

## DXing Latin America and the Caribbean: Country by Country (December 1979)

Written by Neil Kazaross, Mark Connelly, & Marc DeLorenzo

This article is designed to assist both beginning and more experienced DXers who are interested in receiving many Latin American & Caribbean countries on the MW BCB. While all of the tips here concern reception from the northeastern U. S., many of the tips apply generally throughout the U. S. & Canada. What can and cannot be heard will depend upon the individual DXer's local stations, as well as his or her ability, perseverance, equipment, and location. Coastal locations are a definite help for a variety of reasons beyond the scope of this article. A loop antenna or Beverage is also advantageous because these antennae can establish directionality to the south whilst nulling to the east and to the west.

Now is the time to DX LA's since the sunspot count is high and many nights will be auroral with poor reception of northern TA's and weakened or totally inaudible high-latitude domestics. This clears frequencies for LA's. A knowledge of Spanish is not necessary: one can soon learn to pick an ID out of a jumble of otherwise incomprehensible audio. Many LA's do not have the frequency stability of U. S. stations; therefore, different "drifter splits" will show up on different nights. The "growls", or audible low beat tones, heard on LA stations result from poor standards of frequency-maintenance accuracy.

This article lists the countries of interest in approximate order from easiest (1) to most difficult (45), based upon receptions from the New England-Long Island-New Jersey region. DXers should be reminded that the sun sets earlier at the same longitude at a QTH to the south of them during the period from the vernal equinox (about 22 March) to the autumnal equinox (about 22 Sept.) Therefore, DXing the Caribbean during the spring & summer seasons will give a greater amount of time around sunset during which desired DX stations will be free of domestic QRM. During the autumn and the winter, noise levels will be lower, but the DXer will be much more dependent on an aurora to clear away the domestic QRM. The reader should also be aware of the fact that daytime domestics go off before their local sunset times during the last halves of the months of January through June and during the first halves of July through December. DXing during these sunset periods will afford lessened daytime-domestic QRM of desired LA DX stations.

Times in the following list are GMT. It is assumed that the DXer has a World Radio-TV Handbook with which to look up station slogans & call letters. Most of these were omitted from this article for the sake of brevity. Except for the Mexicans, most SS LA's use slogan ID's much more frequently than call letters. GOOD LUCK!

