of Los Angeles! But I have my own mental image of what the South Seas paradise is like. You probably have yours too.

And because of these exotic mental pictures most people have of the lands surrounding and dotting the Pacific, that area of the world ranks high with shortwave listeners. There are darned few SWLs who don't get a special kick out of tuning the countries of Oceania.

And like so much of the DXing hobby, when you tune in the Pacific there's a bit of something for everyone. Some of the stations are easy to hear. There are others that provide a bit more challenge. And finally, there are a few real toughies that test your tuning skill and the capabilities of your listening equipment.

The first thing to keep in mind when you set out to conquer the Pacific with your shortwave radio is time.

The old phrase, "half a day away" comes literally true when you are talking about the lands of the Pacific. But that "day" may be today or tomorrow, since the International Date Line runs right down through the mid-Pacific. New Zealand is exactly half a day away from GMT, that is. Down under, in Zed-land, the time is GMT+12. In the Cook Islands it is GMT-11 . . . it is "this" side of the Date Line; but in, for instance, New Caledonia, the time is GMT+11 hours. And Australia spans the distance from GMT+8 to GMT+10, because of its huge size.

Because of propagational factors, the lower shortwave frequencies require a "path of darkness" along the Great Circle route between shortwave station and the SWL's receiving site. That means, for all practical purposes, that reception of Pacific area SW stations transmitting below, say, 9 MHz, the best times for

reception will be around 0800 to 1500 GMT for North American listeners. That is, depending on where in the U.S. or Canada you live, post-midnight to dawn local time! So, be prepared to lose some sleep for a goodly share of your exotic island listening!

There are some exceptions, however. The prime case, because it uses higher frequencies, well above 9 MHz, is Australia.

Radio Australia, the foreign service of the Down Under continent's government broadcaster, is easily and widely heard by North American listeners on shortwave. And its broadcasts, in English, can be heard during our local evenings—decidedly before midnight, fortunately—on a number of frequencies, which at this writing included 11,740, 11,810, 15,320, 15,410, 17,795 and 17,870 kHz. In the morning, about 1000 to around 1400 GMT, try 31 meters, such as 9,540 or 9,580 kHz. Frankly, I don't think you'll need any more specific clues to find Radio Australia!

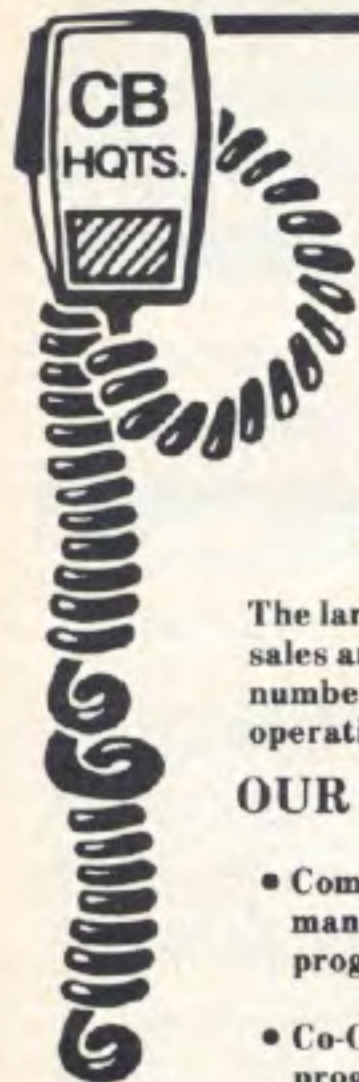
More interesting to DX-hunters are the stations Australians themselves tune to, the domestic shortwave outlets of the Australian Broadcasting Commission. These include VLM4, Brisbane on 4,920 kHz, VLI6, Sydney on 6,090 kHz., and VLW9, Perth, broadcasting on 9,610 kHz. Best time should be about your local dawn.

Already mentioned is New Zealand and the station there to tune for, with high chances of success, is called, not surprisingly, Radio New Zealand.

A couple of years ago, during a financial crunch, the foreign service of the New Zealand Broadcasting Corporation bit the dust. SWLs bemoaned the fact that another SW country has "gone silent." Fortunately, however, this silence lasted almost no time at all. The shortwave voice continued to be heard, but without special programs directed to overseas listeners. When you tune Radio New Zealand these days, you hear programs from the domestic medium wave stations relayed on shortwave. That includes ads, soap operas, sports and, well, whatever the average New Zealander hears on his portable "tranny" (transistor radio). To my way of thinking, at least, it is more fun to tune in on purely local fare than to some program specially prepared for foreign audiences.

During the post-midnight period, say 0800-1000 GMT, look for RNZ on 6,105 kHz. Or, much earlier in our evening time slot, 11,705 and 15,130 kHz.

One of the newer countries of the region is Papua New Guinea. The signals of its government operated



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National Broadcasting Commission are not hard to hear on shortwave. Two good bets are P2T9, 9,520 kHz, around 0800 GMT, and P2K4, 4,890 kHz, at about whatever time dawn comes to your locale. Both outlets are located at Port Moresby.

There are a number of broadcasters operating on shortwave from the Philippines.

The government foreign service shortwave broadcaster is the Voice of the Philippines. Give this one a try on 9,580 kHz between, say, 0800 and 1000 GMT. The Far East Broadcasting Corporation (FEBC) is a Protestant religious station which can be heard on a number of frequencies at a number of times. Here are a few you can try: 6,120 kHz at 1500 GMT; 11,765 kHz at 0830 GMT; 11,890 kHz at 2330 GMT; 15,235 kHz at 0030 GMT; 15,440 kHz at 0300 GMT.

