

DXING MEXICO

by Bruce Portzer

Our neighbor to the south presents a wealth of DXing opportunities for the Broadcast Band listener. There are over seven hundred AM stations in Mexico, ranging from 100 watt daytimers to 100,000 watt (and more) powerhouses. There are 32 states to log, if you want the challenge of trying to log and verify every single one of them. There's the chance to hear some exotic (or at least different) music than you would hear DXing Yank and Caunk stations. And while the language barrier has scared away many a DXer from logging more than the English-language border stations, it's not really difficult to learn to pick out IDs from Mexicans.

Your ability to hear (and identify) Mexicans depends, to a great extent, on where you live. Your location will also have a great effect on which parts of Mexico you receive.

If you live in the northeastern U.S. or eastern Canada, Mexico will be tougher for you than for DXers in any other region. Most of what you receive will be high powered stuff, especially stations in Mexico City and near the U.S.-Mexico border---stations like XERF-1570, XEW-900, XEROK-800, XEX-730, and so on. And you'll probably have to fight through QRM from Canadians. As a further complication, most of the Spanish you'll hear is from Cuba, Colombia, and other Latin American countries, so you can't get your hopes up just because you hear Spanish.

If you live in the southeastern U.S., especially along the Gulf Coast, you'll have even worse Cuban interference, but you'll also have a great shot at eastern Mexico. Stations in Tamaulipas, Veracruz, and other eastern states will breeze in a lot more easily on regional channels than they will in other parts of the U.S. This is due, of course, to the "water path" over the Gulf. The usual crowd of high powered Mexico City stations will also be there to drive you nuts. And if you're really lucky, you might log something on the Yucatan peninsula.

If you live in the south central U.S., you'll hear more Mexicans than you know what to do with. And most of the Spanish you hear will indeed be Mexican. Stations in the border states of Coahuila and Chihuahua will be especially dominant, as will the higher powered stations in the major cities (Mexico, Monterrey, etc.).

If you live in the north central U.S. and central Canada (say, between the Rockies, the Mississippi River, Topeka, and the North Pole), you'll hear about the same stations as your south central counterparts. But it won't come in as well---you'll have to wait for a good aurora night and/or fight your way through domestic interference.

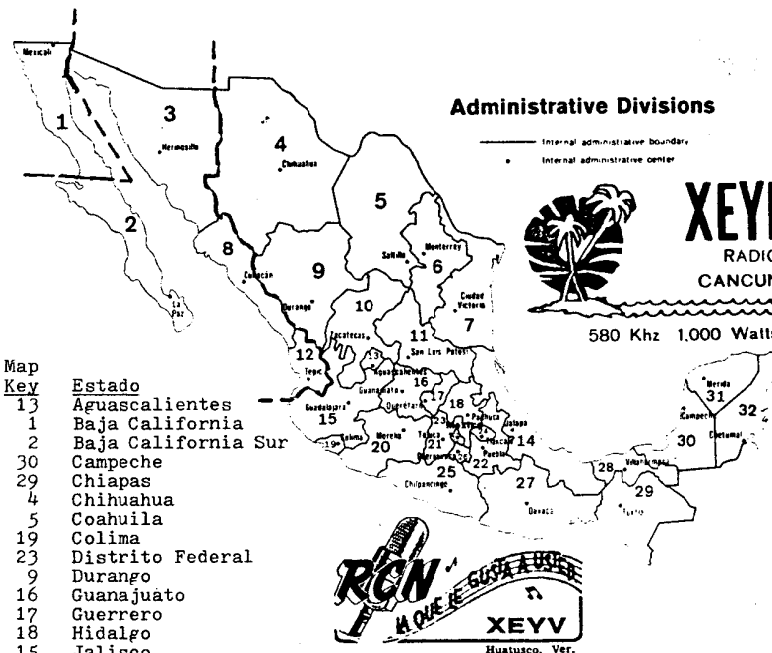
If you live in the southwestern U.S., west of Albuquerque and south of San Francisco, you'll be able to hear lots and lots of Mexicans, with Baja California and Sonora especially good. In southern California, the Tijuana powerhouses will come in so well, you'll be able to log them on your hair dryer, your plumbing, and your false teeth.

In the northwestern U.S., Baja California will dominate, but other western Mexicans (Sonora, Jalisco, etc) can be heard at various times of the evening and early morning.

SOME HELPFUL SUGGESTIONS

If you're going to get serious about chasing Mexican DX, here are a few helpful suggestions.

