



Australian Government

Joint Agency Coordination Centre

MH370 Operational Search Update

5 August 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

- On 29 July aircraft wreckage was found on La Réunion. The wreckage was subsequently identified as being from a Boeing 777 and is currently undergoing further examination to determine its origin.
- *Fugro Discovery* arrived at the port of Fremantle for resupply on 1 August and departed the following day to conduct approximately two days of familiarisation training for new crew members. The vessel will return briefly to Fremantle today to complete resupply before departing for the search area this evening. *Fugro Discovery* is expected to be back in the search area around 12 August.
- *Fugro Equator* continues to conduct search operations in the southern Indian Ocean, and is expected to depart the search area tomorrow, 6 August. The vessel will arrive in Fremantle around 12 August for routine resupply before returning to the search area.
- Regular port and resupply visits are a necessary part of vessel maintenance and crew well-being. The crossover of ships was anticipated and is part of the ongoing search plan.

Aircraft wreckage found on La Réunion

The Malaysian authorities, who are responsible for investigating the disappearance of Malaysia Airlines flight MH370, have determined that the aircraft component retrieved from La Réunion is a flaperon from a Boeing 777 aircraft. Work is still being undertaken by the Malaysian and French authorities to establish whether the flaperon originated from MH370. An Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB) investigator will join the international team which will examine the flaperon in Toulouse, France.

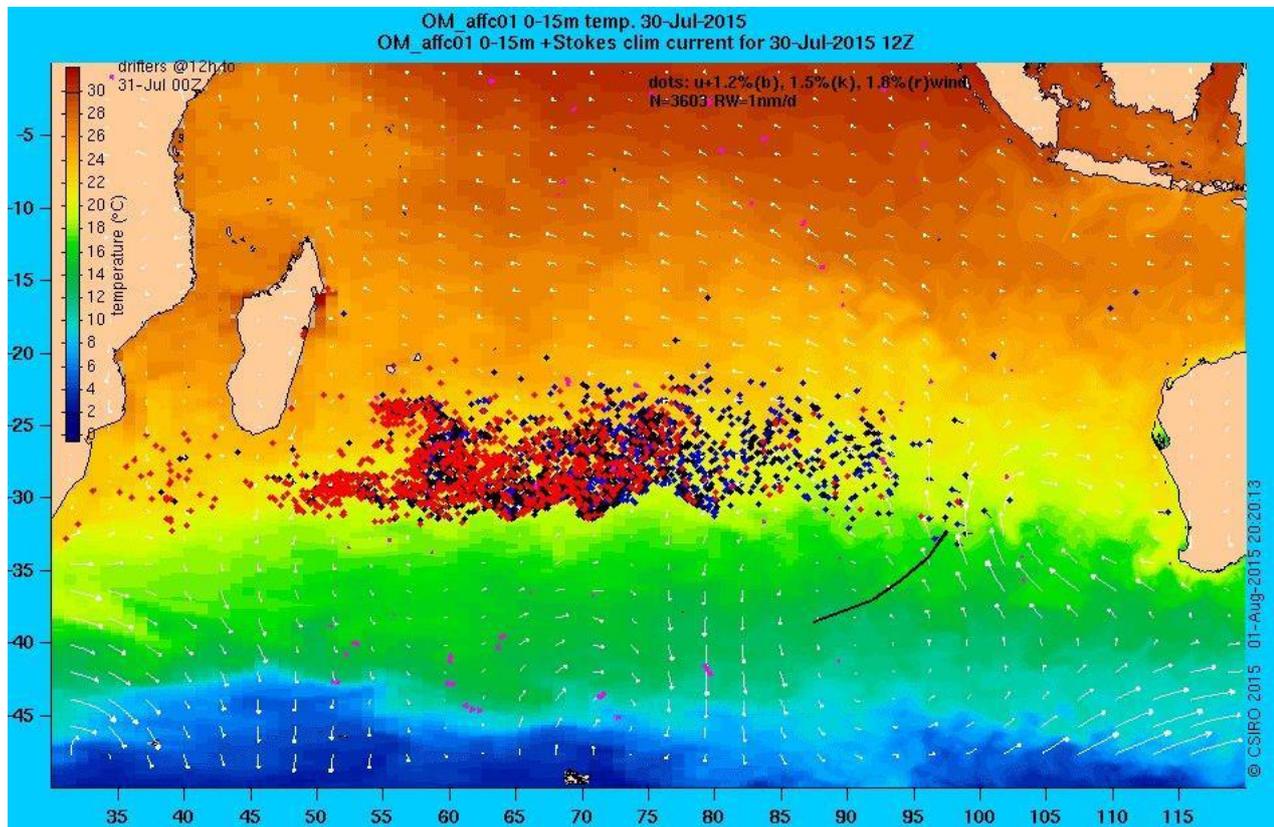
The ATSB, which is leading the search for MH370, has reviewed its search calculations and priorities and is satisfied that the discovery of the flaperon at La Réunion, 16 months after the disappearance of MH370, is consistent with the current underwater search area in the southern Indian Ocean.

Drift modelling by Australia's Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) shows that material from the current search area could have been carried to La Réunion, as well as other locations, as part of a progressive dispersal of floating debris through the action of ocean currents and wind.

Figure 1 shows the indicative drift of debris from the search area as at 30 July.

Blue, black and red dots simulate items with leeway factors (applied to the 10m wind velocity) of 1.2, 1.5 and 1.8%. The items originated along the black arc (7th arc) on 8 March 2014. White arrows are the winds for the day shown. Magenta symbols are positions of real drifting buoys (with sea-anchors at 12m) on the day. Their movement has been used to estimate the errors of the ocean current component of the total drift velocity.

