



Newsletter of the Big Bend Amateur Radio Club, K5FD

April, 2017

Alpine, Texas

Look, Ma...Sunspots

After our program last month, it looked as if the HF bands were dead in the water but lo and behold, here came some sunspots. The SFI went from a dismal 71 to 121 the week this newsletter was published. Activity is still not great on the upper HF bands but better than nothing.

There has been some M-class flares and the A and K indices have been up a little but operating is still good. The prediction from prop.hfradio.org is conditions will continue to improve mildly until they turn toward the bottom as we approach the end of Cycle 24. But, who knows. Stay tuned.

WA5ROE to Present Program on ARES/Emergency Comms

Bob Ward, WA5ROE, will be the program at next Tuesday's Big Bend Amateur Radio Club meeting. Bob will be talking about the Amateur Radio Emergency Service and proper procedures to use for emergency communications.

The club meets at West Texas National Bank in the community room at 7:30 on Tuesday, April 11. Visitors are welcome.

Midway and Kure Islands No Longer Eligible for DXCC

Midway and Kure Islands have been placed on the list of DXCC deleted entities, effective August 26, 2016. This came about as an unintended consequence of action last summer by then-President Barack Obama that expanded the

Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument

to include the northwestern Hawaiian Islands west of Ni'ihau Island, making it the largest contiguous protected conservation area under the US flag.

Midway (KH4) had qualified for DXCC status by virtue of its being governed by a separate administration. Because it is now under the administration of Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument, however, it becomes a deleted entity. Approximately 50 people live on Midway, including US Fish and Wildlife Service staffers and contractors. The Battle of Midway, a turning point in the Allied World War II Pacific Campaign, took place in June 1942.

Now uninhabited, Kure Island (KH7K), a part of Hawaii, is separated from the rest of the state by Midway; because of that, it qualified for DXCC status under Section II, 2 (b) (iii) of the DXCC Rules — separation from its “parent” Hawaii. Midway Island's change in DXCC status in turn made Kure Island no longer eligible for DXCC status, since Kure no longer is separated from the rest of Hawaii by intervening land or islands that are part of another DXCC entity.

Kure Island once was home to a US Coast Guard LORAN station, remnants of which are still evident. It has been a state wildlife sanctuary since 1981.

Neither Midway nor Kure was able to be activated without prior permission and only for a planned DXpedition. Only contacts made on August 25, 2016, or earlier will count for these two entities.

Hams Get Two New Bands

It's been a long time coming, but the Amateur Service will get two new bands in the near future. The FCC on March 28 adopted rules that will allow secondary Amateur Radio access to 472-479 kHz (630 meters) and to 135.7-137.8 kHz (2,200 meters), with minor conditions. The FCC *Report and Order* ([R&O](#)) spells out the details. It allocates 472-479 kHz to the Amateur Service on a secondary basis and amends Part 97 to provide for Amateur Service use of that band as well as of the previously allocated 135.7-137.8 kHz band. The *R&O* also amends Part 80 rules to authorize radio buoy operations in the 1900-2000 kHz band under a ship station license. Just when the new Part 97 rules will go into effect is difficult to determine just yet; more on that below.

“It's a big win for the Amateur community and the ARRL,” ARRL CEO Tom Gallagher, NY2RF, said. “We are excited by the FCC's action to authorize Amateur Radio access for the first time on the MF and LF spectrum. As amateurs begin using these new allocations in the next few weeks, we encourage the entire Amateur Radio community, as secondary users, to be especially attentive to the rules.”

It has not been an easy win, however. ARRL has been trying since the 1970s to convince the FCC to allow amateur access to parts of the spectrum below the Standard Broadcast Band. Through the Utilities Telecoms Council (UTC), electric power utilities have opposed Amateur Radio use of the MF and LF spectrum, raising unsubstantiated fears of interference to unlicensed Part 15 power line carrier (PLC) systems used to manage the power grid. The FCC said the Amateur Radio service rules it has adopted for 630 meters and 2,200 meters allow for co-existence with PLC systems that use the two bands.

Here are the highlights:

Amateurs operating on 472-479 kHz will be permitted a maximum equivalent isotropically

radiated power (EIRP) of 5 W, except in parts of Alaska within 800 kilometers (approximately 496 miles) of Russia, where the maximum would be 1 W EIRP. [EIRP is the product of the power supplied to the antenna and the antenna gain in a given direction, relative to an isotropic antenna (absolute or isotropic gain). EIRP is equal to ERP multiplied by 1.64.]

- Amateurs operating in the 135.7-137.8 kHz band will be permitted to run up to 1 W EIRP.
- The FCC is requiring a 1-kilometer separation distance between radio amateurs using the two new bands and electric power transmission lines with PLC systems on those bands. Amateur Radio operators will have to notify the UTC of station location prior to commencing operations. The FCC Wireless Telecommunications Bureau will provide details on the notification process later, but ARRL is urging radio amateurs interested in operating on either band to register at the earliest opportunity, to avoid having to protect any “post-notification” PLCs.
- The FCC placed a 60-meter (approximately 197 feet) above-ground-level (AGL) height limit on transmitting antennas used on 630 meters and 2,200 meters.
- The bands would be available to General class and higher licensees, and permissible modes would include CW, RTTY, data, phone, and image. Automatically controlled stations would be permitted to operate in the bands.

Ed. Note: Amateurs have had access to 630 meters as experimenters for some time. By the way, the wavelength on 630 meters is 2066.93 feet. Half-wave dipole anyone?