- In case you haven't heard, they speak Spanish in Mexico. 99% of the radio broadcasting down there is in that language. However, the language barrier is not a DX barrier. You may want to enroll in a Spanish course to become familiar with the sound of the language and basic pronunciation and grammatical rules. Or you may try to pick it up on your own. Either way, for DXing purposes, you should first memorize the Spanish alphabet and the way the letters are pronounced (A is "ah", B is "beh", etc), then the numbers (so you know that "ochenta y ocho" is 88, etc), and the pronunciation rules (so you know how to pronounce city and slogan names you see in print). After you become proficient in those areas, work on learning words you might hear on the radio in ads, DJ patter, news & sportscasts, etc. After a while you'll be amazed at how well you can figure out what's going on, even if you can only understand about 5 percent of what the announcer is saying. An excellent reference on this subject is the University of Chicago Spanish-English/English-Spanish dictionary, available in paperback form at most book stores.



Map Key	Estado
13	Aguascalientes
1	Baja California
2	Baja California Sur
30	Campeche
29	Chiapas
4	Chihuahua
5	Coahuila
19	Colima
23	Distrito Federal
9	Durango
16	Guanajuato
17	Guerrero
18	Hidalgo
15	Jalisco
21	Mexico
20	Michoacan
26	Morelos
12	Nayarit
6	Nuevo Leon
27	Oaxaca
22	Puebla
17	Queretaro
32	Quintana Roo
11	San Luis Potosi
8	Sinaloa
3	Sonora
28	Tabasco
7	Tamaulipas
24	Tlaxcala
14	Veracruz
31	Yucatan
10	Zacatecas



- You'll need a good log listing Mexican stations. At the risk of praising myself, I'll recommend the IRCA Mexican Log (which I compiled...), which appeared in the IRCA Foreign Log (Vol. 9), and DX Monitor about a year ago. It's also available as a reprint. It lists slogans, skeds, etc., as well as call, frequency, and location. Other useful references include the World Radio-TV Handbook, the North American Radio-TV Station Guide, and Medios Publicidad Mexicanos. The latter is a book of advertising rates for AM/FM stations, TV stations, and movie theatres, but it has a lot of information on facilities, formats, addresses, personnel, etc.

- It's helpful to have a good map of Mexico. The best I've found (so far) is the road map of Mexico, put out by the American Automobile Association. It's free to AAA members, so you can't beat the price, and shows all major cities and highways, and most smaller towns

(including just about every place with a radio station). Also potentially useful is the AAA Travel Guide to Mexico and Central America, which includes (among other things) layouts of the major streets in the larger cities, a Spanish phrase guide, and descriptions of many cities, towns, and tourist sites. It's also free. Many world atlases and North American road atlases have relatively good maps of Mexico.

- Mexico has what a lot of US daytime-only stations wish we had---post-sunset authority. Many Mexican daytime-only stations are allowed to stay on for a while after sunset. In many cases, this authority extends to 8 p.m. local time. This opens up all sorts of DX possibilities during the evening hours.
- Most of Mexico is on Central Standard time. Sonora, Sinaloa, Nayarit, and Baja California Sur are on Mountain Standard time. Baja California is on Pacific time. And rumor has it that Campeche, Yucatan, and Quintana Roo are changing to Eastern time. I'm not sure if Mexico calls their time zones the same thing we call them, though, as mountains aren't the major distinguishing feature of the area of Mexico in the MST time zone. Daylight saving time is not observed in Mexico, except in Baja California. You might keep this in mind when DST is in effect, as the s/on and s/off times shift by one hour, relative to ours. For example, XEYI-1000 signs off at 2 a.m. (their time), and can be heard here on Monday mornings (during DST) for an hour after KOMO's midnight signoff.

WHEN TO LISTEN

As in any DX endeavor, the best time to listen is when the desired signals are at their best, and the interference is at a minimum. This requirement varies from one part of North America to another. If you live in the northeast U.S. and eastern Canada, you have your best reception after midnight, when some of the QRM has died down. In the south east, the evening hours will be very productive. Near the U.S.-Mexico border, evenings will be excellent, and sunrise and sunset time will hold possibilities for bagging some daytimers. In the upper midwest, there's probably no outstanding time for chasing Mexicans, evenings will bring in some, and others won't be heard until after midnight. In the Pacific Northwest, evenings are okay for the routine stuff (XEG-1050, XEWA-540), but the really good stuff will come in between 3 and 5 a.m. In the western U.S., it is generally a good idea to watch the clear channels just before sunrise, as eastern QRM will have faded out, leaving one or two Mexicans in the clear.