- CUBA** - Our neighbour to the south has many very easy stations from which to choose: 590, 600, 630, 640, 690, 720, & 780 are all a cinch. Most Cuban stations play distinctive martial music with their hourly ID. Radio Reloj ("Radio Clock") stations (e. g. 760, 1180, 1560) have continuous news in SS with clock ticks in the background. Time checks & tones are heard once a minute. Many weaker stations run programmes parallel to the stronger stations; this makes Cuba easy to DX extensively.
- NETHERLANDS ANTILLES** - Trans World Radio (PJB) on the island of Bonaire with 500 kW. is presently the most powerful station in the Western Hemisphere. It is heard nightly over or under CKLW on 800; PJB programmes religion in EE, SS, PP, & Dutch.
- ST. KITTS** - In the early evening Radio Paradise - 1265, with religious pgms. in EE, can be received often at levels equalling or surpassing the strengths of the adjacent 1260 & 1270 domestics. ZIZ on 555 is also an easily-heard split.
- VENEZUELA** - Many easy targets to be found here: best bets include 670, 700, 720, 750, 830, 950, 1020, 1070, 1110, & 1200.
- COLOMBIA** - Try the Sutatenza outlets on 700, 810, & 960; these should dominate during auroral conditions ('AU CX'). La Voz de Barranquilla - 760 & R. Reloj - 1100 are easily heard. Colombian network ID's heard often are RCN (erray-say-ennay), CARACOL, R. Sutatenza, & TODELAR. HJED-820 usually over-rides WBAP in the eastern states. HJAZ, Emisora Sinu - 1160 in Monteria has been dominating the channel late at night.
- SURINAM** - SRS on 725 is easy even on unsophisticated receivers in the early evening. 600 & 640 are frequently heard at Cape Cod and at other coastal sites during the local-sunset period. 820, 914 & 1030 are rarer. Surinam stations programme Dutch, Hindu, and numerous other languages; similarly, musical content is extremely variable.
- ANTIGUA** - The EE religious broadcasts & BBC news relays of the Caribbean Radio Lighthouse on 1165 can be copied early in the evening before WWVA-1170 becomes strong. ZDK-1100 can be heard mixing with the Colombians during AU CX; even during 'normal' cx. it dominates quite well at coastal sites at local sunset between WHLI s/off & HJAT/WWVE fade-ups.
- HAITI** - 4VEC on 1035 is easy with WBZ looped or phased; this is heard early in the evening. Also try 4VEF-840 & 4VRS-1170 at local sunset during AU CX. 895 is a split sometimes noted during good Latin American conditions.
- CAYMAN ISLANDS** - 1555 is easy most nights; 1205 also makes it through rather often. Both are heard best when AU CX diminish the adjacent-channel domestic splatter.
- COSTA RICA** - R. Nacional (TIRN) - 575 makes this country easy. Other good bets are R. Sonora - 675, R. Uno - 775, R. Titania - 825, & R. Casino - 1176. 725 is heard after SRS s/off, or w/SRS nulled.
- PUERTO RICO** - WHOA on 870 can be heard in EE with Top 40 before WWL fades in for the night. WKAQ-580, R. Reloj, gets out very well with its SS all-news format. WAPA-680 is often heard well outside the immediate vicinity of domestic pests such as WRKO & WCBM. WKVM-810 can be heard mixing with other LA's during AU CX; the KVM (Kah-Vay-Em) ID's are easily distinguished.
- BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS** - ZBVI on 780 can be heard at sunset, before Cuba/WBBM fade-ins. This is best at coastal sites, but it will make the trip inland. The format is basically soul/disco/reggae with a crazy & heavily-accented male announcer who talks over records and dumps in sound effects including wolf howls & Star Wars-style raygun noises.
- GUADELOUPE** - Arnouville - 640 is heard at sunset mixing with Surinam before Cuba & Venezuela fade in. Programming is all in French.
- DOMINICAN REPUBLIC** - R. Universal on 650 is commonly heard. Other possibilities are 830, 890, 1120, 1160, & 1180. R. Clarin - 860 was the best bet before Hurricane David. It came back on the air, but at a much lower power than before.
- MEXICO** - XEWA on 540 "La Voz de la America Latina" is sometimes the dominant station on 540 after CBT/CBEF s/off's. Others likely to be heard are XEQ-730, XEW-900, XEQ-940, XEG-1050, XERH-1500, XEVIP-1560, & XERF-1570. Mexicans are best heard in the early morning hours.
- BELIZE** - 834 is heard often between YVLT/WCCO-830 & WHAS-840 until s/off at 0510 GMT.
- ST. VINCENT** - R. St. Vincent on 705 puts out a good signal but the modulation level is weak. As with all Caribbean stations, the best time to try is at sunset during auroral conditions.
- DOMINICA** - D. B. C. on 595 is a good bet in EE or try for R. Caribbean International w/ FF on 1210 or 1150. R. Jumbo - 545 is long gone, unfortunately.

19. BARBADOS - R. Barbados on 900 requires an auroral disruption to weaken CKTS/CHML. The best time for Barbados-900 is at sunset before YVMD & HJEY fade up.

20. NICARAGUA - R. Sandino on 750 can usually be heard u/WSB w/YVKS looped later in the evening. Also try 540 & 620.

21. PANAMA - R. Peninsula- 825 ID's often and it can be heard fighting for control of the channel w/R. Titania in Costa Rica. Other possibilities include HOL80 on 840 & HOL55 on 860. The splits on 965 & 1045 may be received on a communications receiver during reasonably-good Latin American conditions.

