



Australian Government

Joint Agency Coordination Centre

MH370 Operational Search Update

18 February 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

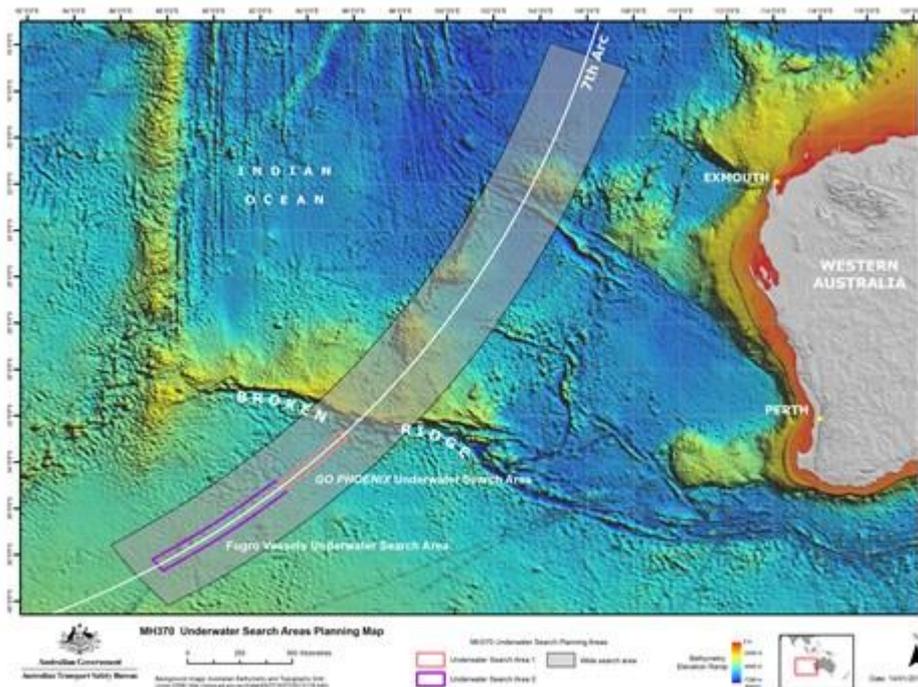
- *GO Phoenix* continues to conduct underwater search operations.
- *Fugro Equator* departed the search area on 11 February to return to Fremantle to conduct scheduled resupply. The vessel arrived in port on 17 February.
- *Fugro Discovery* departed the search area on 12 February to return to Fremantle to conduct scheduled resupply. The vessel arrived in port on 18 February.
- *Fugro Supporter* departed the search area on 13 February to return to Fremantle to conduct scheduled resupply.
- Over 24,000 square kilometres (40 per cent) of the priority zone have now been searched.

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.

Over 24,000 square kilometres of the seafloor have been searched, which is around 40 per cent of the priority search area.

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

GO Phoenix continues to conduct underwater search operations in the search area.

Fugro Equator suspended underwater search operations on 11 February in order to travel to Fremantle for a scheduled port visit. The vessel arrived in port on 17 February, and is anticipated to depart around 20 February, arriving back in the search area around 27 February.

Fugro Discovery suspended underwater search operations on 12 February in order to travel to Fremantle for a scheduled port visit. The vessel arrived in port on 18 February, and is anticipated to depart around 19 February, arriving back in the search area around 25 February.

Fugro Supporter departed the search area on 13 February to return to Fremantle to conduct resupply. The vessel is scheduled to arrive on 20 February, with an anticipated departure date of 21 February. It will conduct a series of calibration trials that are expected to be 24 – 48 hours in duration. The vessel will then return briefly to Fremantle to disembark additional personnel before proceeding to the search area. The vessel is expected to arrive in the search area around 2 March.

Weather

Weather conditions in the northern part of the search area, where *GO Phoenix* is operating, are expected to be favourable, with sea states expected to rise no higher than 2.

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

Quality assurance process

Prior to the commencement of the underwater search, the vessels and equipment were rigorously tested and this continues throughout the search. In the following interview, Mr Andy Sherrell, Quality Assurance Manager with the Australian Transport Safety Bureau, explains his role and some of the challenges presented by the search.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y7UTi1-WB4o>

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