

Mini DXpedition to Haida Gwaii March 11 to 13, 2011

On the heels of the giant 9.0 earthquake that rocked the Pacific coast of Japan and the subsequent tsunami which struck the entire Pacific rim, by coincidence I flew up to my cottage on Haida Gwaii a few hours after the earthquake, and before the tsunami was scheduled to hit Haida Gwaii. I had heard nothing until I turned on the radio that morning and listened with increasing alarm regarding the devastation and possible tsunami that might affect the coast of British Columbia. Whatever was going to happen, I would arrive 3 ½ hours after the tsunami. As it turned out, the estimate for Haida Gwaii was for a wave height of between ½ and 1 meter. As you will see, there was evidence of such a wave near the cottage, as well as out at Tow Hill, well past the high/high tide line, and into the grass and dunes above. My estimate was that the wave height may have been up to 2 meters in height at Tow Hill.



Figure 1 On Rose Spit, with Tow Hill in the background collecting debris from the beach on Saturday March 12, 2011.

The further we walked along the beach away from Tow Hill, the higher the tsunami wave appeared to have reached, as shown in the following photos:



Figure 2: Sand from a high wave covering the snow that had fallen earlier in the week, some 2 meters above ocean level. Rose Spit 12 March 2011.



Figure 3: Looking along Rose Spit above the tide line. Notice the large amount of sand deposited on top of the recent snow. There were no high tides or storms that would account for this, besides the tsunami. Sand was seen right up on top of the crest, two meters above the ocean level.

Even at our cottage, the wave height must have reached a meter or more with the same large amount of sand deposited on top of the moss, grass, and snow covered dunes.

This time, I travelled very light, without any radio gear. Using my resident AOR 7030+ and NRD 535D, it was like going back in time for me. I've become so accustomed to using the Perseus SDR, and it's visual cues to help in DXing. Still, it was a thrilling weekend. The first night, I simply used my large diameter ALA 100 loop oriented approximately 40/220 degrees. On the second night, I added a 700' Beverage aimed approximately 300 degrees towards Asia, hoping to hear Japan better. I was not disappointed.

I'll divide the report into two sections, with the first covering MW DX, and the latter, mostly SW loggings. Conditions were like night and day between the two days. On March 12th, the TPs were strongly favouring a more southerly direction, with a decent number of Australian stations. On the other hand, Japanese stations were very anemic by comparison, at least until dawn/post dawn when they did pick up. On the following morning (March 13th), conditions were fabulous to Japan with a huge number of stations booming in at great levels. The NHK2 network, which only carried a loop multilingual

tsunami warning on the 12th to past 16:00 UTC, signed off at 14:40 this morning leaving every MW channel with a strong open carrier (OC). Programming was back to normal, as well. I'll send a clip of the emergency loop to the various clubs/websites as well.

Solar conditions were relatively active with the SF into the 120s, with some elevated A/K indices and R1 blackouts reported. Of course, this ruled out any chance for European MW DX. I was able to hear the faintest of a het on 1215 from Absolute Radio in the early evening. Propagation to the south, however, both on MW and SW was very good with the Guyana Broadcasting Corporation on 3290, for instance, being the best ever heard last night. So, on to some loggings. First, for MW/LW with the John Bryant 10 point scale (1 being the faintest het, maybe there, to 10 meaning absolutely armchair, local quality. A 5 is a very strong het, no audio. 6 means just audible without content. 7, language only identifiable, 8 a decent signal with some difficulty following, while 9 is a very nice signal. I still like this system, as it's easy to graph on a sheet. I'll comment on the 7+ level stations only below:

Day One: March 12, 2011 TP report for LW/MW: Monitored from 12:50 to past 15:00 UTC

Russian LW: 180: 7 level. 279 (normally the strongest), only 6.5 and that one was late at 15:09.

531: 7 level probably DU with music

540: NHK1 local program at 15:07 with local program 7.5 level

567: 8 level 15:05 with music. Not sure who. Possibly Radio National, Wellington.

594: JOAK Tokyo at 7.5 level at 13:13. Anemic Japanese morning, until dawn/post dawn! Normally a 9+ signal.

612: 9 level 4QR Brisbane early, plus weak JOLK audible.

