

ON THE BANDS

As this is being written in early February, 6 meters has been going through one of those low points which usually take place even during relatively high solar periods. Since the first day of the new year, I have received only scattered propagation reports. This conductor worked HC5K January 14, and heard the DL3ZM/YV5 beacon at RST 599 the following day. This same beacon was heard again on the 17th, followed by CW QSOs with VE3CPU/J8 and J37AE. Signals were quite weak for both of those contacts. Both the YV5ZZ (50.048 MHz) and the DL3ZM/YV5 (50.045 MHz) beacons were heard on January 25 at 1500Z. The following day, at about 1555Z, HK3AVR and HC2GE/4 were worked. A hint of what may be coming began to be observed February 5 when KH6IAA was heard here in Texas. The following day, several LUs reported hearing the KH6HI beacon and, on the 7th, PJ9EE worked LU8YYO. February 8 brought the southern tier of states a strong opening to the Buenos Aires area at about 1940Z, as well as good backscatter signals from the West Coast an hour later. West Coast stations reported strong New Zealand TV audio signals at 50.750 MHz at about 2230Z. These reports wouldn't even make it into print in better times, but their inclusion is indicative of the kind of conditions that 6-meter operators have been experiencing over the first five weeks of 1990.

Let's hope that conditions improve soon, especially with many DXpeditions coming up in the next few months. Space does not permit me to list them all here, but the South Pacific is to be particularly well-traveled. In addition, many new countries are getting on. G4UPS, in his very complete rundown of 6-meter news, notes a DXpedition to southern Sudan the last week in March. Ted also details the latest on European countries getting on the band. Belgium is going the permit route. Power is stated as 30 W, with a frequency

range of 50.0 to 50.45 MHz. As this is being written, word comes that ON4PS is the first Belgian station to receive a permit for 6-meter operation, and that three Swiss stations, HB9s XAJ, CRQ and QQ, are now authorized. HB9XAJ and HB9CRQ were reportedly worked in the UK February 8. No information is available at this time concerning power, operating time, or antenna limitations for the Swiss stations, nor how many more will be getting on. In the case of Denmark and the Faroe Islands, all license classes of OZ and OY operators are now granted privileges for 50 to 52 MHz with powers of 100-500 W, depending on license class. There are no antenna restrictions, but operation is on a noninterference basis. G4UPS reports he worked four OZs on January 15, and OY9JD the following day. Additional exciting news comes from Austria. G4UPS's newsletter states that all OEs living outside a specified area are allowed 25 W on 50-52 MHz beginning February 1. No antenna-gain restriction applies, but antennas must be horizontally polarized. Those within the restricted area, which covers all of OE1 and 4, most of OE3, and part of OE6, will be allowed to operate only outside of TV hours (0000 to 0900Z). Others have unrestricted hours of operation.

Also on the subject of European privileges, the *Northeast VHF News*, edited by W1GX, provides some information that should clarify the French situation. According to this source, which is attributed to K5ZMS and the Pack Rats publication *Cheese Bits*, there are 252 French stations holding permits to operate 6 meters (beginning at 50.2 MHz). They all have distinctive prefixes such as FC, FD or FE. Thus, F1XXX might use the call FC1XXX. In addition, there are apparently 100 additional stations with "experimental" authority to operate on the band. These stations are limited to specific frequency segments, specifically 50.086 to 50.089 MHz, 50.111 to 50.114 MHz, and 50.135 to 50.139 MHz.

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