22. EL SALVADOR - YSS R. Nacional on 655 is not too difficult unless you DX from a site too close to WNBC or WSM. Try YSCF-1155 which has an American-sounding Top 40 & disco format w/SS announcers.

23. BAHAMAS - ZNS3 is sometimes heard on Monday mornings with WGY off on 810. ZNS1 on 1540 makes it to New England when AU CX kill WPTR's skywave; those living south of Albany (in the WPTR null) can easily log this one before KXEL fade-up.

24. JAMAICA - J. B. C. outlets are found on 550, 560, 580, 620, 700, 720, 750, & 770. All stations are 5 kW. Radio 1 on 700 seems to be the most easily heard; it's often audible with WLW nulled. The Jamaicans sometimes run all-night, despite indications to the contrary in the World Radio-TV Handbook.

25. GUYANA - The best bet is R. Demerara on 760 at sunset during AU CX. This is heard well at coastal sites such as Delmarva, south Jersey, & Cape Cod. Action Radio on 560 can also be heard in severe AU CX if you're lucky enough to have no serious WGAN or WFIL problem; the last report I've seen on this one was from Bob Foxworth on Long Island.

26. HONDURAS - R. Panamerica on 944 is the best bet. R. Aeropuerto on 1085 & R. Danli - 1365 can also make it during the best conditions. Those without a selective receiver will have difficulty logging this country. W.R.TV.H. lists a 25 kW. station on 1160, but nobody ever hears it.

27. GRENADA - R. Grenada on 535 can be heard at sunset with a poor to fair signal. Reception tends to deteriorate later in the night as s/lop & noise levels increase. 535 suffers from the severe TV birdies, light-dimmer buzz, & powerline-leakage noise problems which plague the lower end of the band.

28. MONTERRAT - ZJB on 885 in EE is the easiest, but modulation levels are low and it's difficult to get an ID through the WCBS s/lop. R. Antilles - 740 can be heard occasionally w/FF programming, best during AU CX at sunset before the SS LA's fade in. The 200 kW. station on 930 has a very unfavourable directional pattern for U. S. reception; it beams to the northeast. It is heard more often in Europe than in North America.

29. TRINIDAD & TOBAGO - There are two stations here: 610 & 730. Both require AU CX to be heard. A coastal receiving QTH is advisable. These stations have reputedly increased power to 50 kW. but they don't seem any easier to hear. Check for Caribbean-accented EE talk and Caribbean-style music.

30. ECUADOR - Frecuencia Mil on 995 & R. Melodia - 735 will be at least readable most nights if a communications receiver is used. 945 is more difficult. Tropicana - 540 is heard during AU CX.

31. ST. LUCIA - R. Caribbean on 840 can occasionally make it through the QRM at local sunset.

32. BRAZIL - R. Mundial on 860 can be heard w/R. Clarin & the Cuban R. Reloj after CBH/CJBC s/off. This runs all night with U. S. Top 40, disco, & an occasional PP folk-rock song. Most nights this can be heard at the coast at poor to fair quality. Occasionally, it is strong enough to penetrate inland. Long deep fades are common. R. Globo - 1220 can also be heard at sunset during AU CX. The

33. ANGUILLA - R. Anguilla on 1505 programmes a variety of music; it is heard best at the coast early evenings before WTOP becomes too strong.

34. BERMUDA - ZFB on 960 is occasionally heard with Top 40/pop/soul/disco music during semi-auroral conditions o/u HJHN with the mainland QRM nulled. This is best at East Coast sunset. Those of you who like 'graveyard' DX can try 1230 & 1340 during a moderate aurora. But don't hold your breath waiting - hi. Really deep AU CX will knock out Bermuda, though, as Bermuda is not very far to the south.

