

VO2A Brings New Labrador Destination NA-194 and 205 on the Air



Ken Frankcom (left) and Cezar Trifu ready for the airlift to Finger Is.



Radio operators' tents on Finger Is. Guide's tent is in center.



Cezar working JA/JS stations on 20 m CW.



Cezar, Ken and Henry (boatman) ready to go to Paul Is.

VO2A is a special callsign for commemorating the UN's International Day of the World's Indigenous People. On this occasion, Cezar Trifu (VE3LYC) and Ken Frankcom (G3OCA) operated from Finger Island (NA194 and NF-073) on August 5-6 and from Paul Island (NA-205 and BF-74) on Aug 7-9, 2008. This was the first time both of these islands were on the air and the second activation of these IOTA groups in about 13 years. A total of about 1700 QSO's were made from each island.

These details, however, don't do justice to the real accomplishment of these two dedicated amateur radio operators. Just getting to this remote location was a challenge. To begin with, the base in Nain is the northernmost community in Labrador and home to about 1200 people. Because of the logistical concerns and the potential presence of wildlife, especially black and polar bears, a local guide, Paul Fenton, and his two dogs accompanied Cezar and Ken. It turns out that the most dangerous creatures on these islands were much smaller.

The first station was set up on Finger Island after a helicopter lift. A bear fence needed to be set along with the antennas before operation started. Rigs consisted of an Icom IC-7000 (Cezar) and a Kenwood TS-50 (Ken), with 100W power and vertical multi-band antenna wires on 10 m fiberglass masts. The original plan was to broadcast simultaneously with operations set up 30 – 40 m apart. Unfortunately tests showed that the TS-50 was affected by radio interference and each rig was operated alone.

With only one rig on the air, the pressure mounted. It took only a few calls to be faced with a large pile-up, which continued all night. Cezar's most rewarding moment on 30 m was when VK and ZL stations came in. Along with 30 m CW, 20 m SSB, 20 m CW, and 40 m CW bands were worked. Similar activity followed on Paul Island that was reached by boat.

Their logs show that from each island they made about 1700 QSOs with stations in six continents, logging 2200 different stations from 63 DXCCs. Two thirds of these contacts were in CW. The QSO distribution by continent was EU 59%, NA 34% and AS 6% from NA-194 and EU 41%, NA 51% and AS 6% from NA-205, while other continents shared the remaining percentage.

Oh yes, back to the most dangerous creatures. The mosquitoes on Finger Island were merciless. However, the black flies on Paul Island were not only merciless, but also vicious and dangerous. Cezar suffered from significant swelling under both



Ken has the first QSO from Paul Is.
on 20 m SSB.



Icom's IC-7000 was the workhorse
for the operation.

eyes.

Icom Canada salutes these two brave souls and congratulates those operators around the world who were able to complete these unusual and elusive QSO's.