## The Ham Bandstand

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You might check out the Northern California DX Foundation (NCDXF) CW beacons on 14.100 MHz. They give a pretty accurate picture of propagation on that band. Here's what happens; 18 stations from around the world take ten second turns in transmitting over a 3-minute cycle. At the beginning of the cycle, you might hear 4U1UN transmitting its call sign (From UN HQ in New York City) followed by four one second dashes. The beacon callsign and the first dash is sent at 100-watts, the next three dashes are at the 10-watt, 1-watt and 100-milliwatt levels. The next ten-second interval you might hear VE8AT in the Yukon Territories (Canada) doing the same thing. The 3rd 10-second interval is W6WX/B in California, followed by KH6O/B in Hawaii. Eventually, beacons from New Zealand, Australia, Japan, Asian Russia, Hong Kong, Sri Lanka, Kenya, Israel, Finland, Madeira, Argentina, Peru, and Venezuela take their turn in the rotation to complete the sequence before 4U1UN comes on again to start the next 3 minute cycle. Equipment used at each site is a Kenwood TS-50s Transceiver and a Cushcraft R5 vertical antenna. with a controller built by the NCDXF The benefits from information gained by copying (and even not copying) certain stations at a given period should be obvious.

For more information on this and more of the NCDXF beacon system, check out http://www.ncdxf.org/beacon.htm. For lists of this and other beacons on the ham bands consult the ARRL Repeater Directory, or check out the massive list of worldwide beacons compiled by G3USF on http://www.keele.ac.uk/depts/por/28.htm

Once you have downloaded the timetable, and if you have a well-calibrated chronometer, you can tell which beacons you are hearing (or not hearing) by keeping track of the time.

See you in the pile-ups.