BEST BETS

Is it possible to log all 32 "estados"? Probably not, but you can have fun trying. Here is a run-down on the "best bets" for each of them. This list was rather tough to compile, since I tried to relate it to all of the U.S. and Canada. Also, some of these places haven't been logged recently by DXers north of the Rio Grande. Anyway, here goes.....

AGUASCALIENTES

This one's a toughie, due to a small number of stations, none of which are high powered. XELTZ-740, XEBI-790, or some other station might pop through for a lucky DXer near the border, but don't hold your breath. The highest listed day power in this state is 1 kw, and nighttime powers are even lower.

BAJA CALIFORNIA

If you live in San Diego, that rock music you hear on your tooth fillings is either XETRA-690 or XEPRS-1090. Things are a lot tougher if you don't live in San Diego; you'll have to use a radio. Seriously, if you live in the western 50% of the U.S. or Canada, you should have no trouble logging this state via XETRA, XEPRS, XEMO-860, XED-1050, or any number of others. If you live farther east, you will probably be able to log it also, but you'll probably have to fight through a bit of QRM to do it.

BAJA CALIFORNIA SUR

This place is tough to hear in southern California and very rarely heard in other parts of the west. XENT-790, XEHZ-990, and XEVSD-1440 have been heard in the U.S. in recent years, though. If you live outside the western U.S., forget it.

CAMPECHE

XEA-1370 can be heard along the U.S. Gulf Coast during evening hours. XESE-1560 was heard at signon in Seattle about 10 years ago. None of the others seem to get out worth a darn.

CHIAPAS

I can't find any loggings of this one in recent foreign logs. Its southern location makes it a toughie, but you might try XERA-760, XEWM-640, or XEIO-840, all of which are daytimers. XETG-990 has .10 kw full-time, but probably beams it all at the Galapagos Islands.

CHIHUAHUA

This one is easy. XEROK-800 is a powerhouse throughout the western 2/3 of the U.S., and parts of Canada. It's occasionally heard in the northeast by DXers who can get past CKLW and/or PJB.



XEGQ
 RADIO ESMERALDA
 Planta transmisora:
 Los Reyes, Mich.
 Sirve eficazmente
 a un importante
 Mercado Michoacano
 presencia de
radio.s.a.
 Av. Yucatán No. 20 y 22 ph.
 México 7, D. F.
 Tels. 574-44-78
 y 574-45-34

COAHUILA

XERF-1570 is probably the the best bet. It doesn't seem to be as powerful as its listed 250 kw, but it gets out well to much of the midwest and west. In the northwest, if CHUB or CKTA is too much, try for XEVK-1010 or XETOR-670 around 1200UTC.

COLIMA

XERL-710 was heard in Mississippi a couple years ago. XEAL-860 might make it as far north as Texas, if on day power. Otherwise, things don't look too promising.

DISTRITO FEDERAL

Take your pick. XERPM-660, XEX-730, XEW-900, XEQ-940, XEQR-1030, and XEB-1220 all put good signals into much of the U.S. and Canada. Your best bet depends on who else is on their respective frequencies.

DURANGO

XEDGO-760 has been heard in Seattle. XECK-620 and XEDU-860 are other possibilities in the western U.S. and Canada. Elsewhere, don't get your hopes up.

GUANAJUATO

XELG-680 can be heard in many parts of the western U.S. and Canada, depending on the listener's proximity to the QRM (it dominates 680 on the west coast when KNBR goes off). XEFG-840 has been heard in Seattle and B.C. XEWE-1420 has been heard in the Gulf Coast.

GUERRERO

None of the stations here look too promising. XEBB-600, XEACA-630, XEKU-710, or XEKOK-750 might make it to the southwestern U.S., depending on how well the QRM cooperates. Or one of the other stations there might surprise someone. There is an XEYL-1170 listed with 50/10 kw, U4, underconstruction, but...

HIDALGO

The only logging I can find was XENQ-1580, heard by Nick Hall-Patch last year. The other seven Hidalgons look a lot less likely.

JALISCO

XEWK-1190 can be received in much of the western U.S. and Canada, especially under auroral conditions. For west coast reception, a KEX silent period helps. XEHL-1010 is a good runner up for west coast reception. It can be heard many nights o/u KXEG et al.

