

# K7TRI from Tillamook Rock, NA-211

*Cezar Trifu, VE3LYC*

Tillamook Rock is a basalt formation less than one acre or 4000 m<sup>2</sup> in area, 1.9 km from the Oregon coast. Sitting 40 m above the ocean and 19 m tall, a lighthouse was built on it in 1880. Nicknamed *Terrible Tilly* for the weather conditions and difficult commute, it operated between 1881 and 1957. The island is currently privately owned and the lighthouse used as a non-visiting dedicated columbarium (cemetery) since 1981. The little rock is home to hundreds of California sea lions, pelicans, black cormorants, with a protected wildlife nesting easement from mid-March to end of August.

The island is part of the IOTA reference NA-211, and it was activated only once, 21 years ago. It is now ranked #28 on the most wanted IOTA list in the world, in demand by almost 94% of IOTA members. Yuri (N3QQ) looked into the re-activation of Tillamook Rock since 2012, and he finally managed to obtain the owners' permission to organize a radio operation between Sep 6 and 9, 2019, for a team of four that included Cezar (VE3LYC), Sandro (VE7NY), and Adrian (KO8SCA). In exchange, the team covered the cost of helicopter transportation for the owners' maintenance team of three.



**Preparing for the heli ride to Tillamook Rock**

The radio team setup two tents on the reinforced concrete platform of 15 x 6 m in front

of the lighthouse, from where they operated three stations. Without a possibility to anchor them firmly, the tents later collapsed in relatively high winds, forcing the team to move into the lighthouse and finish their activity from there.



**Camp K7TRI on the Rock**



**The multiband vertical was installed quickly.**



**Cezar at the key**

Two stations employed K3 rigs and Expert 1.3K-FA amplifiers, while the third a SunSDR2 Pro rig with Juma PA1000 amplifier, all powered by Yamaha SC-2000i generators. Despite the limited space for antenna mounting, the team was able to install a SteppIR UrbanBeam (20 m), a multiband vertical (20, 30 m), and a CrankIR vertical (17, 40 m).



**A small part of the large California sea lion colony**

The strong smell of ammonia, limited space, annoying flies, guarding to ensure that the sea lions don't come up to the platform and entangle themselves in ropes and cables, rain, wind, and limited sleep were some of the challenges the team had to overcome.



**Crank IR vertical was used on 17 and 40 m**

The log includes 3292 QSOs with 2227 stations in 64 DXCCs on 6 continents. About 32% of QSOs were on 20 m, 30% on 30 m, 34% on 40 m, and a few on 17 m. Over 84% of the contacts were in CW, 7% in SSB, and close to 9% in FT8. The continental distribution of QSOs was AS 42%, EU 21%, NA 33%, OC 3%, with SA and AF <1%. The top five DXCCs by QSOs and number of stations were JA, K, UA, DL, and I.



**Both camp tents collapsed in the wind.**

We logged 96 contacts with 90 DL stations, which ranked DL #4 among the DXCCs. If these QSOs, one was on 40 m, 3 of 30 m, and the rest on 20 m, all contacts in CW. Additional contacts were made with several GDXF members located outside of DL. Since the entire area was extremely dirty, we avoided flying any flag, including the GDXF flag, afraid that we will have to discard them afterwards, how we discarded many of the camp equipment and pieces of clothing.



**Team moved inside the lighthouse, continuing to operate three stations**





**Beaming 20 m to central EU**



**We've done it: Adrian, Sandro, Yuri, and Cezar**

We wish to thank Mimi Morisette and Eternity at Sea for their permission to allow us to carry out this project. Our appreciation to Craig and Sam, the two helicopter pilots who took us to the island and brought us back safely.

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