

DX Topic of the Week: QSL Routes

So, you have spent the time to locate the DX you need and you have worked him. Are you sure? Several times when I was chasing something I needed, I recorded the session. If they don't quite get your call right, you can tell them to check again. "It was at 1042Z and you worked K8DV before me and K1FJ after me". More data can't hurt! Always make sure that your computer time is correct. The biggest mistake I have seen has to do with Time Zones, especially around the time change! I use Dimension 4 as my time sync program on all my PCs. It is an excellent time base for FT8 as well. I would hate to find out that I was "NIL" (no in log) for a group that was in Rwanda but won't be back for several years. In a few issues, we will look at DXA – a potential game changes for real time QSO confirmation.

The best source of information on QSL routes is usually the DX Station. Often, they will simply say "QSL via QRZed.com" or "QSL CBA" (call book address). If you have listened for a while and have not heard any instructions, then the next source of information is www.QRZ.com. I have found very few hams that don't have at least some QSL information on QRZ.com. It is becoming more frequent to have hams indicate that they only confirm the QSO via Logbook of the World (LoTW) and not via paper QSLs. Many hams have THOUSANDS of QSL cards at home and really don't want any more. Other hams may request that you email them the QSO details and use Paypal to send them \$ to cover postage. They will then confirm the QSO via a QSL card in the mail. Of course, these instructions will be on their QRZ.com webpage.

My third source of information is via The Daily DX webpage: <http://www.dailydx.com/qsl-routes/>. There are listings for QSL routes, managers and addresses as well as other useful sites.

The next source of information on QSL routes and information is an "aggregator site" at <http://www.dxlabsuite.com/pathfinder/WebClient/>. There are over 60 country specific callbooks, 10 individual search sites and much more information at this site.

If you are directed to a particular QSL manager, remember to...

- #1 - Be Patient - a busy QSL manager can handle hundreds, if not thousands of direct requests per month.
- #2 - Managers often have to wait weeks to receive logs
- #3 - Many times QSL cards have to be designed/ordered/printed
- #4 - DO NOT send an email 2 weeks after sending your request – doesn't help and it may put your request at the bottom of the list!
- #5 – Make sure that you QSL within one year of the QSO as logs get lost, ops become SK, or logs get closed

Finally, if you use the BURO (details on the BURO in a future edition), remember that this may be the longest turn around time of all the routes – but, it is the most economical. Before using the ARRL QSL BURO, make sure that the entity that you are attempting to confirm is a member country and that the card will be transferred to that BURO. The upside is that you can use LoTW to confirm QSOs in a very expediate fashion and then use the BURO to get the physical card later. I have received as many as 70 cards at once from the BURO and I have also received cards that were 5 or more years old.



Be patient and adjust your approach to your need. Let me know what you think and what your favorite route is. Also, if there is a route that I have not addressed (QSL service for instance), let me know.