

**NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES WEEK – “REFUGES ON THE AIR”
SPECIAL EVENT STATION – KL1YY – HOMER, ALASKA**

Thank you for your participation in Refuges On The Air, 2010.

Here is a summary of event results:

Stations on the air - 3

Antennas in the air:

Two yagi's – HyGain 20- meter monobander and a Cushcraft tribander.

Three dipoles – G5RV, 75 meter, and a 20/40 combo.

Operators:

AL2F – Kris

AL7LW – Larry

AL7LX – Brenda

KL1IL – Ray

KL1YY – Marvin

KL2HD – Jeff

KL7AN – Van

KL7JD – Jim

KL7JDR – Bruce

KL7RA – Rich

KL7RHJ – Bill

KL7TZ - Anne

KL7UW – Ed

NL7TZ – Tom

VE6NH – Ed

KL7XJ – Dale

Total contacts made - 643

Countries contacted - 14

Contacts by band:

75 meters - 13

40 meters - 14

20 meters - 484

17 meters - 71

15 meters - 61

Contacts by mode:

SSB - 532

RTTY - 25

CW - 77

PSK - 9

A special thanks to Tom, NL7TZ, for bringing the MARA tower trailer and for serving as event photographer.

A special thanks to Van, KL7AN, for bringing the MHARC communications trailer.

And a special thanks to Rich, KL7RA, for his help during this event and his excellent suggestions for future events. I agree with essentially every comment Rich made.

And thanks to Rich and Kris for transcribing the logs.

Obviously for any endeavor to be successful one must focus on the objective(s). It is my opinion the objectives of a Refuges On The Air events are, in order of priority:

1. Spread the word about National Wildlife Refuges.
2. Achieve maximum exposure of the amateur radio hobby and the Moosehorn ARC and/or any other clubs that participate.
3. Fun and fellowship for the Hams involved.

4. A high contact count is not a high priority (a special event station is not a contest) but is often the first question asked by visitors, so should be considered.

With those objectives in mind, I submit that although DX spotting helps achieve a high contact count, we should keep in mind that generally speaking, the Hams who monitor the DX spotting reports and participate in five-second contacts are not our target audience.

During the event in Homer the most rewarding contacts were those that lasted many minutes. Specifically, many of Jeff's contacts were very informative, and the most productive contact I monitored was between Poppy and a Boy Scout troop in the South 48 and lasted nearly 20 minutes.

Also, although PSK did not get much attention during this event, I believe PSK and even SSTV should be included in future events because they are "eye-catching" modes that have greater appeal to potential Hams and other visitors.

There was much discussion between numerous individuals prior to this event as to whether to use paper or computer logging and how to dispense QSL cards and certificates. The consensus was that for this first Refuges On The Air event we would use paper logging, and distribute high-quality cards and certificates via US mail. Those decisions resulted in considerable "second guessing" during the event as a result of requests from a few of the stations contacted. Rich, KL7RA, and Kris, AL2F, have considerable auto-logging experience and graciously agreed to digitize our logs so they could be "plugged into the system."

The logging procedure will require additional thought and planning for any future events. With that in mind, the following are a few things to consider.

"Plastic or paper" – As nearly everyone knows, computer logging has been the norm for the DX and contest crowd for many years.

The advantages are:

It requires less effort by the operators, minimizes logging errors and streamlines the confirmation process.

It satisfies those contacted stations that are part of the DX and TEST crowd that expect instant results on the web.

The disadvantages are:

It requires a computer, headset/microphone and a foot switch for each station. (VOX is not an option in a noisy environment). An alternative is to use two operators for each station.

Operators that are not experienced with foot switches (and many that are) will find it difficult. I frequently hear operators that have used foot switches for years searching for the switch and/or dropping parts of their transmissions.

QSL cards and certificates downloaded and printed by individuals will be much lower quality than those created by a commercial printer.

An Internet connection is desirable. That requires an Air Card or a Wi-Fi connection, and neither of those work well at the Islands & Ocean Visitor Center.

Summary:

Bottom line is that computer logging is a desirable option that should be considered.

Please keep in mind, whether or not we use computer logging we still must be prepared to provide QSL cards and certificates by mail as do the other refuges and the WFF.

Again, thanks to each and everyone who helped with this event.

Comments, suggestions and constructive criticism from anyone is welcome and will be appreciated.

Larry – AL7LW