October 6 – October 26, 2021

Kingdom of Eswatini

https://www.lral.lv/3da0ww/index.html

These unstable times in the world have changed all of our lives. People are eager for traveling and new adventures. Our team also had numerous discussions on when and where could we go next and is it even possible with the given circumstances. When we were looking for the next DX-pedition location we had to take into account all the restrictions and this complicated the whole process.

The idea about DX-pedition to *Kingdom of Eswatini* I acquired during my first visit to *South Africa* in the early of 2021. This country was not very high in DXCC most wanted list (#140), however, it had very interesting history and tales about its king and traditions. In addition, the government representatives were very supportive about our plans to organizing amateur radio event.

Location of our QTH I acquired by studying the map and *booking.com* website. First option was a hotel far away from populated places and it could be good choice, however, I decided to look for another place because next to it were placed some solar panels and it could have the risks for interferences. Another option which I decided to use was hotel *Mdzimba Mountain Lodge* located 10 km from the city *Manzini*. Two houses approximately 80 meters from each other and 1200 meters above sea level. *Manzini* city was located in valley.

3DA0WW QTH, Mdzimba Mountain Lodge

DX-pedition team roaster consisted of two Latvian and four Ukrainian radio amateurs. We met in *Johannesburg* airport and from there travelled together with plane to *Kingdom of Eswatini* and reached *King Mswati III* airport on 13th of October.

Vlad UW7RV, Jack YL2KA, Yuris YL2GM, Sasha UT7UV, Pavlo UU0JR, Wlad US7IGN 3DA0WW team

Security service took all our passports, licenses and hotel reservations. It took about two hours and we could continue our journey together with our hotel owner when he arrived. It was about 60 km drive to our hotel. There we split between two houses, Latvian two operators took the smallest house and Ukrainian operators moved into the bigger house.

Till the evening dark we managed to install our multi band GP. After turning on transceiver we saw that there are noise level S7-8 on all bands. We were looking for the noise source by gradually switching on and off all light sources. They all made noise and we decided to use only one table lamp as light source during the dark in each house. However, these weren't the only noise sources because in other houses there were also lights that could not be turned off because of security reasons.


Resolving the dogs chewed guy-wire problems

Next morning, we found our multi band GP on the ground because the local dog chew through its guy-wires. After talking to owner, the dog was moved to a smaller territory behind a fence.

During the day we set up Spiderbeam antennas in both positions and operate. This time for each band we have separate filters, we split them between both positions. This ruled out the possibility that both stations would turn on the same band simultaneously. The temperatures were +34 to +36 C during the day and droped down to +20 C during the night time.

Next day one Spiderbeam was found on the ground with two broken fiberglass tubes. Our friendly dog managed to escape from his fenced territory and right after that he chewed through our antenna guy-wires once more. Dog gets isolated again.

In the morning we set up low band antennas. Sadly, this time our LBS vertical does not operate as intended and we get burned relay and capacitor in the switchbox. We redesign our vertical for low band antenna and use it for 160m, however it's not very effective and the poor results show that.

The new week starts with heavy rain and thunderstorm. Temperature drops during the nigh to only +9 C, it's also very foggy because the mountain top was covered with the cloud.

Sasha UT7UV together with hotel owner drives to the local market for food products every second day. Sasha is our chef and prepares breakfast and dinner for the whole team. The most delicious dish is the *Ukrainian borsch* soup that is prepared using African products.

For the second half of the week the sky clears a bit and the hot temperatures return and again we feel like in Africa. Sun is very hot with very intensive ultraviolet radiation.

On FT8 we get called by 3DA0AQ, however the program does not register the call because it registers as two separate calls, this gets solved by typing manually. Technical problems keep piling and we also start to have issues with

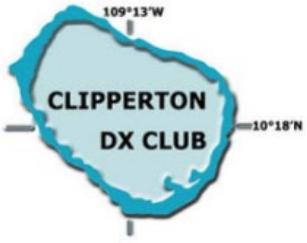
our SPE Expert PTT because it works with delay and we lose our first transmitted symbol. This gets resolved by restarting whole software. Three days before QRT our K3 driver transistor brakes down so we are left only with one station.

All together team spirits are in good mood. In addition, the hotel owner takes us to small excursion to local school that he supports financially. However, the school is empty because of riots in the country. All public transportation is on hold. People are disappointed in the country's ruling. However, the Kingdom of Eswatini is very tourist friendly country with many beautiful mountain and wildlife sceneries. Sadly, because of the pandemic many cultural sites were closed down and we could not enjoy them fully. Because of these reasons we did not plan Hams with Hearts support this time.

