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Here's the first of what I hope will be many topical DX Techniques columns. The subject is "Effective Summertime DXing." Away we go...

Phil Bytheway: I use my summer DX time to log those easier/closer stations that have changed calls or are new on the air. The first thing I do is create a comprehensive list, using "Broadcasting Information," and appropriate DXR columns in the past year's DXM's. I enter them into a file on the computer at work, in frequency order. Once I have this master list complete, I go through it station by station and note the best time to try for each. Then I rate the probability (1-10) of hearing, based on previous loggings, frequency conditions, and "gut feeling". The list is then sorted by probability, and printed out for easy reference. For a normal DX session, I usually consider the top 5 stations, crossing them off the list when logged. Using this technique, I have often heard other (more true DX) stations, as well as the targeted ones. The key for me is that the list gets me to think of regular DX during the summer, when I would normally not turn the radio on for months.

Larry Godwin: The key to summertime success is, I think, persistence. Sometimes I'll get up at 0445 and all I'll hear will be lightning static. Other mornings there's an annoying buzz from I don't know where. It takes some self-discipline for me to keep at it, but I'm always rewarded. I believe there is a great deal of potential for hearing distant southern hemisphere stations around the changing of the seasons, which is June 22 this year. In previous years I've been able to hear stations in Chile signing on around 0700 ELT, plus a few in the South Pacific. So far this June, I haven't had much success, but come a GOOD sunspot year, these stations will make it plentifully, I'm sure.

Ed.: My comments are somewhat in line with Phil's, in that I use summer to log the closer stations. My "hitlist" still shows many stations unheard within a 500 mile radius. I take advantage of the shorter skip conditions during summer to log these closer stations. Then, closer stations may be heard that are covered during winter by stronger, more distant stations coming in on the longer skip. The SSS/SRS periods are longer in summer, and while not providing the long distance reception they often do in winter, the DX stations tend to stay "in" longer during summer.

Thanks to all the reporters for their support. As you can see, summer can be used for more than mere logbook maintenance, and wishful thoughts of cool, crisp fall evenings to come.
--Leonard L. Hyde