621: 3RN Melbourne at 9 level at 15:00. Also strong at 13:18 which is unusual. Normally, the DU activity picks up after LSR, although the DU activity can be very good overnight (at least as experienced on Rose Spit), and then fades towards dawn.

657: 8 level North Korea.

666: 7 level JOBK at 14:56

693: JOAB Tokyo with multilingual loop advising tsunami evacuations from tune-in at 13:25 right past 16:00. Languages also included Portuguese and English, as well as probable Japanese, Korean, and Chinese. Really picked up strength after my LSR to 9 level.

702: up to 9 level with music, as well as cochannel NHK2 (either JOFB Hiroshima or JOKD Kitami, both with 10 kW). At 14:55.

711: KBS 1 presumed HLKA, Seoul at 8.5 level.

729: JOCK Nagoya 50 kW with NHK1 at 8.5 level at 14:54

738: 8 level with two cochannel. RFO plus another playing what sounded like Indian music.

747: 7 level only at 14:53 with JOIB Sapporo 500 kW.

756: unid 7 level station

765: unid music station 7 level at 14:52

774: weak early, but 9+ level later with 3LO far over JOUB Akita at 14:20, but then the JJ station dominating later.

792: 8 level 4RN Brisbane at 14:55.

801: unid 7 level at 14:55

819: 9 level DU station with a church service/sermon. Could be 2GL Glen Innes, NSW with 10 kW or RNZ National, Tauranga with 10 kW.

828: 7.5 level JOBB Osaka

873: Very strong JOGB Kumamoto at 14:48 with 500 kW. Strongest of the NHK2 station network today.

954: 9 level JOKR Tokyo with EZL music. 100 kW. Always a good performer.

972: HLCA Dangjin with a 9 level powerhouse signal at 14:46. Small wonder with listed 750/1500 kW.

1008: JONR Osaka at 8.5 level at 14:45. 50 kW.

1044: 7.5 level unid station with talk at 14:43

1053: 8 level Korean jammer at 13:50, but music dominating at 14:43

1089: 7 level JOHB Sendai, on air despite being in the earthquake/tsunami region.

1098: Super strong OC from V7AB Radio Marshalls. Thought they might carry some tsunami information, but nothing.

1116: 8 level 4BC Brisbane with 17 or 6.3 kW at 13:05. A good bell weather station for DU openings.

1134: 2 cochannels at 14:39 at 8.5 level.

1179: 7 level music at 14:38

1224: 7 level unid

1233: 8 level unid.

1242: 9 level, very strong JOLF Tokyo 100 kW with call in show at 14:37

1278: 7 level JOFR Fukuoka 50 kW

1287 to 1314: Normally well heard, but these channels barely lifted out of the noise this morning.

1323, 1332: 7 level

1359: At 14:33, a multitude of cochannels here at 8 level.

1368: 7 level

1377: 7 level NHK2 plus cochannel

1386: NHK2 station (4 x 10 kW listed) and cochannel at 8 level at 14:32

1395: 7.5 level CC music at 14:31

1404, 1413, 1431, 1449, 1476, 1494: all at 7 level only.

1422: JORF Yokohama 50 kW at 9 level at 14:28 plus coch music station.

1467: 8 level probable HLKN Mokpo with 100 kW KBS1

1512: 2RN Newcastle at 8 level at 14:25 10 kW

1548: 9 level 4QD Emerald 50 kW at 9 level at 14:24.

1557: WYFR at 7 level 300 kW.

1566: 8.5 level HLAZ, Jeju at 14:23. 250 kW and normally one of the strongest stations on the band. Not so today. Earlier, only a 6 level signal.

1575: only 7 level from probably VOA Thailand (1000 kW). Later, pop music, so likely AFN Japan with 1 kW or less.

1593: 9 level CNR1 with 600 kW listed from Changzhou. Just about the only Chinese station heard today. Normally a very good performer on the west coast. Heard at 14:22.

1602: NHK2 stations at 7 level.

X-Band: pretty much absent today.

Day Two: March 13, 2011 TP report for LW/MW: Monitored from 13:58 to 16:13 UTC

What a difference a day makes. Today, I caught the solar indices: SF 121, A: 12, K(12:00 UTC): 2 with minor radio blackouts predicted. Almost totally a Japanese morning.

