

How do I?

An occasional series

This week: Manufacturer Round-Up 2021

This is a follow up to the Manufacturer Round-Up 2020. We will attempt to focus on new radios and changes.

The Ham Radio Outlet (HRO) Fall/Winter 2021 Catalog arrived in the mail this week. I like catalogs. Send me one and I will look at it. On the other hand, I will never get up in the morning and ask myself 'What is Retailer X selling today' and go look for a website. Ham Radio Outlet., or HRO, is one of the top two or three retailers of amateur radio equipment in North America. They do not carry everything, from every vendor, but generally speaking, if they do not carry it, you need to hunt.

With the demise of AES- Amateur Equipment Supply- a couple years ago, DX Engineering has broadened their offerings and there are some internet only vendors.

I was sort of surprised at the current offerings in the HRO catalog. This is not an endorsement of any product or manufacturer. Just some musings about what the market looks like and what it may mean for the hobby.

There are 4 "mainstream" ham radio transceiver manufacturers. I do not have sales data, but in terms of total units sold for the amateur service, it probably looks like Yaesu, Icom, Kenwood and Alinco. All have their merits, and for the most part it is like arguing Chevy vs. Ford or John Deere vs. Case IH, and someone always chimes in with "What about Dodge?" or "What about Agco?".

Note: In the following sections, if an entry is highlighted in blue, you will find a *How Do I...* article written about that radio and posted on our website, or we know a Cumberland Amateur Radio Club member who has first-hand experience with one.

HF Equipment

Let's start with HF equipment. (160 meters to 10 meters, some may offer 6M, 2M and 70 cm coverage as well)

Alinco's long time entry, the **DX-SR8T** is gone. As I write this, HRO only has some accessories and parts for it. Alinco still has it on their website, but a quick Google search shows it is hard to find from mainstream vendors. HRO does not offer any other Alinco HF radios.

Icom offers the top of their line **IC-7610**. but the IC-7700 is now gone. They have what may be the best seller of the moment, the **IC-7300**. The trusty (see elsewhere in this series) entry level **IC-718** is still in the catalog. Rounding out the 100W HF transceiver category is the **IC-**

7851. The mobile **IC-7100** fits here as well. It offers HF, UHF, VHF and D-Star as well as analog on VHF/UHF. We will also insert the QRP (low power) **IC-705** here, as it does HF, but Icom puts it in another category, so we shall meet it again later.

Kenwood offers the top of their line **TS-990S**, **TS890S** and the **TS-590SG**.

Yaesu offers the **FTDX101D** and **FTDX101MP** at the top of their line. The **FTDX5000MP-Limited** (200 watt output vs. 100 watt in the standard FTDX5000) and the **FTDX3000** are both gone. The **FTDX10** is the HF-only work horse similar to the Icom 7300. The HF plus VHF/UHF **FT991A** rounds out the line and for QRP work the **FT818ND**. Unique to Yaesu, at the moment, is the 100 watt mobile radio. They offer the **FT891**, which is much like the older FT857D minus the VHF/UHF capability.

VHF/UHF Mobile. (2 meters and/or 70 cm) Analog or Digital

Alinco has maybe the most interesting lineup. They have the 2m/70cm dual band **DR-735T**. The rest of the lineup is changed. The 85 watt 2 meter only **DR-B185HT** is gone. The 50 watt 6 meter **DR-06TA** and the 50 watt 2 meter **DR-135TMKIII** remain. The very similar but 220 MHz only **DR-235TMKIII** and 440 MHz only **DR-435TMKIII** are both gone. **New** is the **DR-MD500T** a DMR dual band mobile.

Icom offers the dual band (2m/440cm) **IC 2730A**, the 2 meter only **IC 2300H** as analog radios and the **IC-7100** (HF/VHF/UHF), the **ID-4100A**, **ID5100A Deluxe** and as mentioned before, the QRP **IC-705** all with analog and D-Star capability (see elsewhere in this series for articles on digital modes, including D-Star).

Not sure where else to put it, but Icom offers the **IC-9700**. It can be mobile but seems most used in the shack. It covers 2 meters, 70 cm and 1200 MHz. Icom sells it as designed for weak signal work and satellite operation and it also handles D-Star.

Kenwood has no mobile radios in the HRO catalog. All of these are gone: The dual band 2m/70cm **TM-D7106** ready for GPS and APRS work; the **TM-281A** and the EchoLink-ready **TM-V71A**, both 2 meter only.

Yaesu:: The **FT-991A** does 2 meters and 70 cm as well as HF. The **FT-818ND** does QRP only but covers 2 meters and 70 cm.

Yaesu offers 5 true mobile VHF/UHF radios. The **FTM-300DR** and the **FTM-400DXR**. Just looking at the catalog, I am not sure what advantage one or the other offers. I think the 300 is "entry level" and the 400 is for the advanced user. Both offer UHF and VHF, 2 meters and 70 cm, analog and Yaesu System Fusion C4FM digital.

The 2 meter analog category is down to two radios-the **FT2980R** and the **FTM3100DR**. But new to the category is the dual band FTM-6000R which is apparently trying to fill the niche of the Yaesu FT-7800 and FT-7900 of yore.

Handhelds. (2 meters and/or 70 cm) Analog or Digital

This category has perhaps changed the most.

Alinco offers a dual bander and tribander. That is it in analog. For 2m/70cm it is the **DJ-VX50T**. The tribander adds 1200 MHz in the **DJ-G7T**.

