Australian Government

Joint Agency Coordination Centre

MH370 Operational Search Update

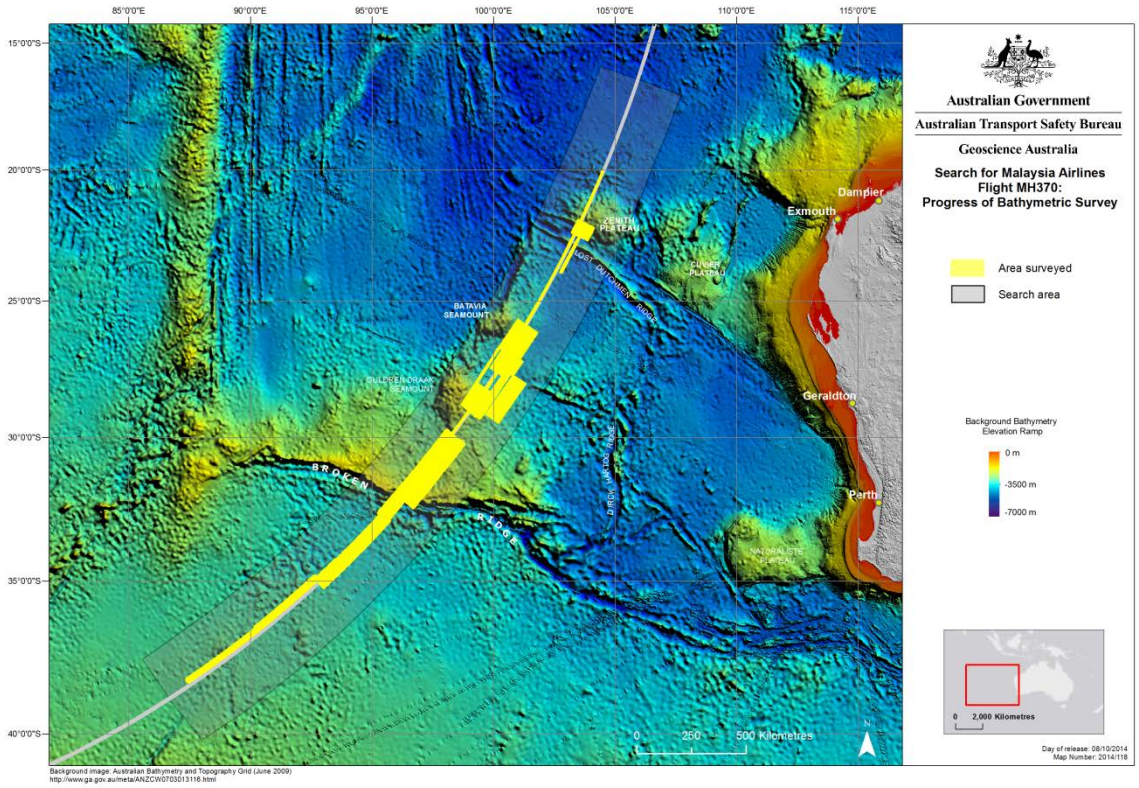
8 October 2014

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.

Bathymetric survey

The bathymetric survey provides a map of the ocean floor to ensure the safe and effective operation of equipment during the underwater search.

Over 117,000 square kilometres of the wide search area have been analysed and mapped (see map below).



The priorities for the search will continue to be reviewed and will change over time.

Ship movements

Fugro Equator continues bathymetric survey operations.

Weather

Over the next four days, sea states in the area assigned to *Fugro Equator* are expected to range from 1 to 4, providing good conditions for the survey work.

Underwater search

Vessels involved in the search are being jointly funded by Malaysia and Australia. *Fugro Discovery* and *Fugro Equator* (which is currently being used to survey the search area) are Fugro Survey Pty Ltd vessels, and *GO Phoenix* has equipment and experts provided by Phoenix International (Phoenix).

Ship movements

On Monday, 6 October 2014, *GO Phoenix* arrived in the vicinity of the search area and, following system checks and vehicle deployment, underwater search operations commenced on the seventh arc. The vessel is expected to continue operations for around 12 days before sailing to Fremantle to be resupplied.

Fugro Discovery arrived at the Port of Fremantle on Sunday, 5 October. Search equipment and a mission crew are being mobilised. Trials will be conducted to ensure the equipment is calibrated and functioning correctly and the estimated day of departure is 11 October. The vessel will then travel to the assigned search area in the southern Indian Ocean.