Russian LW stations: 153 (6), 189 (7), 279 (8.5) level

531: 8 level NHK1 JOQG, Morioka with 10 kW

540: 7 level NHK1 Numerous 1 and 5 kW stations listed

549: 9 level Mayak. Several far east sites listed with 500 and 150 kW. ?Vladivostok with 500 kW or ?Magadan, also with 500 kW most likely.

558: HLQH Yeong-il 250 kW with KBS 2 at 7 level //603

576: Mayak again with 8 level. This one more usually heard. Again, several transmitters listed, but most likely the 150 kW transmitter at Petropavlovsk (in my opinion).

585: JOPG Kushiro 10 kW // 594 7 level.

594: 9+ level JOAK Tokyo 300 kW. That's more like it!

603: 9 level NHK1 station // to JOAK. Surprising as there's only 2 5 kW listed here: JOOG Obihiro, Hokkaido and JOKK Okayama. Also cochannel, probably HLSA Seoul at 14:14.

612: No sign of Australia today with JOLK Fukuoka 100 kW at 8 level, //594

648: 7 level Chinese station

657: North Korea at 8 level

666: JOBK 100 kW Osaka with NHK1 at 9 level. At 15:12 noted cochannel probable Voice of Vietnam 1 Nha Trang, 50 kW in Vietnamese.

675: 8 level NHK1 (2 listed, both with 5 kW: JOVK Hakodate, Hokkaido and JOUG Yamaguchi) cochannel with presumed Voice of Vietnam 1, My Van 700 kW. The latter is often the dominant station on this channel.

684: 7 level prob. JODF Morioka 5 kW, not // to NHK1 network.

693: JOAB Tokyo, 500 kW at 9 level, and back to "5 minutes in English" at the top and bottom of each hour. 14:30 first heard. Network seems to have reverted to normal programming today.

702: 8 level NHK2 (2 listed with 10 kW: Hiroshima and Kitami, Hokkaido) plus weak cochannel.

711: 9 level at 14:50 KBS1 HLKA Seoul, 500 kW.

729: JOCK, Nagoya 50 kW, // NHK1 666 at 14:35 and cochannel prob. Voice of Vietnam 2 Dong Hoi, 200 kW.

738: 7 level ? BEL2 Taiwan Area Fishery BC Station, Baisha with 100 kW and ? // to 1143. Not strong today. Incidentally, RFO Tahiti was very strong last night at my QTH.

747: 8.5 level JOIB 500 kW Sapporo

756: 7 level JOGK, Kumamoto

765: 8.5 level Japanese station, with 5 transmitters to choose from between 0.1 and 5 kW.

774: JOUB, Akita with 500 kW is pretty much a 10 with 5 min of English at 14:00. Sign-off today at 14:40

792: 7 level CC station

819: 7 level KCBS at 14:44. 500 kW, Pyongyang listed.

828: JOBB at 8 level 300 kW Osaka

837: 7 level JOQK //666 and cochannel. 10 kW listed from Niigata, although there is a 1 kW repeater in Nayoro, Hokkaido.

846: 7 level unid

855: North Korea at 7 level.

873: JOGB at 9 level with OC after sign-off. 500 kW Kumamoto

891: 8.5 level JOHK 10 kW Sendai NHK1

909: JOVX 9 level //1440. 5 kW Abashiri, Hokkaido.

945: 7 level NHK1 with 4 transmitters between 1 and 5 kW. Probable JOIQ Muroran, Hokkaido. Also cochannel CNR1 Jiaohe, Jilin with 400 kW.

954: near 10 level JOKR with piano music. 100 kW Tokyo

963: At 15:06 8 level NHK1 with 5 transmitters between 1 and 5 kW.

972: HLCA at 8 level marred somewhat by IBOC (or maybe jamming) 750/1500 kW Dangjin.

981: 8 level CNR1. 27 transmitters listed in PAL from 1 to 200 kW!

990: 7 level JORK plus cochannels. 10 kW Kochi.

999: 7 level NHK1 (7 transmitters from 0.1 to 1 kW) and KCBS on the low side of 999.