35. U. S. VIRGIN ISLANDS - WVWI on 1000 may be heard occasionally at sunset during AU CX. Check early because the channel is quickly dominated by the Venezuelans & Colombians. WSTX is another AU CX possibility if you have no strong groundwave pest on 970.

36. GUATEMALA - TGW on 640, "La Voz de Guatemala", can be heard late in the evening under CMQ; s/off is at 0600. TKG-1240 has been heard during deep AU CX. TGTL sometimes drifts to 939, where splittable from 940 on a good receiver. TGJ used to be common on 880 before WCBS went All Night operation.

37. PERU - Because of the horizon-blockage effect of the Andes mountains, Peru is received better on the west coast than in the east. R. Nacional on 854 on a Monday morning with WHDH off or running OC is the best chance to log Peru. R. Union - 880 & R. America - 1010 have been heard in the west; they used to be heard in the east when WCBS & WINS had Monday morning silent periods. There are also two 10 kW. Radio Nacional transmitters on 1120 in the cities of Tumbes & Iquitos in northern Peru, away from the Andes. These might be possibly received along with other co-channel LA's when KMOX is knocked out by AU CX.

38. ARGENTINA - LRAL on 870 has been heard at sunset and also at 0900 s/on. ID is R. Nacional. Listen for the LRA pips on the hour. They are 6 pips with the last one prolonged. Usually these pips are heard through much QRM. You might hear R. El Mundo - 1070 or R. del Plata - 1030 on day power of 25 kW. when WBZ is occasionally off on early Monday mornings. These stations will fade by 0830 GMT during our winter, so wait until spring to hear them on day transmissions. 1070 R. El Mundo runs all night. Also check 950.

39. FRENCH GUIANA - Virtually the only possible time to hear this country is at sunset during extreme AU CX before the more westerly LA's fade up. The 0930 s/on will likely be buried by YVMA, HJAG, & HJCG. FF talk or music will be the tip-off here. A recent shortwave QSL said that the power on 1070 is now 20 kW., but based upon its strength compared with that of stations from Guyana & Surinam heard at the same time, it seems that if this is 20 kW. it is very inefficient; more likely, it still uses 4 kW.

40. PARAGUAY - R. Caaguazu on 645 is very difficult, but it was heard by several DXers on Cape Cod last season. R. Presidente Strössner is on 885 or 890 with 25 kW. & a listed schedule of 0900 - 0415. It might be heard if all factors were right. Other long-shots are ZP5 on 760, ZP70 on 780, & ZP28 on 860. Additionally, ZP10 is listed as being on 1305.

41. TURKS & CAICOS ISLANDS - 1550 is very difficult to receive due to its low power and a more westerly location; even during AU CX there will be QRM from the southern U. S. regionals at sunset. The format is EE disco/soul/top 40.

42. MARTINIQUE - This French colony had a 50 kW. transmitter on 1310 which was rarely heard in the U. S. but made it occasionally to Europe. This was reported to have been destroyed during Hurricane David but, hopefully, it will return.

43. BOLIVIA - There's little hope of receiving Bolivians on the crowded broadcast band of today, unless some of its stations raise power. R. Illimani - 1020 is on 24 hours a day; it might be heard on a Monday morning if YVRS decided to go off. Other s/ons to look for (if you pray a lot - hi) in conjunction with 'pest' silent periods are CP57 on 1090, CP27 on 730, & CP34 on 680. CP34 was heard about 12 years ago.