MEXICO

It depends on how you look at it. XEABC-760, XEUR-1530, and XEFAJ-1560 are all licensed to this state but actually try to serve Mexico City. I believe the studios for all three are in Mexico City, and for all I know, their transmitters may be, too. XEFAJ-1560 has been heard IDing as in San Rafael Chamapa, Mexico, and has proclaimed that they serve "Valle de Mexico", which is like saying "Bay Area" instead of just San Francisco. At any rate, the more "genuine" Mexico stations are all low powered daytimers or graveyarders.

MICHOACAN

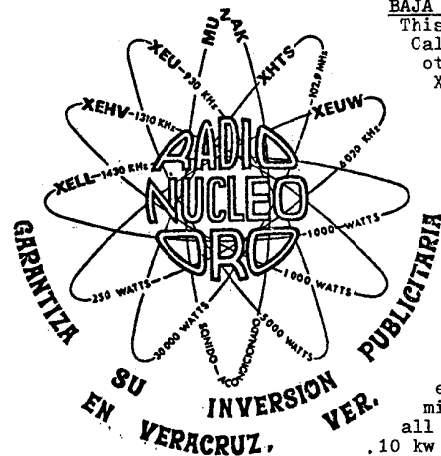
XELY-870 and XEZM-650 are sometimes heard in the western US/Canada after the eastern QRM fades down.

NORELOS

This state has 5 stations. And it's way down in southern Mexico. All 5 stations are 1 kw or less. If you hear one of them, congratulations!

NUEVO LEON

XEG-1050 is by far the easiest. It can be heard in most of the U.S. and Canada, although in some places (Toronto, New York, etc) you'll have to wait for the local QRM to go off. Runners-up are XET-990 and XEMR-1140.



NAYARIT
 XERIO-1560 was heard in Seattle a year ago, but was apparently on earlier than their normal s/on. XEUX-810 might make it into parts of the southwestern U.S., if on day power.

OAXACA
 Daytimers XEIU-1160, XEYG-660, XEZB-1120, or XEACC-870 might make it into the south central or southwestern U.S. if the QRM pipes down. XEAX-1270, I believe, has been heard in the southeastern U.S.

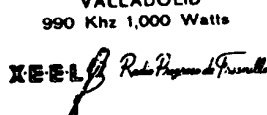


PUEBLA
 There are lots of stations here, but none look like outstanding bets. XEPA-1370 is the most powerful.

QUINTANA ROO
 XERB-1170 looks like a good bet for the Gulf Coast crowd, but I can't say I've seen it reported by anyone. Daytimer XEWO-1020 might also reach the southeastern U.S. if KDKA is wiped out by daylight or an aurora and the other Latins cooperate.



QUERETARO
 XEXE-1490 has been heard in the Gulf Coast area. Others, with similar power, like XENA-1450, XEVI-1400, or XEJX-1250 might be worth watching for, but all of them have tough QRM to fight. Outside the southeastern U.S., uh.....no.



SAN LUIS POTOSI
 XEWA-540 is heard in many parts of the U.S. and Canada. It's a powerhouse as far away as British Columbia. Nothing else in SLP comes close to matching them.

SINALOA
 XEPNK-880, XECU-1470, XEVQ-830, XETNT-650, XEWS-1010, and XENW-860 are all heard regularly in various parts of the western and south central U.S. They're all longshots in the east, though.

SONORA
 XEDM-1580 has been heard as far east as Quebec and is quite strong in the western U.S. and Canada. It can even be heard in parts of the Los Angeles area with KDAY on! Lots of other Sonorans can be heard in the west during the evening or around sunrise. Few, if any, besides XEDM, make it very far east.

TABASCO
 XEVA-790 is heard fairly often in the Gulf Coast area. I can't recall seeing it reported elsewhere, though.

TAMAULIPAS
 Lots of Tamaulipans are heard in Texas and neighboring states. Like XERTT-1270, XEO-970, XEAM-1310, and XENU-1550. Some of them make it to the upper midwest under the right conditions. XEPW-810 is the best bet for west coast DXers, if you can wait for a KGO silent period. It might be a good bet in other parts of the U.S. and Canada.

TLAXCALA
 This state has two 500 watt daytimers, period. Which is easier for you? XEHT-810 or XETT-1430?

VERACRUZ
 XEQO-980 has been heard in Pennsylvania. XEPR-1480 was heard in Seattle several years ago, with certain QRMers off. XEHV-1310 has been heard in the upper midwest (Michigan) and Gulf Coast areas. Take your pick.

YUCATAN
 XEYW-1270 has been heard in the Gulf Coast area.

Radio Conto

ZACATECAS
 XEEL-610, XEMA-690, XEIH-930, or XEYQ-1510 might be heard somewhere in the U.S., if the QRM cooperates....