1008: JONR at 8 level. Osaka 50 kW

1017: Big OC and weak CC cochannel. OC is JOLB Fukuoka 50 kW, after NHK2 network signed-off.

1035: 7 level OC again. 7 small transmitted between 0.1 to 1 kW

1044: 9 level CRI in JJ 300 kW Changzhou. Also note a cochannel on 1043.78

1053: 9 level CC, with weaker cochannel JOAR Nagoya with 50 kW.

1071: JOFK 9 level Hiroshima 20 kW and a weaker cochannel.

1098: 7 level cochannels

1107: 7 level radio play JJ.

1116: No sign of Australia today. Instead a JJ program at 8 level. 9 transmitters between 0.1 and 5 kW for RNB, NBC or BSN networks.

1125: 8 level with OC from NHK2 with 8 transmitters 0.1 to 10 kW.

1134: JOQR 8 level Tokyo 100 kW

1143: JOBR at 8 level with ID at 15:31. Kyoto 20 kW.

1152: 8 level OC from NHK2. 4 transmitters between 0.1 to 10 kW, including 10 kW JOPC Kushiro, Hokkaido.

1161: 8 level with CC music, not CNR1

1170: HLSR KBS in KK at 8 level, over domestic stations

1179: 9 level JOOR plus IBOC. 50 kW Osaka

1188: 9 level JOKP 10 kW Kitami, Hokkaido // NHK1 666. Also cochannel ? HLKX, Seoul

1197: 7 level with 2 different JJ stations. 15 transmitters listed between 0.1 and 10 kW from STV, RKK, RKB, IBS, and SBC networks.

1206: 8.5 level Yanbian RGD, Yanji, Jilin 150 kW in KK

1215: 8 level JJ (4 listed 0.1 to 2 kW from KBS, RAB, or TBC networks).

1224: 7 level with piano and vocals. Probable JOJK, Kanazawa, Ishikawa 10 kW

1233: 7 level JJ (6 listed 0.1 to 5 kW from RAB, WBC, or NBC networks)

1242: 9 level JOLF Tokyo 100 kW

1251: 7 level

1260: 7.5 level JOIR Sendai under domestic. 20 kW

1269: 9 level JJ station (most likely JOHW Obihiro, Hokkaido with 5 kW, although 3 others listed between 0.1 and 5 kW). 1000 Hz tone noted making reception difficult (and not a het from 1270). 16:00 UTC. Was // to 1287.

1278: 9 level JOFR Fukuoka 50 kW

1287: 9 level JOHR JOHR Sapporo 50 kW. Also cochannel KK or CC station

1296: JOTK 10 kW Matsue, Shimane at 9 level.

1314: JOUF 9 level. 50 kW Osaka.

1323: 7 level

1332: 9 level JOSF Nagoya, Aichi 50 kW at 15:54 not off the air as listed in PAL

1341: 7 level with 2 cochannels

1350: JOER 8 level. 20 kW Hiroshima

1359: 8 level NHK2 with OC (26 0.1 kW transmitters listed!)

1377: 8 level NHK2 with OC (3 transmitters 1 to 5 kW)

1386: 9 level NHK2 with OC (4 10 kW transmitters)

1395: 7 level with IBOC interference

1404: 7 level JJ (probably JOQL Kushiro, Hokkaido with 5 kW although 3 others listed as well)

1413: 8 level JOIF Fukuoka with 50 kW

1422: 8.5 level JORF Yokohama 50 kW

1431: 7 level JJ (11 transmitters from 0.1 to 5 kW)

1440: JOWF (50 kW Sapporo) at 8.5 level

1449: 8 level JOQM (Abashiri, Hokkaido)

1467: 7 level at 16:04 with oriental music

1476: 8 level NHK2 with OC (JOSD 1 kW Ida, Nagano plus two 0.1 kW repeaters)

1485: 8 level JOGO Hachinohe, Aomori 1kW with "RAB" ID at 16:11

1494: 7 level

1503: 8 level JOUK 10 kW Akita

1566: HLAZ with 9+ signal

1575: 9 level AFN Japan (with rap music) and cochannel at 16:08

1584: 25 listed 0.1 kW NHK1 transmitters at 8 level with NHK1 network programming

1593: 9 level CNR1 and cochannel. Changzhou listed with 600 kW

1602: 8 level NHK2 with OC. 27 transmitters 0.1 or 1 kW.

