

Apr 15 – 29, 2023

June 8 – 19, 2023

Lakshadweep Islands



<https://lral.lv/vu7w/>

Hello friends! This year started with a plan to visit Lakshadweep Islands for one DXpedition from April 15 – April 29, 2023. However, this turned out to be double DXpedition with secondary visit from June 8 – June 19, 2023. Here is a short story summarizing both parts with some pictures and results.

The journey started on 13th of April from hometown Valka located in NE of Latvia. Together with XYL Zigrida we drove to Riga international airport. As usual, the car was packed with antennas and equipment, this time with total weight of 100kg. With 4 connection flights starting from Riga to Istanbul, Delhi and Kochi we reached Agatii Island, from where we continued our trip to Kavaratti Island by passenger ferry.



Yuris YL2GM and XYL Zigrida



Our hotel and QTH on the Kavaratti Island

We reached Kavaratti Island on 15th of April in late afternoon. During twilight time I managed to set up *EFHW* and made first QSOs in FT8. The hotel we stayed at was a three storied building with flat roof divided in to segments with one of them being elevated. There was already placed antenna mast on one of the segments, however, I could not use it for my antennas because it was bent. The other segment was covered with solar panels which made difficult to place *Spiderbeam* there. As well the panels made noise and interference on the bands.

The next day I continued and managed to set up *Spiderbeam* by fixing it to the center point of the building between both segments. With the hotel staff I arranged to switch off solar panels that significantly reduced the noise levels. However, it was still pretty high because of very densely populated area right next to us where no one seems to care about

electricity saving because the lights are turned on 24/7.

On Monday 17th of April we encountered our first electricity shortage for two hours and the staff told us its due to construction works nearby. Later, while turning antenna I found out that two elements were tangled and I had to climb up to fix this. During the day temperatures are +35 °C and working in the sun is quite extreme, so I plan all outside tasks in late afternoons or early mornings and I still manage to get sunburns.



Setting up antennas

On Thursday 20th of April I set up *FT-710* transceiver on FT8 as secondary position. The main position is with *Sun SDR + SPE Expert* intended for CW and SSB. Unfortunately, SSB had very low activity only ~ 80 QSOs with EU, 4X, BY and JA6. All attempts to reach JA3 were unsuccessful.

Later that day we were visited by Mr. Aboobacker VU3EBX who is the only radio amateur on the islands. He invited us to join excursion and visit islands lighthouse and water desalination plant. At the end of expedition, I gifted 6m antenna to Mr. Aboobacker so he would be possible to make QSOs from the island in future. Couple days before the end of the expedition I set up LBS vertical and that resulted in new QSOs on 60 and 160m.

At the end part 1, our hotel administrator Jaffer told us that next week he was going to Minicoy Island and he invited us there. As these dates aligned with our future plans that we did not know at that point, this came true and we met again later in 2nd part of this same DXpedition.

While being on the way to home I received Japanese amateur radio group proposal to visit Island again. They supported this financially and with 6m antenna from JA1BK. As I decided to do this, I left all my equipment in hotel storage in Kochi city and we continued our way home.

On 3rd of June we started our 2nd trip from Riga international airport to Kochi with two



Yuris YL2GM and Mr.Aboobacker VU3EBX



Yuris YL2GM with expedition flag next to ferry from Kochi to Minicoy Island

connection flights through Dubai and Muscat. Until ferry departure on 6th of June to Minicoy Island we had two days to spend in Kochi. Later, travel agency informed us that the ferry is being delayed for one more day till the morning of 7th of June. We passed all security checks and moved in to our cabin. Ferry was being delayed once more and we left the port only after midnight.

To Minicoy Island we arrived in late afternoon the next day. Transfer from ferry to Island was carried out with small boats and boarding them was extreme because of high waves. From there we drove to Minicoy Island resort where in total we were staying

just 6 guests. After 3 days me and Zigrida were the last 2 guests left in the whole resort and because of this the personal called us king and queen. Catering was organized 3 times daily and the meals were fantastic.

The living apartment was situated on the first floor and on the second floor I set up my DX station. The first days went by as a routine with setting up antennas and regularly checking the 6m band for Japan. The first successful day was on 10th of June when I managed to work 85 Japanese stations. Propagation window was very short for just about 30 minutes. There were no EU stations on this band. In total the propagation on 6m



Shack

was for days where I managed to ~200 Japanese stations.

On 16th of June XYL Zigrida had birthday. With the help of hotel staff, we organized a surprise cake and a celebrational dinner in an outside tent on the beach. Staff was wearing colorful ceremonial dresses and greeted Zigrida. The next day we went for a swim in a lagoon to see the underwater world. Beautiful coral reefs with lots of colorful fishes were a fantastic sight.

When the DXpedition time came to end, staff informed us that ferry departure from the island is postponed for 2 days. Because of



Celebrational dinner

this I had to cancel flight reservations and my plans to visit *Hamfest* in Friedrichshafen. Later these delays were cancelled so there still was some hope for Hamfest.

On 20th of June we were brought to port and the ferry left on time. We were warmly welcomed by the staff and they organized a small excursion for us to visit the captains bridge. This was new for me as I never visited captains' deck before. The next day around noon we arrived to Kochi port from where we took taxi to the airport. We were lucky to get on the next flight to Dubai and from there to Riga. From airport Zigrida continued back home and I flew to Friedrichshafen. DXpedition was over and we were tired from the flights. As this all was a success it brought new energy for me.

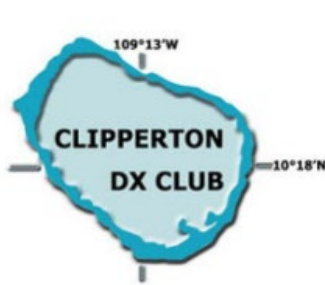
Thanks to everyone who supported us and followed us on this journey. Thanks to everyone who worked VU7W. Altogether in both parts 60k QSOs were made.