The **DJ-MD5TGP** was a dual band (70cm/2m) handheld. This was the only DMR offering from a major manufacturer. (see elsewhere in this series for more on DMR). It is now gone from the catalog. The **DJ-MD5XT** is still offered online but at a price that makes me think it is being discontinued.

Icom had one analog HT, the **IC-V86** (see elsewhere in this series for reviews), a 2 meter-only transceiver. It still is listed and the old IC V80 Sport is back. The V80 now comes with only a battery tray for user supplied AA batteries. It uses the same rechargeable battery as the V86, but it does not come with a battery. D-Star users have the dual band 2m/70cm **ID-52A***.

Kenwood offers one HT: The 2 meter analog **TH-K20A** basically goes head-to-head with the Icom V86.

The rest of last year's Kenwood lineup: the **TH-D72A** is a dual band 2m/70cm with GPS and APRS and the **TH-D74A** is a triband (2 m/ 220 MHz/70 cm) with GPS/APRS and D-Star, are gone.

Yaesu offers six handhelds. The stunner here is they no longer have a single band HT. They used to carry 2 meter or 70 cm single banders and they were well liked. If you want a classic Yaesu **FT-60R** you may only have weeks or months to get one. This very popular dual band analog 2m/70cm is still in the catalog, but so is the **FT-65R** which says it is based on the FT-60R. The next oldest is the **VX-6R** which is a triband 2m/220 MHz/440 MHz. The **FT-4XR** is sold as a very compact analog 2m/70cm. The **FT-3DR** offers analog and C4FM with GPS and APRS and is a dual band 2m/70cm. Last but not least is the **FT-70DR**, dual band 2m/70cm, analog/C4FM.

Summary

So what does all this mean? While you may pay a little more, you still have access to perhaps the best performing HF transceivers of all time.

The mobile market seems to have shrunk. But then you do not see as many antennas on cars or articles about vehicle installations.

The hand held offerings have shrunk, yet you seem to see more articles than ever about handhelds. I sort of think the manufacturers can offer a HT with multiple bands and modes for not a lot more than a single band, analog radio, and have priced themselves out of that market. Or maybe the Baefongs have forced them out.

<u>Category</u>	<u>HF</u>	<u>Bands</u>	<u>VHF/UHF?</u>	<u>RF Power*</u>	<u>Digital?</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Alinco	None	None	None	None	None	None
Icom	IC 7610	160-6	No	100	No	
Icom	IC 7851	160-6	No	100	No	
Icom	IC 7300	160-6	No	100	No	
Icom	IC 718	160-10	No	100	No	
Icom	IC 705	160-6	2m, 70cm	5	D Star	
Icom	IC 7100	160-6	2m, 70cm	100	D Star	
Kenwood	TS-990S	160-6	No	100	No	
Kenwood	TS-890S	160-6	No	100	No	
Kenwood	TS-590SG	160-6	No	100	No	
Yaesu	FTDX101D	160-6	No	100	No	
Yaesu	FTDX101MP	160-6	No	200	No	
Yaesu	FTDX10	160-6	No	100	No	
Yaesu	FT991A	160-6	2m, 70cm	100	C4FM	
Yaesu	FT891	160-6	No	100	No	
Yaesu	FT818ND	160-6	2m, 70cm	5	No	
Category VHF/UHF Mobile						
Alinco	DR-735T	NA	2m, 70cm	50	No	
Alinco	DR-MD500T	NA	2m, 70cm	50	DMR	
Alinco	DR135TMKIII	NA	2M	50	No	
Alinco	DR O6TA	NA	6M	50	No	
Icom	IC-2730A	NA	2m, 70cm	50	No	
Icom	IC 2300H	NA	2M	50	No	
Icom	ID-4100A	NA	2m, 70cm	50	D-Star	GPS
Icom	ID-5100A	NA	2m, 70cm	50	D-Star	GPS
Icom	IC-9700	NA	2M, 70cm, 23 cm	100	None	Satellite
Kenwood	None	None	None	None	None	None
Yaesu	FTM-300DR	NA	2m, 70cm	50	D-Star	GPS/APRS
Yaesu	FTM-400XDR	NA	2m, 70cm	50	D-Star	GPS/APRS
Yaesu	FTM-6000R	NA	2m, 70cm	50	No	
Yaesu	FT-2980R	NA	2M	80	No	
Yaesu	FTM-3100DR	NA	2M	50	No	

Category **VHF/UHF Handheld**

Alinco	DJ-VX50T	NA	2m, 70cm	5	No	
Alinco	DJ-G7T	NA	2m, 70cm, 1200 MHz	5	No	
Icom	IC - V86	NA	2M	5	No	
Icom	IC-V80 Sport	NA	2M	5	No	AA only as shipped
Icom	ID-52A	NA	2m, 70cm	5	D-Star	
Kenwood	TH-K20A	NA	2M	5	No	
Yaesu	FT-5DR	NA	2m, 70cm	5	C4FM	GPS/APRS
Yaesu	FT-60R	NA	2m, 70cm	5		
Yaesu	FT-70R	NA	2m, 70cm	5	C4FM	
Yaesu	FT-4XR	NA	2m, 70cm	5		
Yaesu	FT-65R	NA	2m, 70cm	5		
Yaesu	VX-6R	NA	2m, 1.25m 70cm	5		

More info:

Ham Radio Outlet: <https://www.hamradio.com/>

Alinco: <http://www.alinco.com/>

Icom: <https://www.icomamerica.com/en/>

Kenwood: <https://www.kenwood.com/usa/>

Yaesu: <https://www.yaesu.com/>

Catch 'ya on the air!