F39-3-3  
F39

- 44. **URUGUAY** - At present, it's a very tough catch. R. Carve on 850 s/on at 0830 might be heard on a Monday morning with WHDH off. Another possibility is R. Oriental on 770 with s/on at 0900 if WABC goes off on a Monday morning. SODRE - 650 is soon supposed to increase power to 200 kW. This would make Uruguay considerably easier to log at sunset in the spring, summer, and autumn.
- 45. **CHILE** - This country is extremely difficult for Easterners to log because it offers no all-nighters on clear frequencies. As it lies in western South America, its stations are QRM'ed by the time that they fade in during the early evening. Chile's s/ons are too late to be logged free of QRM on a Monday morning in the East. Three 50 kW. stations offer the best chance: CB106 on 1060, CB114 on 1140, and CB138 on 1380. These might be possible with phased Beverages on the coast during AU CX. CB118 - 1180 which had been heard on the west coast is no longer on the air. As is the case with Peru, the Andes mountains restrict some otherwise-viable modes of propagation from Chile to eastern North America.
- 46. **FALKLAND ISLANDS** - For you dreamers - here it is: F. I. B. S. on 536 with over a quarter of the distance around the world to span with its humble 5 kW. transmitter. This has never made it to North America, but set up miles of wire to a southward-facing beach and you just might be the first to log it. Remember to tape this because no one will believe that you heard it.

The reader is also advised to consult the IRCA Foreign Logs for other articles of considerable use to the Pan-American DXer.

## DXing Latin America & the Caribbean - Some Comments

Kazaross, Connelly and DeLorenzo have provided a very useful, complete summary of optimum DXing targets in the Caribbean area. In the interest of completeness, it is worthwhile to comment on a few countries where additional information is available.

- 3. **St. Kitts**. ZIZ Radio, 555 kHz normally leaves their carrier on all-night. There is no modulation present. During holiday periods such as the time around Christmas, programming is available all night. The reason stations leave the carrier on continuously is usually to avoid humidity-induced component failure in the event of a power shut-off; a real problem in tropical areas. The AN carrier may provide a useful beacon of propagation to West Coast DXers.
- 8. **Haiti**. It may not be clear that, except for 1035, Haitian programming is normally all in French. As 840 is the most commonly heard French-programmed signal for me, at least, great care must be taken to differentiate from St. Lucia here.
- 9. **Cayman Is.** 1555 seems to be another all-night unmodulated carrier which is often heard well late in the evening or early AM hours. For some reason I have found 1205 reception to be quite difficult during programmed hours, and don't believe the 1205 carrier is on AN; at least I can't hear it!
- 11. **Puerto Rico**. The WKVN-810 s/off can often be heard in the clear, Monday mornings, after WGY s/off, during summer months when DST is in effect. This was the case in 1979. ZNS Freeport may change that in 1980, though. They play the Star Spangled Banner and La Borinqueña, the P.R. anthem, a "slow, plodding" music piece.
- 17. **St. Vincent**. Again, carrier seems AN; I can pull it past WOR slop.
- 21. **Panama**. Another interesting possibility, if WABC is off, is on 770 mixed with Colombia's Radio Tequendama.
- 24. **Jamaica**. Only 4 of the outlets are JBC, the others are Radio Jamaica (which used to be called RJR. Consult WRTVH for details). They are separate systems with one of each system in each of the 4 major "centers" of the Island. During auroras in past years, I've found 550 to be readable a few times, atop.
- 25. **Guyana**. I've heard 560 at least a half dozen times, generally in the evening during Au conditions, and a few times after morning s/on, too. Reception was not that difficult. Demerara-760 was only heard here once with a lot of difficulty, in the early AM. The 560 IB was simply "G-B-S".

