

Jock White Field Day 2008 Report

Thank you to everyone who participated in this years field day, especially those of you who set up and operated in the bad weather. Reports warning of bad weather were most likely responsible for the drop in total branch points available from 80 total compared with 101 from 2007 and 2006. Many teams commented on the wet conditions which began to let up late on the Saturday.

The Whangarei team are to be commended for regrouping and continuing their efforts under difficult conditions. Some areas had the opposite problem with high temperatures and sun burn.

The activity levels this year would have been even lower had it not been for the indomitable Papakura punters who went out and activated Papakura, Howick, Manukau and Huntly branches.

Good to hear school age operators at least two field stations: ZL2KS and ZL2REG.

Propagation seemed to be down on 40m and with only 2/3 the of the field stations this year compared to 2007 things were pretty quiet, especially for central region stations, at least one struggling, but succeeding to make 50 contacts.

It was good to hear Chris VK2LCD active again from across the Tasman.

There were no field stations active in either Wellington or Christchurch, hopefully this will be reversed for 2009?

Statistics

184 operators at 28 Field stations, down from 41 last year. Ten home station logs were received.

Team Comments

Found the general operating great.

Poor on 40m but 80m conditions good.

Promise of poor weather concerning but things improved from the Saturday afternoon on.

Caravan stifling hot!

Fantastic warm weekend with mozzies as big as sparrows!

Temperature reached 32 degrees.

Five watts gets out a lot better than I thought.

Three non amateur members at one team included: food preparation and morale; food delivery and morale; companion and tail wagger (which I presume was a dog!).

One or two very broad signals caused a few difficulties but were not insurmountable.

Bad splatter made operating difficult.

We had to concentrate our operating on 40m for several hours to get the qualifying number of contacts to count as a multiplier.

Shortage of CW operators hindered our score.

A possible separate 40 metre award

I have had a suggestion that this may help boost 40m activity, it would not be a separate category such as 40m only (there are enough categories at present), rather recognition to the station participating with the highest score on 40m. It could be at the managers discretion awarded to the station with the highest phone and or CW score. Suggestions and comments would be welcome.

Poor signals

By far the majority of signals heard during field day are clean and stable, a few comments are needed as far as the small remainder goes. This is a perennial problem.

One station in particular splattered to the extent that interference to many other stations occurred.

There was one chirpy CW station and another with a lot of hum/buzz on its signal.

Mic gain/ALC settings These need to be carefully set prior to the event and left alone. If your station is using a different microphone than is usually used for the radio don't assume its output will be the same, it could be far higher. There is nothing to be gained by trying to force a few more watts out of your rig. Success at field day is due to operating technique far more than a little more power out! Turning up the wick excessively can be potentially fatal to expensive output transistors.

Power supply hygiene I wonder if a few stations had low supply voltage problems. More planning prior to the event will sort this one out. Another potential problem is RF getting into accessory leads, bypass capacitors and clip on ferrites can usually fix this.

It is essential to check out your gear at home as it will be set up on the day, for correct operation:

I will be looking at a rule change for 2009 to allow penalisation of stations that cause QRM.

Valid Branch Points (Multipliers)

There were a total of 76 available for field stations, 80 for home stations: (four less for field stations, as they cannot claim their own branch number)

80 Phone (Max 27): 01 02 03 08 10 12 13 15 17 18 20 21 22 25 27 28 30 34 42 47 53 61 63 65 69 79 83 87

80 CW (Max 17) 01 02 03 10 12 17 20 22 24 25 27 28 30 42 61 65 79 87

40 Phone (Max 20) 02 03 08 10 12 13 15 17 18 20 21 22 25 27 28 30 34 61 65 83 87

40 CW (Max 11) 02 03 12 17 22 25 27 28 30 61 65 87

There were about 9 invalid branch points this year and scores have been modified to account for this.

Several branches although meeting the requirements for some bands/modes did not meet the minimum number of contacts on others. This was the case with three branches, Hutt Valley (40m CW), Franklin (40m CW) and Upper Hutt (40m Phone). These branches submitted logs so it was easy to correct things.

Branches need to have a game plan to avoid this sort of problem: plan operations in advance to ensure that operations on bands and modes will allow the minimum numbers to be reached.

It is not so easy when stations appear for a few contacts, give out branch numbers then vanish, *and do not send in a log*. I then have to go through a number of logs to get an idea of how many contacts were made by that station to work out if that station reached the required number of contacts. Branches included: 48, 71, 77 and 85.

Logs were not received from Manawatu.

Home Station Certificates

First overall: ZL1JKY, runner up ZL1WT

Phone only: ZL1AAR, runner up ZL1ZLD

Check Logs

Received with thanks from:

ZL1AIH, ZL2AJB, ZL2VM, ZL3TDI

See you all in 2009,

Stuart Watchman ZL2TW
Contest Manager