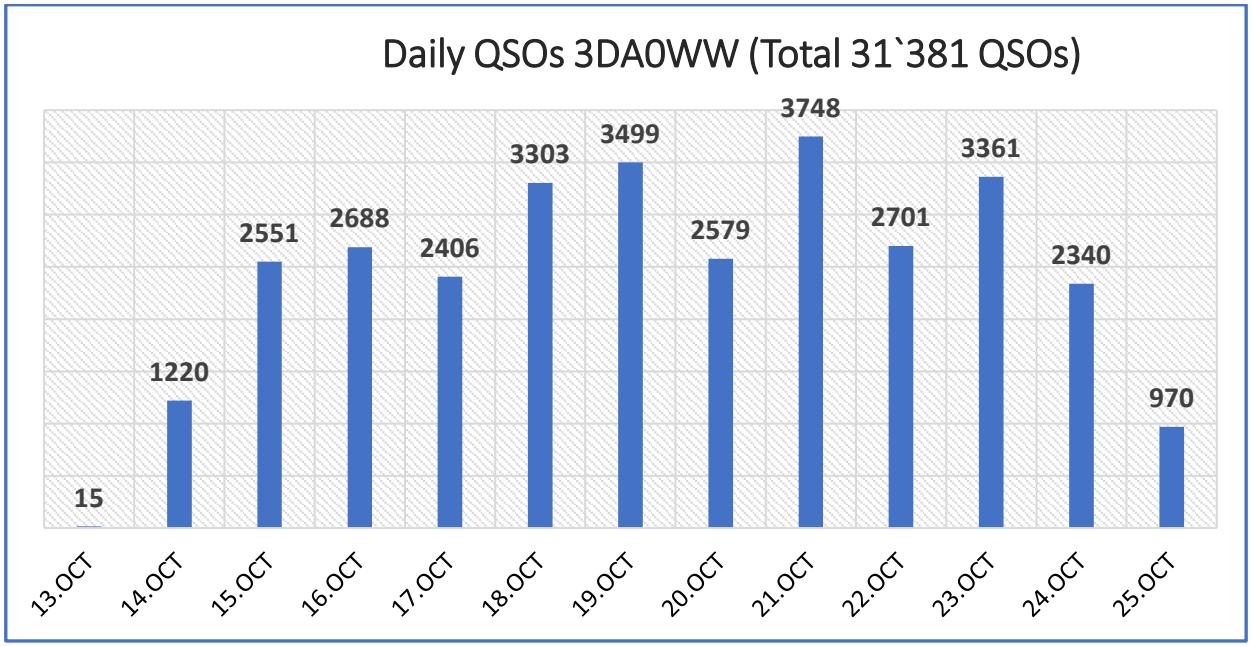
Two weeks fly by in a blink of an eye and we have to pack our bags for returning home. Expedition plan is accomplished, we managed to make 31k QSOs. For two team members this was their first DX-pedition. Lesson learned from this expedition – if possible, then visit QTH site before the expedition in order limit unexpected noise sources and etc.

Vlad UW7RV, Pavlo UU0JR, Sasha UT7UV, Yuris YL2GM, Wlad US7IGN, Jack YL2KA

Thanks to all of the team and their families for supporting us through our adventures. Thanks to all radio amateurs and amateur radio clubs for supporting and working with us in the air, this would not be possible without your support.



STATISTICS



Band/Mode breakdown 3DA0WW

Band	CW	FT8	SSB	Total	Total %
160	1	70	0	71	0.2%
80	339	1518	0	1857	5.9%
60	0	95	0	95	0.3%
40	476	3115	77	3668	11.7%
30	363	2320	0	2683	8.5%
20	1771	2144	1078	4993	15.9%
17	2823	2925	606	6354	20.2%
15	1783	4031	992	6806	21.7%
12	671	1613	759	3043	9.7%
10	438	979	394	1811	5.8%
Totals	8665	18810	3906	**31381**	99.9%

DXCC by Band/Mode breakdown 3DA0WW

Band	CW	FT8	SSB	Total
160	1	19	0	20
80	42	71	0	73
60	0	25	0	25
40	51	89	23	93
30	48	101	0	105
20	76	91	69	113
17	83	92	56	107
15	69	104	70	113
12	55	79	62	87
10	59	75	51	88
Totals	104	132	94	**148**

Continent by Mode 3DA0WW

Band	SSB	CW	FT8	Total	Total %
AF	66	52	169	287	0.9%
AN	0	0	0	0	0.0%
AS	141	682	3819	4642	14.8%
EU	2758	6337	9273	18368	58.5%
NA	800	1429	3859	6088	19.4%
OC	13	26	582	621	2.0%
SA	128	139	1108	1375	4.4%
Totals	3906	8665	18810	**31381**	100.0%

Expedition website: https://www.lral.lv/3da0ww/index.html

Expedition movie: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NK_CAbKwKLs&ab_channel=VladfonGurt

73, Yuris /YL2GM/