Sticky-Beaking Solutions
Understanding the Tricky Terms

Common - FAQ's

What do you mean "VFO Mode"?
This is a manual tuning mode. The term VFO historically means "Variable Frequency Oscillator" but today refers to a tunable data store which contains frequency, mode, attenuator etc. Most Amateur Transceivers offer two VFO's and some Professional Scanning Receivers 2 or more selectable and tunable VFO's. Searching from one VFO Frequency to the other is a quick means of searching, without the need of re-programming a Search.

What is "Memory Mode"?
When in Memory mode, you would usually have a Memory Channel displayed with Mode and Memory Number. A Memory is a Frequency, Mode, etc that you have entered via the keypad or found by searching a certain band, and then saved into it's own memory for future monitoring and/or scanning. ....more on this in a future issue.

What are "Steps"?
Steps are the frequency increment between adjacent channels, this is the band channel spacing. This is generally 12.5kHz or 25kHz for a majority of repeaters. Although there are some new bands with 6.25kHz spacing. The Cell Phone Band is 30kHz..

What is the "Search" & "Scan".?
Your Scanner will have some sort of memory bank or banks frequency storage system. You will have entered frequencies of local users e.g.. Police, Fire, Ambulance etc., or we may have installed some for you. Pressing Scan means your scanner will look at each individual Memorized Frequency and stop on any activity. Searching is what you do if you're trying to find a new Frequency. For example, if you were looking for the local Police Frequencies you would search between about 75.2750 Mhz and 76.6000 Mhz in steps of 12.5Khz. Some Scanners have 40 Plus pre-programmable search bands pre-installed, talk to your dealer!

Please explain "Select Scan"?:
Your Scanner may have up to 20 memory banks with up to 50 memories per bank. Select Scan allows you to tag some of those memories from selected banks and only Scan those selected.

I don't understand "Free Scan":
Free Scan is a predetermined time that your scanner will remain on an active frequency before resuming Scan or Search even though the frequency is still active. Very useful for monitoring Cell phones or monitoring activity on local Ham Repeaters. Called "SKIP" on Yupiteru Scanners.

Frequency changes when I push ENTER!
If your scanner is set for 25kHz steps and you try to enter something like 75.7125 it will change to 75.725 Mhz. You need to change your step to 12.5kHz. Unfortunately some scanners are not designed with New Zealand in mind and you just can't change steps. In some models the error is only 2.5Khz which used to be near enough. New requirements for Commercial Repeaters mean that instead of the old plus or minus 5kHz bandwidth they are now supposed to be plus or minus 2.5Khz. Meaning near enough will not be good enough.
Don't throw your old 25 Khz scanner away..... It,'ll be perfect for 157.9500 Mhz!.....see the next issue.....

How useful is "Mode Scan"?:
You may have a Memory Bank full of Civil Defence and Red Cross HF and VHF Frequencies. All the local channels will be NFM where as the HF(Shortwave) will all be USB. If there was a locally based emergency (Flooding etc) then you would probably have no need to scan the HF Memories. Easy answer is to do a Mode Scan on that particular Memory Bank..NFM only..This feature is only offered in certain models.

What are "Birdies"?
Birdies are internally generated frequencies that cause the scanner to stop during search or scan. A good Scanner should not have too many, if your scanner offers the Frequency Pass facility then this is seldom a problem. Known Birdies are sometimes published in the user manual..

What is "CTCSS"?
Used by some amateur band repeaters and most commercial RT Services where shared resources are used, CTCSS ensures that operators only hear traffic intended for them. A CTCSS Decoder board fitted internally or externally will display this tone. There are 50 different tones, of which you will not be able to hear due to the low frequencies they use and the audio characteristics of most receivers.