



Australian Government

Joint Agency Coordination Centre

MH370 Operational Search Update

21 January 2015

This operational report has been developed to provide regular updates on the progress of the search effort for MH370. Our work will continue to be thorough and methodical, so sometimes weekly progress may seem slow. Please be assured that work is continuing and is aimed at finding MH370 as quickly as possible.

Key developments this week

- Both *Fugro Equator* and *Fugro Discovery* arrived in the search area on 15 January.
- *Fugro Supporter* has completed trials of the Autonomous Underwater Vehicle (AUV) and is travelling to the search area.
- Underwater search operations were suspended on 18 January, due to severe weather conditions associated with Tropical Cyclone Bansi. *Fugro Equator* and *Fugro Discovery* have since recommenced search operations. *GO Phoenix* is expected to resume in the next day or so.
- Around 16,000 square kilometres of the seafloor have been searched, which is around 26 per cent of the priority search area.

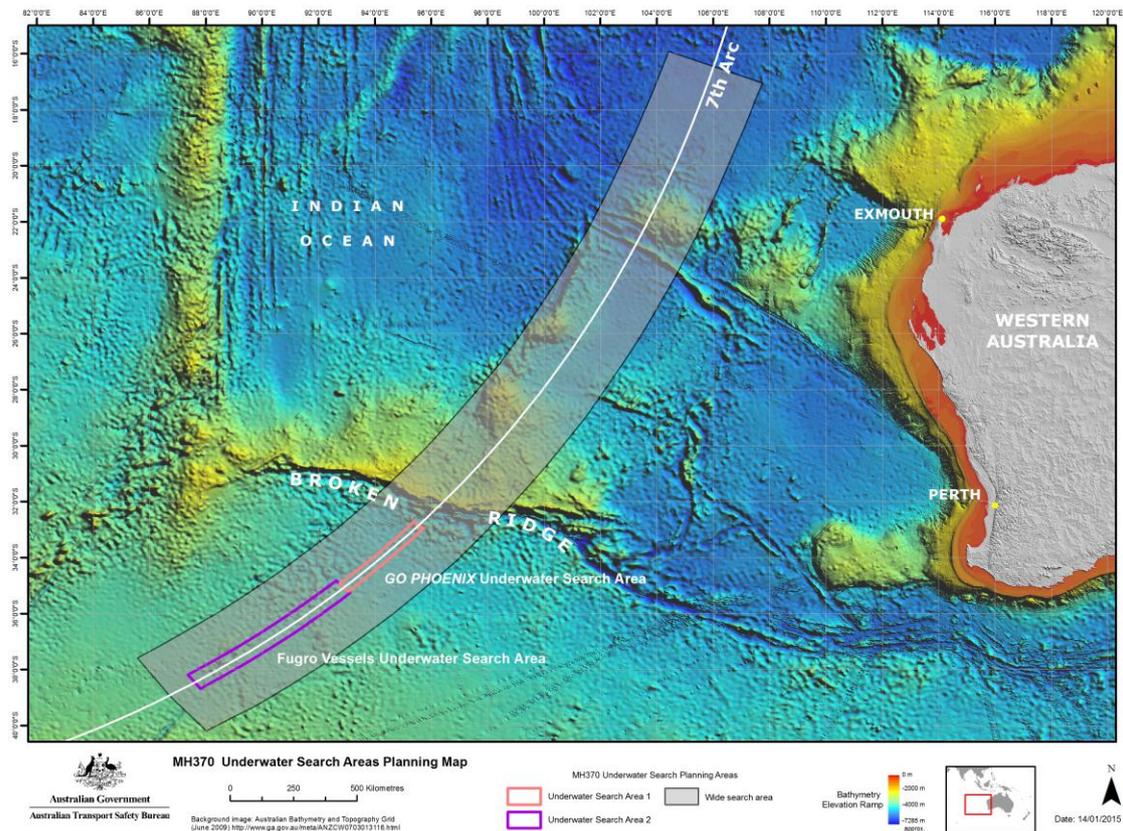
Underwater search

In addition to locating the aircraft, the underwater search aims to map the MH370 debris field in order to identify and prioritise the recovery of specific aircraft components, including flight recorders, which will assist with the Malaysian investigation. The ATSB has utilised the data from the bathymetric survey work to prepare the initial plan for the underwater search, to be followed and referred to by all parties involved. The plan includes search timings, methods, procedures, safety precautions and the initial search areas for the various vessels.

Around 16,000 square kilometres of the seafloor have been searched, which is around 26 per cent of the priority search area.

Underwater search operations were suspended on 18 January, due to severe weather conditions. *Fugro Equator* and *Fugro Discovery* have since recommenced search operations. *GO Phoenix* is expected to resume in the next day or so.

Notwithstanding current weather conditions and assuming no other significant delays with vessels, equipment or from the weather, the current underwater search area may be largely completed around May 2015.



Ship movements

Fugro Equator and *Fugro Discovery* both arrived in the search area and commenced underwater search operations on 15 January.

Underwater search operations were suspended on 18 January, owing to severe weather conditions resulting from Tropical Cyclone Bansi, east-northeast of Mauritius. Wave heights of around 5-6 metres occurred and prohibited all three vessels, *Fugro Equator*, *Fugro Discovery* and *GO Phoenix* from being able to deploy the towfish equipment safely.

Fugro Equator and *Fugro Discovery* have since recommenced search operations. *GO Phoenix* is expected to resume in the next day or so.

Fugro Supporter is expected to arrive in the search area and commence search activities in the coming week.

Weather

The presence of Tropical Cyclone Bansi in the Indian Ocean has affected sea conditions in the region, with conditions up to sea state 8 in the search area. Even as Tropical Cyclone Bansi has begun to dissipate, the effects of the storm have spread out to influence conditions in the search area.

Weather conditions are anticipated to improve towards the end of the week.

Overall conditions are expected to be generally favourable during the summer months.

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