

440-24

# DXing The 1984 Solar Eclipse

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The solar eclipse of May 30, 1984 kind of snuck up on me. I didn't learn until the day before that Pensacola, Florida would experience 96% totality and that another eclipse wasn't due here until 2017. Furthermore, it wasn't until the morning of the eclipse that I definitely decided to sacrifice a half day of work (in the interest of DX science, of course) to see what the effects of an eclipse-weakened D-layer of the ionosphere would be on BCB DX. As a result of these 11th hour events, my hastily devised monitoring plan was, I'm sure, far from optimal. Nonetheless, it did result in some interesting listening and loggings.

Having never before DXed an eclipse, I didn't really know what to expect. I assumed that, since the darkness path was moving from west to east, stations from the west might begin appearing via skywave some time before the eclipse began in Pensacola. As it turned out, skywave reception wasn't definitely noticeable until the eclipse had begun in Pensacola and no unequivocal westerly bias was noted at that time. There did seem to be a slight easterly "opening" after the eclipse had peaked here and had begun receding, however. The strongest signals throughout the eclipse, though, seemed to originate from locations along the 100% totality path (i.e., New Orleans, southern Alabama, Atlanta); but this is a subjective observation.

About an hour before the scheduled beginning of the eclipse in Pensacola (9:45 a.m. CDT), I ran down the dial and selected frequencies to monitor which either had no discernable signals on them or which had weak to poor signal levels. It turned out that on that morning 40 channels fit the bill (a receiver with a multi-channel memory would have come in handy in this instance) but I will report on only a fraction of those. The monitoring equipment included an ICOM R-70 and a Yaesu FRG-7, each connected to its own loop and longwire antenna.

## 8:41 a.m. (one hour before eclipse onset)

The following frequencies showed no signs of signals or carriers and were checked throughout the eclipse:

530	834	1130
555	890	1210
650	1000	
655	1070	
700	1100	

Below are the channels monitored which had low level signals discernable one hour before eclipse onset:

580-WDBO (FL)	1090-UNID
630-UNID	1120-Cuba
750-WSB (GA)	1150-WGEA (AL)
820-Cuba	1530-WAAD (AL)
960-WERC (AL)	1560-WSDL (LA)

## 9:44 a.m. (eclipse onset)

There seemed (somewhat strangely) to be a slight increase in noise level at this time which continued throughout the eclipse. This may have been a purely local (i.e., line noise) phenomenon; I'm not certain.

About 15 minutes after onset, a few subaudible hets (SAHs) and carriers began to appear and overall signal levels seemed to