Effective Date The fact that the new rules contain a new information-collection requirement —

notification of operation to the UTC — makes it difficult to guess at an effective date. The FCC R&O says the Office of Management and Budget (under the Paperwork Reduction Act) must first approve the information-collection requirements (in §97.303[g][2]). Once that happens, the revised Part 97 rules sections will become effective after the FCC publishes a notice in *The Federal Register* “announcing such approval and the relevant effective date.”



**BIG BEND EMERGENCY NET REPORT
From WA5ROE**

Date	Net Control	Check-ins	Length	Remarks
03/26/17	W5NPR	43	35	
03/19/17	WA5ROE	38	43	
03/12/17	WA5ROE	31	28	
03/05/17	KE5OG	46	25	

Remember – the BBEN meets **every** Sunday on 3922 KHz at 8:15 a.m. Central time (either CST or CDT). Visitors are always welcome. Early check-ins are welcome beginning around 8:05 a.m. on 3922 kHz or on the BBARC repeater system or on EchoLink.

2 Meter Net Report

Our 2 meter net meeting EVERY Wednesday at 8:00 PM (local time) on the clubs repeater system network. These are good training ground for possible emergency situations, as well as helping the new hams in the area to have an easy way to get use to "talking on the radio".

The club website (www.bigbendarc.com) has ALL the information on the 2 meter net. Included is the Net Control members schedule, until year end, the "script" (supplied ONLY as a guide to ensure the important information is given out weekly - you can use it anyway you see fit) and a list of the recent check-in members.

If you have an interest in joining the Net Control stations please call me ([432/837-2257](tel:4328372257)) or holler at me during the Wednesday evening net (either before or after the net).

The month of March had five (5) Wednesdays in it and it went this way:

DATE	CHECK-INS	NET CONTROL STATION
March 1	18	W5RHN
March 8	19	KF5KMA
March 15	15	KA5PVB
March 22	15	KG5BMK
March 29		KG5LMG

67 total check-ins for March

If you don't have the time to check-in to the net and stick around for the round-table discussion, take a minute of your time and check-in as an "in-and-out" (where you're there for the head count but don't have the time to participate). All participation is much appreciated and encouraged.

Any of the new hams in the community, if you have questions or problems with trying to get radios and antennas set-up feel free to bring them up during the net. We may not have the answer right off the cuff, but somebody can find the info and get back with you shortly!

During the month of March the net had check-ins from the following hams on our Echo-Link System:

W5RHN - Bob and K5FRN - Fran from San Antonio, TX. (with an update on Fran's hip replacement surgery).

KD5KC - Mike in El Paso, TX.

*** it's always interesting where our Echo-Link check-in's reside and how they came to find out about us out here!

73's and hope to talk to you soon.

Chuck Dobbins – KA5PVB
2-meter Net Manager

BBARC Club Officers

President - Allen Moore, N5MYM
Vice-President - Bill Brooks, KE5OG
Secretary - Billy Roberts, W5NPR
Treasurer - Angie Otoupol, N5MVV

THE BARK Newsletter of the BBARC

Big Bend Amateur Radio Club
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BIG BEND AMATEUR RADIO CLUB <http://www.bigbendarc.com>

Meetings on the second Tuesday of each month at the West
Texas National Bank Building in Alpine, 7:30 P.M.
CST/CDT.

ARRL Affiliated Club

MEMBERSHIP AND NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIPTION

2017 Dues are due

Annual membership is Jan. 1 to Dec. 31 each year. Dues
are \$36 per year for individual or individual & spouse.

Membership allows you to participate in all club activities
and vote at the monthly meetings.

Newsletters are available by e-mail for members,
subscribers, and interested recipients. Send your e-mail
address to [bill.ke5og at gmail.com](mailto:bill.ke5og@gmail.com) to be put on the list.

ABOUT THE BBARC

Founded December 17, 1974

ARRL affiliate since 1986

The BBARC is a 501(C)3 organization. Contributions are
tax deductible.



Big Bend Emergency Net, 3.922 MHz

Founded September 18, 1977

Meets every Sunday morning at 8:30 A.M. CST/CDT

Controlled net format. Welcomes new participants and
visitors.

Established by Bob Ward, WA5ROE.
Net Manager, Bob Ward, WA5ROE, [wa5roe at juno.com](mailto:wa5roe@juno.com)

Big Bend 2-meter Net

Founded July 9, 2008

Meets every Wednesday evening at 8:00 P.M. CST/CDT

Controlled net format. Welcomes new participants and
visitors.

Established by Bob Ayer, KA1AAJ (SK)

Net Manager, Chuck Dobbins, KA5PVB,
[charles.dobbins52 at yahoo.com](mailto:charles.dobbins52@yahoo.com)

BBARC REPEATER SYSTEM

**All standard offsets. All repeaters require 146.2
Hz PL tone encoded on your transmit signal. All
repeaters are linked.**

147.120+	Shafter, Cibolo Creek
147.020+	Elephant Mt. south of Alpine. System hub
146.620-	Ft. Davis located at McDonald Observatory
146.720-	Alpine, Pearce Mountain
146.820-	Terlingua, Study Butte
146.920-	Glass Mountains, Alpine / Ft. Stockton
145.230-	Emergency Repeater

BBARC CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Texas State Parks on the Air: 1400Z, Apr 8 to 0200Z,
Apr 9 and 1400Z-2000Z, Apr 9

ARRL Rookie Roundup, SSB: 1800Z-2359Z, Apr 16