- 27. **Grenada**. 535 reception, here, tends to increase as the evening wears on, and they're almost exclusively a wintertime reception. The last couple of seasons, they were semi-regular at 0230 s/off but since "brother" Bishop took over, have heard them on later in the evening. Never very strong.
  - 29. **Trinidad and Tobago**. Since the 610 outlet increased power to 50 kw a couple seasons ago, they don't require "auroral" cx, but merely decent skip, to be heard. They are often detectable and occasionally atop, at 0400 TC, area news, and 0402 s/off and devotion. I am quite sure that 730 has NOT increased power and are still only 20 kw, and they normally DO require Au CX to be heard here. During Au cx, 730 normally is heard shortly after sunset; 610 is generally hrd late in the evening when non-Au cx prevail. 730 is "Radio Trinidad" and have NOT used the VP4RD call letters since I was in diapers. 610 does NOT use the so-called Radio Guardian ID. They are simply "N-B-S Radio six-ten" (for: National Broadcasting Service).
  - 34. **Bermuda**. Just in case you think I have it easy - this one ain't, here. No receptions in years on any of the 3 freqs, and not for a lack of effort.
  - 39. **French Guiana**. The reported 0930 s/on time is doubtful. SW DX bulletins several months ago report receptions at and after 0900 which agrees with what I heard on the SW freq several years ago. During early morning reception I recommend checking // 3385 kHz which should be heard in the clear except for a Papua New Guinea station on the same freq. Cayenne runs a tone test for a few minutes prior to an IS and anthem. I tentatively had the tone on 1070 once but too weak for audio. I would have to agree, an evening auroral reception seems more likely. However evening 3385 reception seems quite difficult for most.
  - 46. **Falkland Islands**. This is a fascinating item due to the interest in the SW operation here. Within the past year, the 2370 kHz outlet increased power from 500 watts to 5 kW, thus it is occasionally heard in North America and northern Europe. The most recent 2370 receptions were on 29 and 30 December 1979 when I and several other DXers got readable audio from them. Generally this is noted only during disturbed geomagnetic cx; during my reception the K-index was five. During North American winter, reception is possible only after roughly 0030 as sunset at Stanley comes roughly at sunset on the West Coast, or just after it. During summer in North America, reception has been reported just after local sunset on to signoff, as the Stanley sunset is much earlier. The listed and reported signoff is 0130 six days per week and 0030 Monday, which of course is local Sunday night. Reception on 2370 in winter seems to peak around 0100 on the occasional nights when it is heard at all. Occasionally, however they are reported on as late as 0200. This would give the probability of a favorable darkness path covering just about the whole U.S. in winter with the narrowest reception "window" occurring on the Pacific Coast, just at LSS. The authoritative Danish SW Club's Tropical Bands Survey (which covers stations worldwide in the 2000 to 5900 kHz range) lists no favorable morning schedule for this station. They are on briefly in mid-morning, well past fadeout time, and in the afternoon and evenings to 0130 as detailed above...don't get up at 5 AM your time for this one! It follows that anyone who even thinks he is hearing them on 536 should definitely check 2370 as well, which is in itself considered a top-drawer catch by many. Just be sure to tape audio from BOTH frequencies, establishing the difference in reception "sound" lest you be accused of SW-ing it. Remember that the "British colonial" type stations check reception reports probably as thoroughly as anyone does. And F.I.B.S. is reputed to be very fussy about what they will and won't accept for a QSL. Any 536 reception claim would have to be thoroughly documented in view of the 2370 reports they're getting now. With that out of the way, it "seems theoretically possible" that exceptional conditions, a quiet receiving location and a properly pointed Beverage wave antenna "could" bring in 536 reception when 2370 is making it in at the same time, earning the lucky DXer a place in the record books. For this one, good luck! For information...the 536 frequency as best I know is unconfirmed by actual DXer's monitoring although it is consistently reported/listed by official sources. The 2370 kHz freq is accurate to well within 100 Hz as verified by measurement, being nearly zerobeat with a crystal divider marker standard. Stanley is approx. 6500 statute miles from New York at a 170° bearing. Programming is a variety of record shows, drama, BBC World Service news relays, shipping news etc, all in EE.
- \* \* \* \* \*
- Receiving location is central Nassau county (not on the water, 110 ft. A.S.L.) on Long Island 30 km east of N.Y.C. Receiver Hammarlund HQ-150. Antenna primarily a 40 foot outdoor wire; occasionally a ferrite core loop is used.

-- by Bob Foxworth