X-Band: absent today as well

SW Loggings (mostly) from 11 to 13 March 2011

PIRATE 6925, 2337-, KARR Pirate Radio Mar 11 Good reception in USB mode with 70s/80s pop music. Rechecked at 00:41 to excellent reception. Very strong! At 00:50, there is someone else weakly on 6932. Continued on until 02:00 with a 'K A R R Pirate Radio' ID and then off. Great signal throughout! Thanks!. (Salmaniw, Masset, BC)

ARGENTINA 11710.74, 0355-, RAE Mar 12 Good reception with French programming and lots of Latin music. Compared to my last visit to Masset, where the MUF dropped off very rapidly (late December), the MUF continues to be quite high, two hours after LSS. Guitar music at 03:58 with RAE ID, then into a piano piece. Time pips at 04:00 and then carrier off. (Salmaniw, Masset, BC)

PORTUGAL 5905, 0402-, Deutsche Welle Mar 12 Good reception with English to Africa and DW Radio News. Also // to 9450 (Kigali) fair, and 5945 (Portugal) poor. All these SW frequencies end in A11 as I understand. Into tsunami information about Japan at 04:05. (Salmaniw, Masset, BC)

JAPAN 693, 1335-, JOAK Tokyo Mar 12 Not a great morning yet for Japanese stations, but multilingual tsunami warnings heard including English announcing waves of up to 2 meters. Advising evacuation in the following areas....Good at times, but often fading down to poor. Earlier, there was a Portuguese language lesson. Oops, no, listening again I realize that it was the same multilingual tsunami warning in Portuguese, and not a language lesson. Continues with same at 13:43. Same loop past 14:00 without ID. 'All people by the coast must evacuate'. 'The Meteorological Agency is warning that tsunami is expected in the following areas: The Pacific coast ofprefectures.....The waves can be up to 2 meters high in some of the areas mentioned. Everyone near the coast must evacuate to higher ground.' Still on at 16:04 recheck, so likely on continuously during this disaster. (Salmaniw, Masset, BC)

GUAM 5765, 1411-, AFN Mar 12 Very good reception with NPR news reporting on the Japanese tsunami. (Salmaniw, Masset, BC)

JAPAN 1089, 1441-, JOHB NHK2 Sendai, Miyagi Mar 12 Despite the tsunami hitting Sendai hard, JOHB continues on the air at fair to good level with the looped NHK2 tsunami warning broadcast. (Salmaniw, Masset, BC)

USA 15550, 1510-, WJHR Milton FL Mar 12 Good to very good reception with the usual canned religious preaching. I wonder whether they've boosted power?. (Salmaniw, Masset, BC)

INDIA 4920, 1521-, AIR Chennai Mar 12 Excellent reception with Tamil or Hindi programming. Lhasa, Tibet just audible cochannel. Continued monitoring resulted in Lhasa

picking up to almost equal strength at 15:28. At 15:30, into AIR 'English news at 9'. Main news concerns the nuclear alert in Japan as a result of the tsunami. (Salmaniw, Masset, BC)

IRAN 11655, 1536-, VOIRI Mar 12 English news to Asia at fair level. // 9915 poor/fair. (Salmaniw, Masset, BC)

ALASKA 9655, 1546-, KNLS Mar 12 Terrible choice of frequencies. Cochannel with a much more powerful station (not sure who), with KNLS programming in English heard underneath. Good modulation for KNLS making it audible, but unpleasant to listen to due to the interference. (Salmaniw, Masset, BC)

INDONESIA 4749.98, 1558-, RRI Makassar Mar 12 Good reception until sign-off with, I believe, Song of the Coconut Islands. Transmitter cut immediately after. Still other cochannels present. (Salmaniw, Masset, BC)

BOTSWANA 4930, 1603-, VOA Mar 12 English news for Africa at good level. (Salmaniw, Masset, BC)

RUSSIA 7250, 0025-, VOR World Service Mar 13 Good reception in English from Krasnodar, while //7290 from Moldova fair. Still a couple of hours before my LSS. (Salmaniw, Masset, BC)