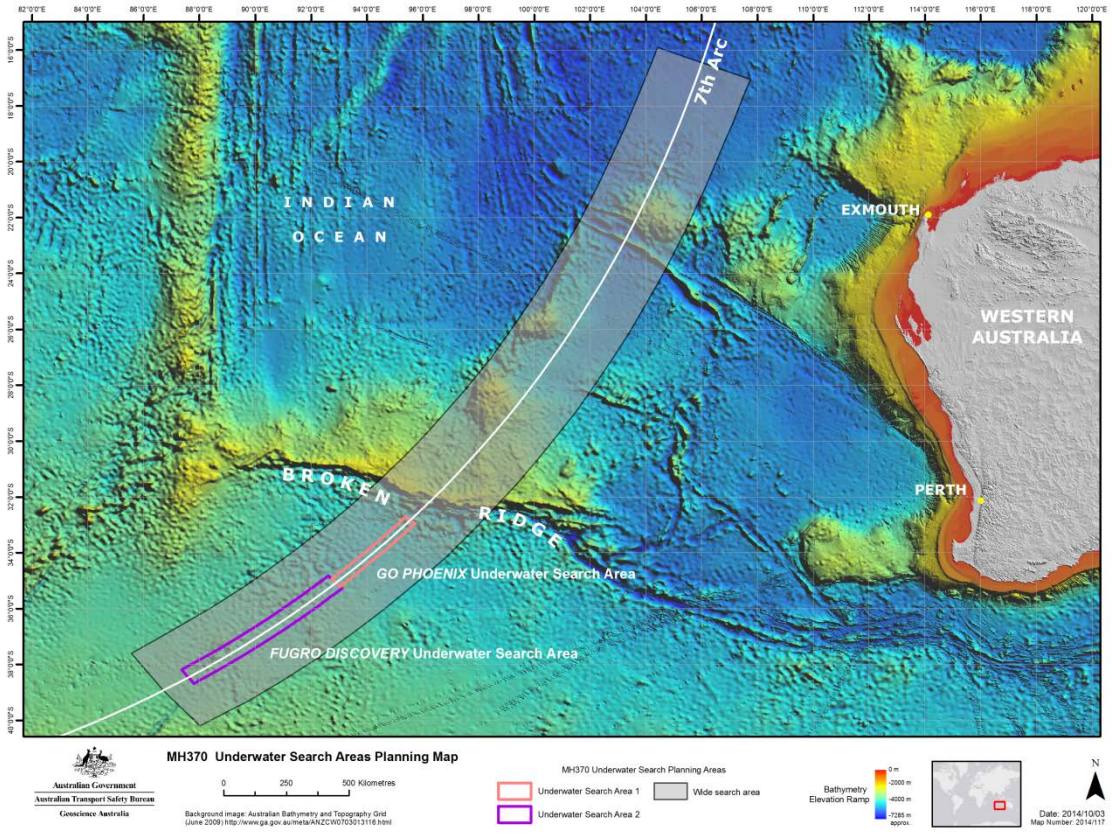
Fugro Equator, the vessel currently being used to survey the search area, is expected to be mobilised as a search vessel when its bathymetric work is complete around the end of October.

Weather

Over the next four days, sea states in the area assigned to *GO Phoenix* are expected to range from 1 to 4, providing good conditions for the search.

Planning

The ATSB, in consultation with the contracted search experts, is in the process of finalising the plan for the underwater search, to be followed and referred to by all parties involved. The plan will include search timings, methods, procedures, safety precautions and search areas. The initial search areas have been identified and allocated to the different search vessels.



The first area to be searched has been assigned to *GO Phoenix*. It has already been surveyed to ensure an accurate understanding of the sea floor topography. The second area, assigned to the Fugro vessels, is currently in the process of being surveyed.

Search priorities

From early in the search, analysis has consistently indicated a very high probability of finding the aircraft along a defined arc in the southern Indian Ocean (where the aircraft last communicated with a ground station through a satellite). This is where the aircraft is assessed to have run out of fuel.

Since then, complex, ground-breaking technical analysis of limited communications data and aircraft flight information has been developed and refined. This work has concentrated on determining the point on the seventh arc that the aircraft was most likely to have reached. This will enable a prioritised search effort in areas along the seventh arc.

Recent refinement to the analysis has given greater certainty about when the aircraft turned south into the Indian Ocean and has produced a better understanding of the parameters within which the satellite ground station was operating during the last flight of MH370. The latest analysis indicates that the underwater search should be prioritised further south within the wide search area for the next phase of the search. The Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB) has published *MH370 – Flight Path Analysis Update* to supplement the previously released report *MH370 – Definition of Underwater Search Areas*, which describes the continuing work. The report is available on the ATSB website at www.atsb.gov.au/publications/investigation_reports/2014/aair/ae-2014-054.aspx and the JACC website at www.jacc.gov.au/media/reports/2014/index.aspx.

Work is continuing with refinements to the analysis of the satellite communication system messages. This ongoing work may result in changes to the prioritisation and location of search activity.

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