A Roman Catholic equivalent is Radio Veritas. You should be able to tune this Manila station on 9,645 or 11,780 kHz about 1430 GMT.

Indonesia may be one of the most shortwave "radio active" countries in the world. Until very recently it made virtually no use of the medium waves, preferring to stick strictly to shortwave broadcasting. That is changing slowly, but there are dozens, probably hundreds, of shortwave stations—most of them domestic stations—in Indonesia. Some, like Radio Republik Indonesia's key station at Ujung Pandang on 4,719 kHz, can be heard quite readily in the U.S. and Canada about 1230 and later, GMT.

But for starters, try the English language foreign service, the Voice of Indonesia, from Jakarta, on 11,790 KHz, from 1100 to 1200 GMT.

If you're willing to go after stations that broadcast their programs in French, there are two Pacific targets—New Caledonia and Tahiti.

The former, with its Radio Noumea can be heard quite easily during the early morning hours, between about 0600 and 1100 GMT, on 7,170 kHz.

Radio Tahiti—many SWL's prime candidate for No. 1 Exotic Station on Shortwave—is also heard easily. Try this one after about 0200 GMT on 11,825 or 15,170 kHz. It is a lead-pipe cinch, Tahitian music will "get" you!

Okay, I told you there would be some tough ones among the Pacific crowd. And here they are. I won't be surprised if many of you just won't find these stations when you tune. But they are there, and they can be heard, with the right listening gear, the DXing know-how and some luck.

Radio Cook Islands at Rarotonga is an ultra goodie that has returned to shortwave during the past year. It has been heard Stateside on 3,265 kHz during the 0600-0800 time slot, GMT.

The New Hebrides Broadcasting Service, at Port Vila, operates a shortwave station YJB4 on a frequency of 3,945 kHz. The time to try is from post-midnight to about 1000 GMT. Since the island is an Anglo-French condominium which means an odd dual ad-

ministration, programs are broadcast in both English and French.

Finally, I'll toss in one that is not the easiest station to hear, but not the hardest either. Chances are it will be just tough enough to make you feel you've got something when you identify it. The station is the Solomon Islands Broadcasting Service. Look for this one during the same post-midnight to dawn period on 5,020 kHz.

So as the sun pulls away from the shore, and our boat sinks slowly in the west, we leave the enchanted islands of the Pacific . . . a tropical paradise for short-wave DXing.



WHAT'S NEW

The Japanese receiver manufacturer, Yaesu Musen made a big splash just about a year ago when it came out with its FRG-7 all-band synthesized communications receiver. It was quickly dubbed the "Frog-Seven" by SWLs, who took it to heart, as a darned good SW rig for under \$300.

Now Yaesu has announced the Mark 2 version of the popular FRG-7. A single modification in the receiver, the addition of a fine tuning control to simplify the tuning of sideband signals, has been made. If you already own a Mark 1 version, you can purchase a kit and instructions for adding your own fine tuning control. The kit is priced at \$7.25 post paid, but you must make the installation yourself.

The Yaesu Musen "Frog-Seven" tunes from 500 kHz (below the AM medium wave band) through 29.7 MHz (the top of the shortwave range). The receiver, with a built-in preselector (a signal booster) and highly accurate frequency "readout", operates on AC house current or eight D-size flashlight cells.

You can get further details and pricing by writing Yaesu Electronics, Dept. GM, P.O. Box 498, 15954 Downey Avenue, Paramount, CA 90723, or from your favorite SWL equipment dealer.

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ala Tom Swift, though he came later—known as The Radio Boys series. In these hard-covered thrillers, the heroes thrashed the bullies and, eventually, nabbed the evil doers with the aid of the then amazing new invention, radio. Some of these old, old books are still available to the SWL who fancies radio nostalgia. Not long ago I picked one up, the Radio Boys on the Mexican Border (you know that goes back to the 1915-1916 era), at a public library book sale for a half dollar. If you're not so fortunate, you can pick up a Radio Boys book for between \$3.75 and \$7.75, depending on condition, from Radiographics Books, P.O. Box 18492, Cleveland Heights, OH 44118. That dealer specializes in old radio books of all types.

IN THE MAILBOX

"After reading DX Korner, I've become interested in the prospect of DX listening," writes Vincent Mucci Jr., New Rochelle, NY. "I intend to purchase a FRG-7 receiver and would like some help and information. What type of antenna, if any, would be needed for this receiver?"


Yes, for optimum performance, any receiver will benefit from an external antenna—though multi-band portables get reasonably decent results with a built-in "whip". The FRG-7 needs an external antenna. For starters, I suggest a simple random length wire, somewhere between 50 and 100 feet long, as high above the ground as you can get it.

For medium wave (540-1600 kHz) listeners, Bill Coleman Jr., Rocky Mount, N.C., has some tips on Trans-Atlantic MW reception of DX signals.

From his North Carolina home, Bill says, "Trans-Atlantic is heard almost every night if your receiver has excellent selectivity and uses about 100 to 150 feet of long wire antenna."

Bill says he has heard the BBC at Washford, England, on 1214 kHz. Also he suggests eastern listeners might try the West German station, WDR at Langenberg on 1586 kHz in the medium wave AM band. The station runs some 800 kilowatts of power, 16 times more powerful than the strongest U.S. AM outlet.

"It is easily heard on the east coast of N.C. nights," says Bill. "They will verify with a colorful QSL!"



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