THAILAND 13745, 0028-, Radio Thailand Mar 13 Good to very good reception with ads for Sheraton Bangkok hotel, and into special report. Off in mid-sentence at 00:29:30. Back at 00:30. (Salmaniw, Masset, BC)

EGYPT 6270, 0206-, Radio Cairo Mar 13 S7 to S9 signal, so could come across quite well, but with a hum, and very low modulation, it's useless. I can just make out it's English, but that's about all. A shame. Rechecked at 02:52, and noted Arabic music at better level. Fairly loud hum still present, though. (Salmaniw, Masset, BC)

RUSSIA 15735, 0207-, Voice of Russia Mar 13 A powerful DRM signal here tonight, but alas, I didn't bring any gear to decode DRM. I suspect that it would have decoded fine. Scheduled as Russian to south Asia. (Salmaniw, Masset, BC)

PHILIPPINES 17770, 0208-, Radio Pilipinas Mar 13 Very good reception with a poem being read in English. A slight transmitter hum present, as well as phone quality audio. Parallel 15285 fair. My notes also list 11880, but nothing there. At 02:15, they interviewed a well-known Filipino singer in Tagalog. (Salmaniw, Masset, BC)

GUATEMALA 4052.49, 0229-, Radio Verdad Mar 13 Must have been a listeners show, or even a DX show, since on tune-in they were playing an interval signal from a well known SW station. The hosts are a man and woman. The woman is speaking Spanish. The male speaker sounds a lot like Jeff White of WRMI. Can't tell whether he's speaking English or Spanish, though. Occasionally fades up to fair strength. Rechecked at 05:28 and still at fair level with an American accented preacher in English. (Salmaniw, Masset, BC)

PIRATE 6925, 0233-, Random Radio Mar 13 Light banter by a male at good level, with good wishes, and ID (pretty certain he said 'Random Radio'. A little bassy. At 02:35: 'Nice signal, Random Radio'. Then Dr. Benway and Undercover Radio with a two way communication between Random Radio and Undercover Radio. Both at equal strength (fair to good). Later another pirate occupied the frequency, but too weak to make any content out (around 02:50). FRN states this was Wolverine Radio. (Salmaniw, Masset, BC)

ALBANIA 6130, 0243-, Radio Tirana Mar 13 Good reception with an interval signal repeated for several minutes. Minor splatter from adjacent channels above and below. At 02:45 announced, 'This is Radio Tirana, Radio Tirana Shortwave'. Proceeded to give their English language schedule with frequencies and meter bands. Monday to Saturday to North America. Presumably this is local time, as it's UTC Sunday now. (Salmaniw, Masset, BC)

GUYANA 3289.99, 0247-, Voice of Guyana Mar 13 Fair to good reception with EZL music. Some deep fades present, but mostly quite nice reception. Probably the best I've heard them. Propagation seems to favour a southerly direction tonight. Lot's of late night banter by the male DJ. '11 minutes after 11 o'clock' at 03:11 UTC. No ID at the TOH. On recheck at 05:30, BBC news. (Salmaniw, Masset, BC)

IRAN 9510, 0317-, VOIRI Mar 13 Good to very good reception of their Russian service. Surprised with the strength. Presumably receiving them across the polar region. ID'd at 03:19 as Golos Islamska Respublika Iran, or something like that. (Salmaniw, Masset, BC)

PIRATE 6925.10, 0534-, unid Mar 13 Back behind the dials and note a pirate at fair level in AM mode. Heavy beat techno pops. Some deep fades. Listened past 06:00 and no ID, just the same music with a very heavy beat. Sounds very much like some of the Europirates. Checking the FRN back in Victoria, this turns out to be Liquid Radio. First time heard here. (Salmaniw, Masset, BC)

RUSSIA 9840, 0538-, VOR World Service Mar 13 Very good reception in English, with ID as, 'This is the Voice of Russia World Service, one of the oldest radio stations in the world'. // 9855 at good level as well. (Salmaniw, Masset, BC)

TAHITI 738, 0606-, RFO Mar 13 Definitely a strong night to the south with good reception of RFO in French with strong modulation (for a change). (Salmaniw, Masset, BC)

Well, that completes my report for the past weekend. 73s,.....Walt Salmaniw, Victoria, BC