



Like many restricted nature reserves, landing on Ducie Island for a DXpedition and overnight stay requires a landing permit (issued by the police and immigration office on Pitcairn Island), a travel visa, and, of course, a VP6/D radio license. Shortly after the DX Convention, we applied for the landing permit. The application included our plan for 14 operators, tents, generators, radio stations, and various antenna types. We received the permit in early July 2017 and immediately applied for the call sign and travel visas.

Our stay will be governed by a strict set of biosecurity and environmental rules similar to those we encountered on Campbell Island (ZL9) in 2012. One regulation states that fishing by non-residents of Pitcairn Island within the 12-mile limit is prohibited.

### Getting to Ducie Island

For transportation, we selected the now-familiar expedition ship *Braveheart* from Tauranga, New Zealand. *Braveheart* and her owner, Nigel Jolly, K6NRJ, have a long history of providing outstanding support to the DXpedition community. *Braveheart* and Jolly's other vessel, *Claymore II*, visited Pitcairn Island many times as resupply vessels.

The team will meet in Papeete, Tahiti, and then fly to Mangareva, the easternmost major island in French Polynesia, where *Braveheart* will be waiting to begin the estimated 3-day journey, our equipment already loaded aboard. We will land on the main island, Acadia, located on the north and east side of Ducie. The transit will take us past Pitcairn Island, and, if there is time after the DXpedition, we will make a quick stop there to meet several descendants of Fletcher Christian, the famous leader of the mutiny aboard HMS *Bounty* in 1789.



The experienced crew of the RV *Braveheart* will get the VP6D DXpedition team to Ducie Island. [David Lloyd, K3EL, photo]

### The Setup at VP6D

Antennas will include monoband 2-element rotatable vertical dipole arrays on the higher bands, four-squares on 30 and 40 meters, verticals for 80/160 meters, and two HF Yagis. The layout will be similar to that used by VP6DX in 2008, with the vertical antennas positioned close to the shoreline to take advantage of the "saltwater amplifier." CW and SSB camps will be separated by several hundred meters, to help reduce inter-station interference. The team will camp on the island, taking meals and sleeping in a small tent city.

Logistical support from the *Braveheart* will allow the operators to focus on their radio duties. Our equipment of choice is the Elecraft K-Line, and each station will be equipped with a linear amplifier. Our chosen logging program is *N1MM+*. Logs will be uploaded to [www.vp6d.com](http://www.vp6d.com) at least once per day using the Inmarsat BGAN satellite. The plan is to have eight operating positions in two radio camps, 160 – 6 meters

(except 60 meters), and SSB/CW/RTTY/FT-8, including 6-meter Earth-Moon-Earth (which would be a first from Ducie). We are hoping to give new contacts to as many stations as possible, and to maximize the number of unique calls we work. Radio operations are expected to begin around October 20 and end on November 3, dependent on the weather.

Detailed planning for the project began in December 2017. Since then, we've been contacting equipment sponsors, and began our fundraising campaign with a generous grant from the Northern California DX Foundation (NCDXF). As of this writing, we're well into the project plan; team member assignments include the antenna plan, power and infrastructure plan, network and wireless design, emergency plan, scheduling, and more. For further information on the project and how to support it, please visit our website at [www.vp6d.com](http://www.vp6d.com).