

VK9WA INSIDERS NEWSLETTER

QST Feature

Be sure to read about the VK9WA DXpedition as featured in W3UR's "How's DX?" column in the November QST magazine.



Insiders QSL Info

VK9WA Insiders and donors receive priority QSL status. We will upload to LoTW as soon as the logs are finalized and will mail you a card automatically as soon as they arrive from the printer. *There is no additional need to request or send a QSL card.*

Willis Island Facts

Willis Island is nesting grounds for Green Sea Turtles which can weigh over 600 pounds. We will regularly be monitoring our camp to ensure turtles don't drag our antennas out for a swim!



VK9WA Online

Our web site is vk9wa.com. Follow us on Twitter at [@VK9WA](https://twitter.com/VK9WA) or on Facebook at facebook.com/VK9WA

The VK9WA Story

We'll be on the air from the Willis Islets in just one week. As our departure approaches, we've reflected on how far we have come in so little time. Considering the idea for this expedition was first hatched around Thanksgiving of 2014, we look back at our progress and feel extremely grateful to be where we are today.

The VK9WA story started to take shape in October, 2014 when, just two weeks away from announcing an expedition to another top 25 location, we were beaten to the press by another team. The decision was made to cancel the DXpedition after 10 months of planning with charter boat arranged and half the expedition team formed. After facing this disappointment, we gave Bernie (W3UR) a call, asking for his advice on how best to proceed. Bernie's words were in effect, "The world is a big place, with so many other locations needing to be activated! Here are a few places that come to mind".

Armed with Bernie's words of encouragement, we took aim at Willis Island. Rob (N7QT) and Jared (N7SMI) quickly teamed up to collaborate on this project. With the help of other expeditioners, we were able to quickly identify contacts in order to obtain landing rights to the island. Once we became confident that we could obtain landing rights and call sign, we started forming the team and announced to the world that we would be activating Middle Cay. Again, with the help of others, we were able to fill out the remaining team members with very experienced operators.

As the team is currently enroute to Cairns, Australia for departure to Willis Island, we're all grateful that Thanksgiving came early this year!

Current Activities

- We have successfully tested our low band 80m/160m SteppIR CrankIR antenna to comfortably handle high power without issue. Look for us to be very active on 80m/160m.
- By the time you read this, most of the team will be enroute to Cairns. We are all currently packing and running last minute errands in preparation for departure.
- We are planning to augment each of our expedition stations with dedicated RX-only antennas providing each station an extra “ear”, in what should be a HF quiet environment.
- To handle log uploads and limited e-mail communications with pilots and family members, Jared (N7SMI) wrote software that runs on a Raspberry Pi to minimize satellite phone bandwidth utilization. All log and e-mail traffic will be handled by a computer that fits in the palm of your hand!
- The team would like to personally thank Elecraft, Expert Linears America LLC, and SteppIR for their AMAZING customer service. These companies have responded to our requests, well above and beyond the call of duty.

SteppIR



DXpedition Schedule

All dates/times are subject to change based on weather and other factors. Willis Island is UTC+10 hours.

- **Nov. 8-10** - VK9WA team stages in Cairns, Australia.
- **Nov. 9-12** - Equipment and supplies procurement and packing in Australia. Loading the MV Phoenix vessel.
- **Nov. 12 @ 0800UTC (1800 local)** - MV Phoenix departs Port Douglas, Queensland, Australia.
- **Nov. 13 @ 1800UTC (0400 local)** - Arrive at Middle Cay after 30 hour trip and begin setup.
- **Nov. 14 @ ~0200UTC — Nov. 23 @ ~2000UTC** - Radio operations.
- **Nov. 24 @ 0000UTC (1000 local)** - Depart Middle Cay for Port Douglas.
- **Nov. 25 @ 0600UTC (1600 local)** - Arrive Port Douglas.

Band Plan (*exclusive to VK9WA Insiders*)

Frequencies are +/- QRM. We will ALWAYS be working split. DO NOT CALL US ON THESE FREQUENCIES!

Mode	160m	80m	40m	30m	20m	17m	15m	12m	10m
CW	1.826*	3.524	7.023	10.105	14.020	18.075	21.020	24.894	28.018
SSB	-----	3.793	7.085	-----	14.185 or 14.275	18.140	21.295	24.955	28.480
RTTY	-----	-----	7.045	10.142	14.083	18.105	21.083	24.922	28.083

*Listening DOWN 2-3 for JA and listening UP for all others.

HINT: If we hear significant QRM on our calling frequency, we will adjust up or down and continue operating.

Tips for Getting in Our Log

Having recently returned from the North Cooks (E51MQT & E51MKW), Rob (N7QT) has the following tips on how to more efficiently get into the log:

- When calling us, please send your call ONCE, then listen! After sufficient time has passed, try calling us again.
- If we are trying to contact a station, please don't respond to us unless a) we ask for your call or b) our request for a partial call matches part of your call.
- Several stations never made it into the log on the North Cooks because they never sent us an RST, though we had 100% copy on our end. It's possible those stations wanted to make 100% sure we had their calls right on their end, or they didn't hear us very well. If you don't hear us well enough, then please don't attempt to contact us. If you are confident that we are attempting to contact you, then please send us an RST.
- Use vk9wa.com/log or Club Log to verify your log entries. We will upload logs at least twice daily. Be sure to check the "Last Uploaded" date and time.
- We will be calling for specific regions (**AF**rica/**EU**rope/**NA** – North America/**SA** – South America/**OC** – Oceania/**AS**ia/**VK** - Australia/**ZL** – New Zealand/**JA**pan) during their gray line transitions and other optimal propagation times. Therefore, PLEASE DO NOT attempt to contact us if you are not in the calling area we are requesting. PLEASE DO NOT attempt to interfere with our request to reach a specific region.
- During station exchanges, please provide the minimum possible information to complete the exchange. If you are confident we have your call correct, then responding to us with only RST is sufficient. During an exchange, do not repeat your call sign if you believe we have your call sign correct.
- Make sure your logged QSO Start Time and End Time closely match the time you worked us. Logbook of the World matches with QSO Start Time and if your start time differs more than 30 minutes from the time we logged you, you will not get an LoTW QSL confirmation. We will be uploading to LoTW within a few weeks of the conclusion of the operation.
- We will always be running split, therefore NEVER call us on our TX frequency. Please verify that you have "split" enabled before calling us.
- We all know this already... but tune up into a dummy load and not on the air. If you absolutely have to tune up on the air, please pick an unused frequency, and not our calling frequency, or our RX frequencies.
- We want to encourage all of you to follow and/or review the [DX Code of Conduct](#) as we will be adhering to it.



Middle Cay, Willis Islets, Coral Sea, Australia

VK9WA SPONSORS



We're incredibly grateful to the sponsors and many individual donors who are supporting this DXpedition. This operation would not be possible without the significant support of the amateur radio community. We'll see you on the air soon!

73,

The VK9WA Team