

HR IOTA TOUR 2013 HQ3W,HQ8S,HQ8D,HQ4W

Report of the Expedition leader Daniel Mejia Rod. HR2DMR

Summary

The expedition HR Iota Tour 2013 was carried out successfully from June to October of 2013

The team consisted in 3 radio operators :

HR2DMR Dan M. Rod Expedition Leader
SSB operator
HQ2DOM Daniel M. Rossell
Computer Guru CW/RTTY operator
HQ2JCM Caleb M. Rossell
Equipment assist., CW/SSB operator

KD4POJ QSL Manager and pilot, a big help
during humongous pile ups.
MM0NDX Web master and designer of HR Iota
page

Plus 3 Navy Cadets who helped a lot on every island.

Two radio stations were deployed and active from 3 to 5 days on every island. Using the following call signs:
HQ3W IOTA NA-160... .CAYOS COCHINOS
HQ8S IOTA NA-035.....SANTANILLA ISLAND
HQ8D IOTA NA-223... .CAYOS VIVORILLOS
HQ4W IOTA NA-060... .ISLA DEL TIGRE

A total of 14,519 QSOs were logged on from 80 to 10 meters band, using CW,SSB and RTTY modes.

Origin of the Idea

I am working as a Professor on the Honduran Navy Academy ,and in several classes we need to travel with the Navy cadets to different island to do some practical work in reference to a particular area of study.

One day, while I was reading my emails and came across one from a well-known ham and expeditionary K6VVA Erick "Rick" "The Locust" Hildin. Rick asked me when am going to activate some of the Honduran IOTAs. He planted the idea and it took root.

I thought to myself, I have the equipment and I can travel on the Navy Patrol boats, and I can do this in time with my annual vacations and this is a great opportunity to put these rare IOTAs on the air for the ham community.

First I had to get permission from the Naval Officers to land on the islands and cays... This turned out to be no problemGranted

Next was to ask CONATEL for the call signs and permits to operate from each island, again no problem.Granted

Finally the hardest thing to get granted, permission from my wife! I had to explain everything, and trying to obtain this permit was the most difficult.....after several dinners at some very fancy restaurants and several trips to the shopping mall..... Permission was finally Granted!

HR IOTA TOUR 2013 is a GO!!

Planning

Much of the planning for this HR Iota Tour was done with my family, my two Boys who helped me a lot with programs, software, logging and sending emails. A big thank you, to you guys.

These trips required a lot of planning in partnership with Captain Matamoros and his crews on board of the different Navy patrol boats. This was not always the easiest job, but The Captain helped coordinate dates and time spent on each island.

We also had to plan how many cadets would be needed to help me carry the fuel, carry and set up the generators, antennas, coax, and the other boxes of equipment. Planning an expedition to a remote island is not easy task but thanks to a great team, we were able to accomplish this endeavor.



Equipment

The main station was as follow: Back up :
RADIOs: Kenwood TS-440 Kenwood TS 480s
Amplifiers: Heathkit SB-200, Dentron TW-500A,
Antennas: Fiberglass vertical arrays, dipoles for low bands, and a Multiband vertical
Generators: Honda 2000i Coleman 1850
Plus an Icom VHF station with a vertical antenna to communicate with the Navy boat.



Facilities

We were lucky to find an available "Champa" (small wood house with coconut tree leaves as a roof) to take shelter when the weather got extremely nasty and wet and a place to rest during the evenings. With access to the Champas, there was no need for the tents.



During the day we did operations out in the open space having the ocean as a motivation to continue on those extremely huge pileups. But at night we have to move operations to the Champa because otherwise we were viscosly attacked by the tiny mosquitos on the island and prevented us from talking on the air.

We used air mattresses, plastic tables and chairs, mosquito netting and lots of good bug repellent. Food and water storage was maintained on the boat. The ships cook was nice man and he provided us with some delicious and healthy meals both onboard and ashore.



Fuel conservation was paramount. I had to calculate the exact amount of fuel needed each day so we did not run out during prime operating times. Fuel is very expensive so keeping a sharp eye on how much we used was necessary. It had to last to long enough to do each island. Through great measures we were able to reach the goal on every island.

We used several types of antennas, from vertical swimming on the Caribbean Sea to delta loops hung from the coconut trees. I believe the antennas played a key role in being able to accomplish the goal of hearing even the weakest stations calling. Though the biggest challenge was being able to hear through the thunder storms, all we could do was to be patient with Mother Nature.

Going QRV

We normally reached the islands during the mornings. This gave use plenty of time, so we could assemble the equipment after looking for the location to be protected from the hot Sun and protected from the mosquitos.

After having everything ready, we turn on the rigs and amps and call "QRL QRL is this frequency in use? QRL QRL?.....QRZ de HQ3W, HQ8S, HQ8D, HQ4W IOTA NA -160,057,223,060...QRZ??"

Nothing quiet compares to hearing the huge pile up start during a new DXpedition from a Rare IOTA. Its also very exciting to know you have lots of friend all waiting eagerly for that precious QSO and to hear "you are in the log 73 thank you, QRZ??"



The pile ups were endless, and I am happy with the results, and we tried our best to keep the pile ups under control and provide a QSO with as many stations as possible to all the continents. Of course the CW pile ups were the most difficult to control. At times it was manageable and then a complete Zoo. But we did our best.

Hearing Japan blasting in on 10 meters made us so happy! It brought back memories of the glory days back in 2002. Propagation was great but as many other expeditions know each island is different. Some island provided very different opportunities for the different bands. One was good for the low bands; while others we could not log a single QSO on low bands. Others provided excellent high band opportunities and we were sometimes asked if we were local stations, of course they were pulling our legs but it was a joy to hear them tell us "guys you are 30 db over s9" that was pure Joy to our ears and made us extremely happy.

Making worldwide QSOs with a simple fiberglass antennas and some delta loops was very encouraging and made you want to do more of these kinds of expeditions, experimenting with different types of antennas and techniques is the key of ham radio.

Just want to say a big thank you to all my friends who helped me to accomplish this HR IOTA Tour

Thanks to all the ham who were patient wading through the huge pile ups and waiting for a chance at a QSO. Remember we were there on these remote island for the benefit of all, so let's keep this ham spirit alive, follow

don't just support the DX Code of Conduct, follow it and use good operating practices so that we all can work that New One. The more we follow the Code the more we can keep enjoying our hobby and the pleasures of DXing.



To my Donors:
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 ene Howard , and many more.



A big thank you

Yes a big thank you goes to:
 To God, who guides us, protect us and our families while we were away.
 My wife, who understands the fire and passion inside of me for adventure and for my hobby ham radio.
 My team, Danny and Jonny, you are the best guys!!



PERMITS



“Rick” K6VVA, thank you for turning the switch on for HR Iota Tour.
 Col MM0NDX, thank you for your support, the web page and helping us with ideas.
 Dwayne aka “Griz” KD4POJ, another master mind of this operation, QSL manager, and a good friend.
 FUERZA NAVAL DE HONDURAS, Admiral Espinoza, Capt. Matamoros, Capt. Mejia, the Officers and crew of every patrol boat, you played a big roll on this expedition.
 To my sponsors : DX WORLD NET, German DX Foundation, Swiss DX Foundation, IARU, Juda radio, K Center, and IREF Island Radio Expedition Foundation

Editiert für die GDXF von Uwe DJ9HX