

POP'COMM Reviews:

Alpha Delta's DX-ULTRA Antenna System

If you own either a communications receiver or a portable shortwave receiver, you know the antenna is a very important part of your listening station. Although the telescoping rod antennas supplied with portables and random wire antennas work well on many signals, there is no substitute for an antenna preferably located outside and mounted as high as possible for serious DXing on the broadcast or shortwave bands. Alpha Delta Communications Inc., a manufacturer of wire antennas and accessories for the SWL and amateur radio markets, recently introduced their latest wire antenna design—the Model DX-ULTRA.

Overview

The DX-ULTRA antenna is an inductively loaded multielement wire dipole with an overall length of 80 feet with specified operation from 500 kHz through 30 MHz. The antenna can be fed with 50-ohm coax through Alpha Delta's exclusive DELTA-C center insulator (included) or with open wire line, and can be installed in a dipole, inverted-V, or sloping dipole configuration. (Note: The DELTA-C center insulator contains a replaceable Model SEP ARC-PLUG that discharges potentially destructive static charges present on the antenna). The DX-ULTRA is comprised of three 12-gauge solid copper wire elements with gray PVC protective insulation: the top-most and longest element utilizes inductive end-loading with Alpha Delta's exclusive ISO-RES inductors; the middle element is 48 feet in

length; and the bottom element is 32 feet in length. Each element is separated by gray PVC rod spacers strategically placed to provide proper separation and overall strength. The package also includes the two end insulators.

Assembly

Although the DX-ULTRA antenna comes essentially fully assembled, some minor preinstallation work on the antenna is necessary. A well-written instruction and installation sheet is included. Carefully unwind the antenna so not to "kink" the wire. Simultaneously route each of the two shorter wire elements on each side of the DELTA-C center insulator through the PVC rod spacers. Everything is included for installation, even a small-diameter rope for securing the end insulators to an attachment point. All you need to supply is a sufficient length of coax or open-wire feedline to reach your receiver.

Performance

For this review, the DX-ULTRA antenna system was installed in an inverted-V configuration at a height of 30 feet at the apex of the V. Because of the multiple wire elements, the DX-ULTRA exhibits resonance on several shortwave bands, including the 41-meter and 90-meter (tropical) bands, 31-meter and 25-meter bands. Plus, the antenna offers good broadbanded performance because of being electrical 1/2- and 3/4-wavelength multiples

long at various other frequency bands. This broadbanded performance is enhanced by the use of Alpha Delta's exclusive low-Q ISO-RES inductors.

In addition to its broadbanded nature, another noticeable feature of this antenna is its low noise. Most dipoles exhibit some form of static or precipitation noise. This antenna does not seem to suffer from this malady. This may be because of the Model SEP ARC-PLUG static electricity protector that is integral to the DELTA-C center connector of the DX-ULTRA.

Compared to a random wire antenna and a 40-meter dipole at the same elevation, the DX-ULTRA provided consistently stronger signal strengths to the receiver on all bands under test. This is one very good all-around wire antenna. Additionally, the antenna can be used as a transmitting antenna with an antenna tuner. Thus, if you are an avid SWL and ham, this may be just the ticket for your "all-band" antenna!

Summary

If you want a full-spectrum broadbanded wire antenna, the DX-ULTRA is one to seriously consider. Its low noise, broadbanded nature and signal-capture ability is excellent. The price of the DX-ULTRA is \$119.95, plus \$5 for shipping. For more information, please contact your favorite dealer or Alpha Delta Communications Inc., P.O. Box 620, Manchester, KY 40962; or (606) 598-2029.

Reviewed by POP'COMM Staff

