

**Report of the HF Band Planning Committee
ARRL Board of Directors
January 2015**

At Minute 47 of its January 2014 meeting the Board adopted the following resolution:

WHEREAS the Board of Directors has received member input regarding the coexistence of various modes in the HF Data/RTTY subbands; and

WHEREAS it is important that all member voices be heard; and

WHEREAS in the opinion of the Board these issues are best addressed by education and prudent use of spectrum;

BE IT RESOLVED that the ARRL Board of Directors instructs the HF Band Planning Committee to reach out to membership regarding concerns pertaining to the increasing popularity of data modes, and furthermore investigate and suggest ways to use spectrum so that these data modes may compatibly coexist with each other; and

FURTHER to report their findings no later than the July 2014 ARRL Board meeting.

The committee's report to the July 2014 meeting of the Board is Document #23 for that meeting. The report provided an overview of some 400 comments received in response to a solicitation made in early March on the ARRL website and in the ARRL Letter.

During October and November the committee conducted a review of the band plans for the 160 through 10 meter bands, with the exception of 60 meters, in a series of six teleconferences. The committee concluded that most of the concerns voiced by members can be addressed by modest adjustments to the existing band plans, and mainly by confining data modes with bandwidths greater than 500 Hz to the FCC-designated segments for automatically controlled digital stations (ACDS) and to parts of the RTTY/data subbands above those segments. The committee's conclusions, band by band, are presented below. Note that CW operation is permitted in both the "RTTY/data" and "phone/image" subbands.

Unless otherwise instructed by the Board, the committee will share these conclusions with the membership for review and comment immediately after the January 2015 Board meeting. Once member feedback has been received and analyzed, the committee will make its final recommendations to the Board.

160 Meters

The existing 160 meter band plan was reaffirmed by the Board at Minute 40 of the January 2008 Board meeting. The committee found no reason to recommend changes at this time.

80 Meters

As reported in July, the committee concluded that the FCC's action in 2006 to reduce the 80 meter RTTY/data subband from 250 kHz to 100 kHz and to limit access to 3600-3700 kHz only to Amateur Extra Class licensees has created significant and unnecessary difficulties for CW, RTTY and data operators, and has left 3600-3700 kHz underutilized. Unless and until the FCC Rules are modified, changes in the band plan for 3500-3600 kHz will not improve the situation. Accordingly, the committee recommends that the FCC be petitioned to move the boundary between the 80 meter RTTY/data band and the 75 meter phone/image band from 3600 to 3650 kHz, with the 3600-3650 kHz segment restored to General and Advanced licensees.

The Board may also wish to consider proposing the following related FCC rules changes:

- Shift the band segment for automatically controlled digital (data) stations (ACDS) from 3585-3600 kHz to 3600-3615 kHz. (While it was 3620-3635 kHz before 2006, 3600-3615 kHz would be consistent with the IARU Region 1 and Region 2 band plans.)
- Extend the current Novice/Technician CW segment from 3525-3600 to 3525-3650 kHz. (While Novice/Tech CW activity is very limited, this change would make 80 meters consistent with 40 and 15 meters where Novices and Techs can operate CW throughout the General/Advanced portions of the RTTY/data subbands.)
- Add 80 meter RTTY/data privileges for Novices and Technicians.

If the FCC can be persuaded to make the change from 3600 to 3650 kHz it would be desirable to shift the boundary between CW and RTTY/data in the ARRL band plan from 3570 to 3580 kHz in order to be consistent with the Region 1 and Region 2 band plans. Then we could address ongoing complaints about interference to PSK31 from W1AW CW transmissions on 3581.5 kHz by shifting the W1AW frequency below 3580 kHz.

40 Meters

Of all of the HF bands, 40 meters has the least global consistency in band planning. This is the result of amateurs having been limited to 7000-7100 kHz in Regions 1 and 3 prior to 2009 and to 7000-7200 kHz today.

In the rest of the world including most of Region 2, data modes operate below 7060 kHz. The Region 1 and Region 2 band plans provide for ACDS at 7047-7050 kHz (up to 500 Hz bandwidth) and 7050-7053 kHz (up to 2700 Hz bandwidth, i.e. a single channel).

After reviewing members' comments, and bearing in mind the fact that most communication on 40 meters by American amateurs is with other stations in North America and not DX, the committee concluded that it is not realistic to try to bring the ARRL band plan for 40 meters into alignment with the rest of the world. While 7040 kHz is recognized as a RTTY/data DX frequency in the band plan, other RTTY/data activity should take place above 7070 kHz.

Currently the "Considerate Operator's Frequency Guide" (COFG) that is published occasionally in *QST* and is available on the website shows 7070-7125 kHz for RTTY/data while the ARRL band plan shows 7080-7125 kHz. The committee proposes that the band plan be aligned with the COFG. Within that range the FCC-mandated ACDS segment is 7100-7105 kHz. In order to put wideband (greater than 500 Hz bandwidth) data as far as possible from narrowband activity the committee proposes that non-ACDS wideband activity take place at 7115-7125 kHz.

30 Meters

The FCC-mandated ACDS segment of this band is 10.140-10.150 MHz. The committee recommends that wideband data be confined to this segment and separated from narrowband data and RTTY at 10.130-10.140 MHz.

20 Meters

The FCC-mandated ACDS segments of 20 meters are 14.095-14.0995 MHz and 14.1005-14.112 MHz. The 1 kHz in between is set aside for the IARU/NCDXF beacon network. The committee recommends using the beacon frequency as a "hard break" line between wideband ACDS in the upper segment and narrowband ACDS in the lower segment. The recommended segment for RTTY and narrowband data is 14.070-14.095 MHz. It should be noted that so-called "weak signal" data modes (PSK31, JT65A, JT9, etc.) are used between 14.070 and 14.078 MHz; these signals may not be audible to other operators.

17 Meters

The committee recommends that wideband data be confined to the FCC-mandated ACDS segment of 18.105-18.110 MHz and separated from narrowband data and RTTY at 18.100-18.105 MHz. The FCC rules do not permit RTTY/data above 18.110 MHz so the options for this band are limited.

15 Meters

The ARRL band plan puts RTTY/data at 21.070-21.110 MHz. The committee recommends that 21.070-21.090 MHz be used for RTTY and narrowband data, the FCC-mandated ACDS segment of 21.090-21.100 MHz be used for narrowband and wideband ACDS, and any additional wideband data activity take place above 21.100 MHz.

12 Meters

The committee recommends that wideband data be confined to the FCC-mandated ACDS segment of 24.925-24.930 MHz and separated from narrowband data and RTTY at 24.920-24.925 MHz. The FCC rules do not permit RTTY/data above 24.930 MHz so the options for this band are limited.

10 Meters

The FCC-mandated segment for ACDS is 28.120-28.189 MHz. The committee recommends that wideband data be confined to this segment and separated from narrowband data and RTTY at 28.070-28.120 MHz.

Respectfully submitted,

The ARRL HF Band Planning Committee

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References:

ARRL band plan: <http://www.arrl.org/band-plan>

Considerate Operator's Frequency Guide: <http://www.arrl.org/considerate-operator>

IARU Region 1 band plan:

http://www.iaru-r1.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=305&Itemid=210

IARU Region 2 band plan: <http://www.iaru-r2.org/band-plan/>

IARU Region 3 band plan: <http://iaru-r3.org/r3bandplan.doc>