

VK9MA EXPEDITION INSIDER

EXPEDITION PLANNING



Figure 1. Gear waiting to be shipped to Port Douglas from Sweden

THE TEAM

If you haven't visited our website, please check it out the latest expedition news, at www.vk9ma.com. In particular take a look at the team we have put together, on our [team](#) page. We have assembled a talented and experienced group of nine DXers from around the world for the VK9MA expedition. All of whom eager to put many of you into the log.

TEAM SCHEDULE

- Oct 25th - Team arrives in Cairns, Australia
- Oct 30th - Leave for Port Douglas, Australia
- Oct 30th - Load gear onto M.V. Phoenix
- Nov 1st - Depart for Mellish
- **Nov 3rd - Arrive Mellish Reef & setup**
- **Nov 16th - Teardown & depart**
- Nov 19th - Arrive Port Douglas
- Nov 21st - Team heads home

DX CODE OF CONDUCT

Please be aware that this expedition will be using the DX Code of conduct. For those of you who might not be familiar with the code can be found at <http://dx-code.org/>



Figure 2. 4square antenna(s) being loaded by the shipper for delivery to port, and eventual delivery to Port Douglas.



Figure 2. High powered filters from LBS for all HF bands.

INITIAL PLANNING

Hawk (SM5AQD) and Rob(N7QT) started planning this expedition January 2017. Much has happened since then:

- We've selected a worldwide team of experienced DXers
- Selected a group of experienced pilots to help guide our operation during our stay.
- Obtained landing rights to Mellish Reef.
- Reserved a charter boat (MV Phoenix) from Bianca Charters, based in Port Douglas, Australia.
- Applied for and obtained the VK9MA callsign
- Acquired and shipped nearly 900Kg(~2000lbs) of radio equipment including 3000' of coax, 4 square antennas for 30m/40m/80m, and control boxes to Port Douglas, Australia.
- Work continues on acquiring/testing station equipment including laptops, K3S radio(s), SPE amplifiers, and networking equipment. All of which will be brought by the team to Australia.

BANDS NEEDED ANALYSIS FOR MELLISH REEF – #29 MOST WANTED ENTITY GLOBALLY

The table taken from ClubLog, indicates the percentage of logs with the slot in question worked.

<5% <15% <100%

Band	160	80	60	40	30	20	17	15	12	10	6
CW	RARE	RARE	RARE	RARE	RARE	NEEDED	RARE	RARE	RARE	RARE	RARE
Phone	RARE	RARE	RARE	RARE	-	RARE	RARE	RARE	RARE	RARE	RARE
Data	RARE	RARE	RARE	RARE	RARE	RARE	RARE	RARE	RARE	RARE	RARE

In evaluating bands needed by continent, as well as evaluating prior expeditions statistics, it is apparent that Mellish Reef is needed on most band slots, and bands by a large number of DXers, particularly on DATA modes. One of our goals is to dedicate a lot of station time to the digital modes, particularly RTTY. If conditions are such that the band(s) are not open for RTTY, we most likely will give JT65/JT9 and FT8 a try. For those of you who have not tried the WSJT application, please give it a try. It can be found at <http://physics.princeton.edu/pulsar/K1JT/wsjsx.html> We will be discussing more in upcoming newsletters, about our expectations when running WSJT modes.

STATION EQUIPMENT

Our station equipment is listed at the [equipment](#) page. The plan is to keep all 4 stations operating, 24/7 for duration of our 13 day stay on the reef. We will be landing on Mellish at daybreak and will spend most of the first day unloading our gear off the MV Phoenix, getting our tents set up, generator shelters built, and antenna(s) installed. Due to the distances we have to move our gear, please be patient with us, as it will take time to get all our stations fully operational, after having first set foot on the island.

OPERATING PLANS FOR 17M/20M

Due to the current solar propagation cycle, we believe that the lower bands(i.e. 30m through 160m) will provide the best opportunity to work the world during the evening hours.

Based on where we are in the solar cycle, the team is concerned about propagation on the upper bands during daylight hours. We expect 17m/20m to provide the most likely bands to work the world during the day. In order to keep all 4 stations busy during daylight hours, we have decided to separate our SSB and CW/Digi stations by at least 200 meters (~600ft), which is about 10 wavelengths on 20m. We are also going to use cross polarized antennas on 17m/20m band when two stations are operating on the same band. This will allow us to put 2 stations on the air, on the same band (17m/20m) and at the same time. On all other bands, we plan to operate one station per band.

DONATIONS

Due to the expense of this effort, we appreciate any donation no matter the amount. if you have not yet contributed to this expedition and would like to, please go to our Club Log donation page at https://secure.clublog.org/make_donation.php?call=VK9MA

We wish to thank of you who have already donated to the cause. In particular:

- Elecraft Corp – <http://www.elecraft.com/>
- DX Engineering – <http://www.dxengineering.com/>
- Low Band Systems -- <http://lowbandsystems.com/>
- Expert Linears -- <http://expertlinears.com/>
- Spiderbeam -- <https://www.spiderbeam.com/>
- SteppIR -- <http://www.steppir.com/>
- W3YY -- <http://www.w3yy.com/fsk.htm>
- Lagunaria DX Group – <http://lagunaria-dx-group.org/>
- Telepost Inc. -- <http://telepostinc.com/>
- Clublog -- <https://secure.clublog.org>

Sincerely,

The VK9MA team