Juris /Yuris /YL2GM

Expedition website: <https://lral.lv/vu7w/>



Main DXpedition supporters



Minnesota



YL2LY, JI1WMI, W9MDB, DM2HK, DL8YHR, HB9BAS, JH8JWF, JA6GPR, N3OUC, JG1TSG, JA1BK, JA1HGY and other supporters...



VOACAP DX Charts



[HTTPS://VOACAP.COM/DX/](https://voacap.com/dx/)



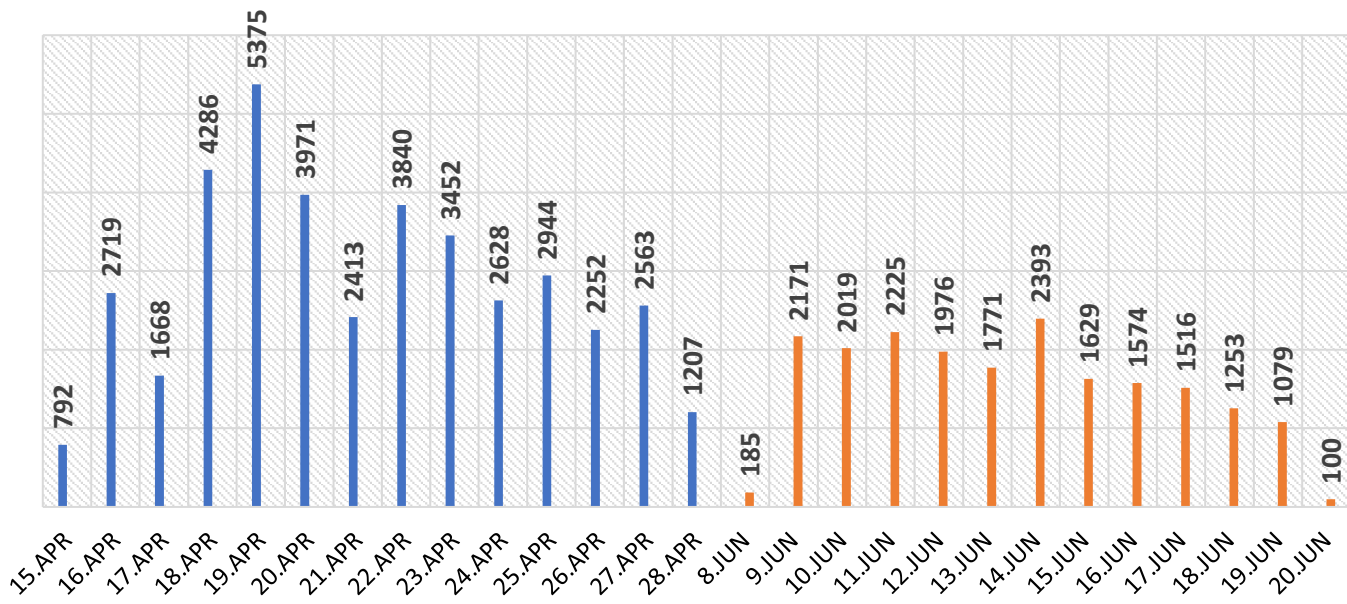
QSL card



STATISTICS

Daily QSOs VU7W (Total 60`001 QSOs)

■ DXpedition part 1 ■ DXpedition part 2



Band/Mode breakdown VU7W

Band	CW	FT8	SSB	Total	Total %
160	0	170	0	170	0.3%
80	102	2251	0	2353	3.9%
60	5	164	0	169	0.3%
40	173	3997	0	4170	6.9%
30	192	6475	0	6667	11.1%
20	927	7356	342	8625	14.4%
17	1199	8275	286	9760	16.3%
15	1211	9778	160	11149	18.6%
12	759	6269	0	7028	11.7%
10	1610	7899	0	9509	15.8%
6	0	401	0	401	0.7%
Totals	6178	53035	788	60001	

DXCC by Band/Mode breakdown VU7W

Band	CW	FT8	SSB	Total
160	0	33	0	33
80	31	74	0	74
60	5	30	0	30
40	30	101	0	102
30	46	110	0	110
20	72	116	50	122
17	70	120	50	129
15	65	131	22	138
12	62	112	0	115
10	74	123	0	127
6	0	26	0	26
Totals	102	158	77	165

Continent by Mode VU7W

Band	CW	FT8	SSB	Total	Total %
AF	26	267	5	298	0.5%
AN	0	0	0	0	0.0%
AS	1098	16826	95	18019	30.0%
EU	4273	28190	552	33015	55.8%
NA	687	5051	114	5852	9.8%
OC	77	1978	14	2069	3.4%
SA	17	723	8	748	1.2%
Totals	6178	53035	788	60001	

Continent by Band VU7W

Band	160	80	60	40	30	20	17	15	12	10	6	Total	Total %
AF	0	10	1	24	24	38	50	41	53	57	0	298	0.5%
AN	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
AS	12	330	1	1060	1862	2206	3036	3910	1837	3392	373	18019	30.0%
EU	157	1913	167	2246	3754	4852	5270	5101	4365	5165	25	33015	55.0%
NA	0	44	0	516	832	1193	1116	1353	521	277	0	5852	9.8%
OC	0	50	0	195	101	251	191	647	156	475	3	2069	3.4%
SA	1	6	0	129	94	85	97	97	96	143	0	748	1.2%
Totals	170	2353	169	4170	6667	8625	9760	11149	7028	9509	401	60001	100%