Figure 1: Indicative drift from the Search Area as at 30 July 2015



Reverse drift modelling – tracking the debris back from where it was found to a possible point of origin – is very imprecise when used for long time periods. To the extent they can be relied on, the results of reverse modelling are also consistent with the defined search area.

A fact sheet about drift modelling is available online at: www.atsb.gov.au/publications/2015/mh370-drift-analysis.aspx.

A great deal of additional material has been handed over to the police on La Réunion. While this is being examined, so far none of it appears to have come from an aircraft. The drift modelling indicates that if there is any more floating debris from MH370, it could be anywhere in hundreds of thousands of square kilometres in the Indian Ocean. Notwithstanding, we encourage people to report any item they find to the relevant local authorities.

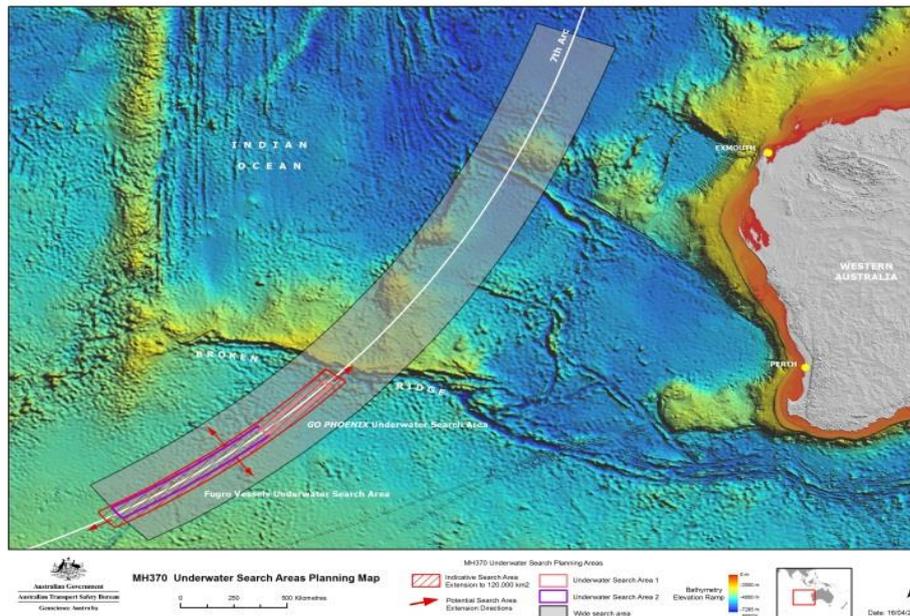
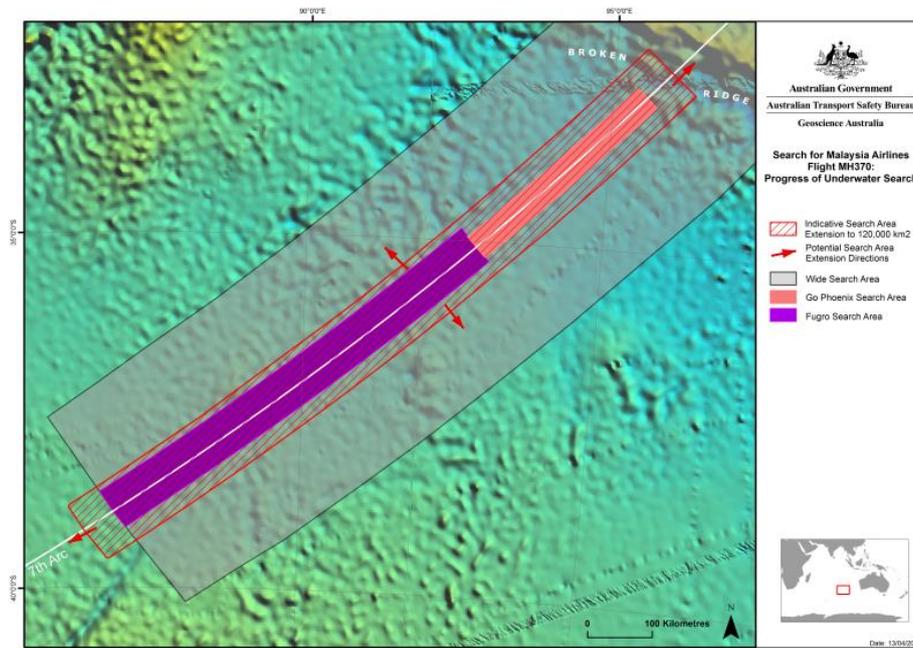
The ATSB continues to rely on the careful analysis of satellite data and aircraft performance information to define the search area and the discovery of the flaperon affirms this work. For this reason, thorough and methodical search efforts will continue to be focused on the defined search area in the southern Indian Ocean.

Underwater search

As announced in April, the search area has been expanded beyond an original 60,000 square kilometre search area to enable up to 120,000 square kilometres to be searched if required.

Search plans were revised in April to ensure that the area can be searched as quickly and effectively as possible. The Fugro vessels have undergone winterisation to enable continuous search operations over the coming months. The safety of the search crews, as always, remains a priority and vessels and equipment utilised will vary to reflect operational needs.

Close to 60,000 square kilometres of the seafloor have been searched so far.



The Search Strategy Working Group continues to review evidence associated with MH370 which may result in further refinement of, or prioritisation within, the search area.

In the event the aircraft is found and accessible, Australia, Malaysia and the People's Republic of China have agreed to plans for recovery activities including securing all the evidence necessary for the accident investigation.

Weather

The weather is forecast to be relatively favourable this week. Search operations will carry on through the winter months, but pauses are anticipated.

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