



Australian Government

Joint Agency Coordination Centre

MH370 Operational Search Update

1 October 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

- *Fugro Discovery* remains in the search area. On 28 September, rough sea conditions obliged the vessel to halt search operations.
- *Fugro Equator* departed Henderson on 28 September after conducting scheduled resupply and maintenance operations. The vessel is anticipated to arrive at the search area on 3 October.

Underwater search

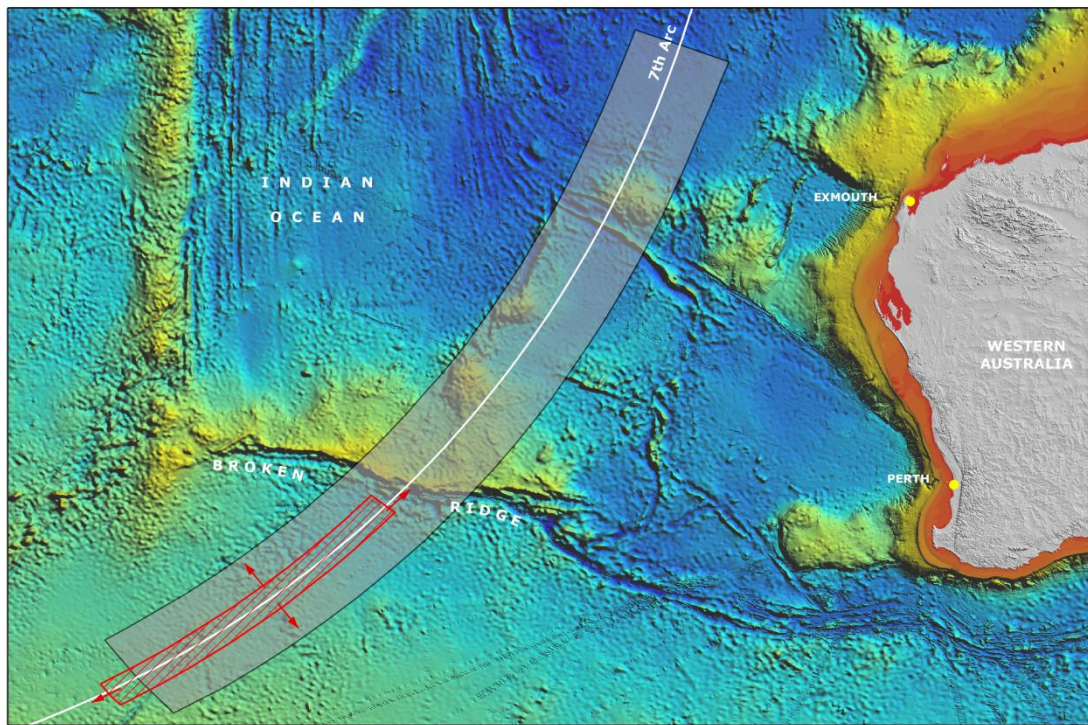
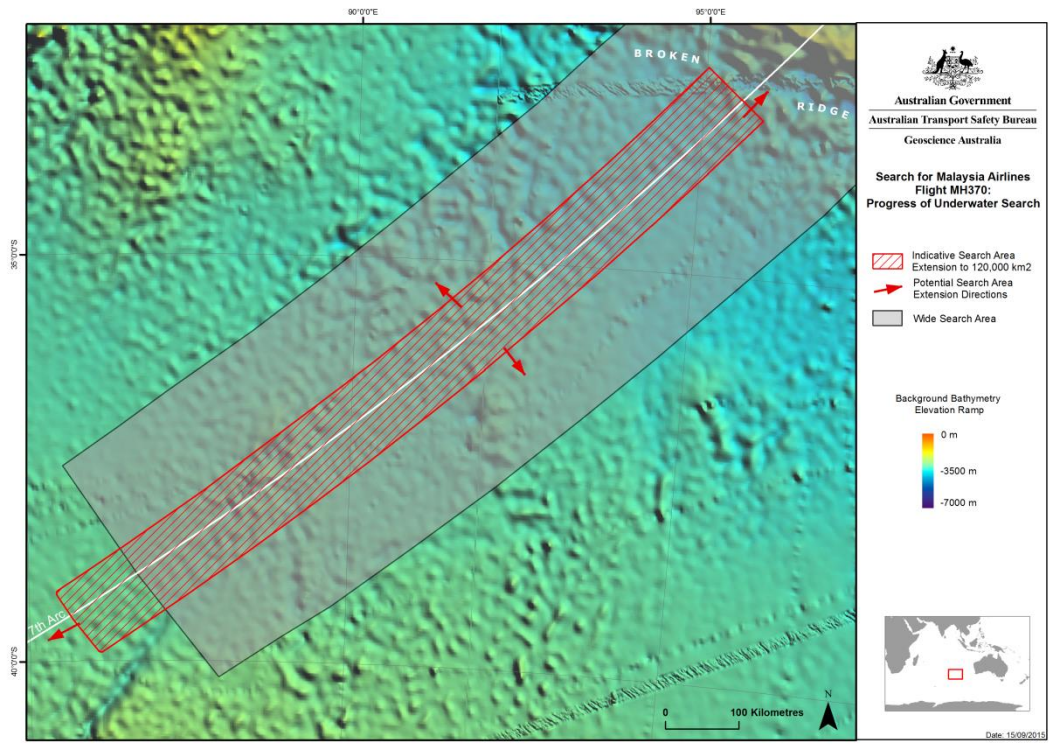
As announced in April, the search area has been expanded beyond an original 60,000 square kilometre search area to enable up to 120,000 square kilometres to be searched if required.

Search plans were revised in April to ensure the area is searched as quickly and effectively as possible despite unfavourable weather conditions. Notwithstanding the onset of spring, weather continues to impact on search operations but conditions are expected to improve in the coming months. The safety of the search crews, as always, remains a priority, and the vessels and equipment utilised will vary to reflect operational needs.

More than 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.



Sonar contacts

During the past week, *Fugro Discovery* resurveyed two sonar contacts identified previously during the underwater search. A fact sheet containing further information about sonar contacts as well as image examples of each of the classifications is available on the website of the Australian Transport Safety Bureau.

The resurvey of contacts was conducted with the deep-tow at lower altitude, shorter range scales, and using low / high frequency sonar. The higher resolution data from this technique enables the search team to identify the relevance of such contacts to the search for MH370.

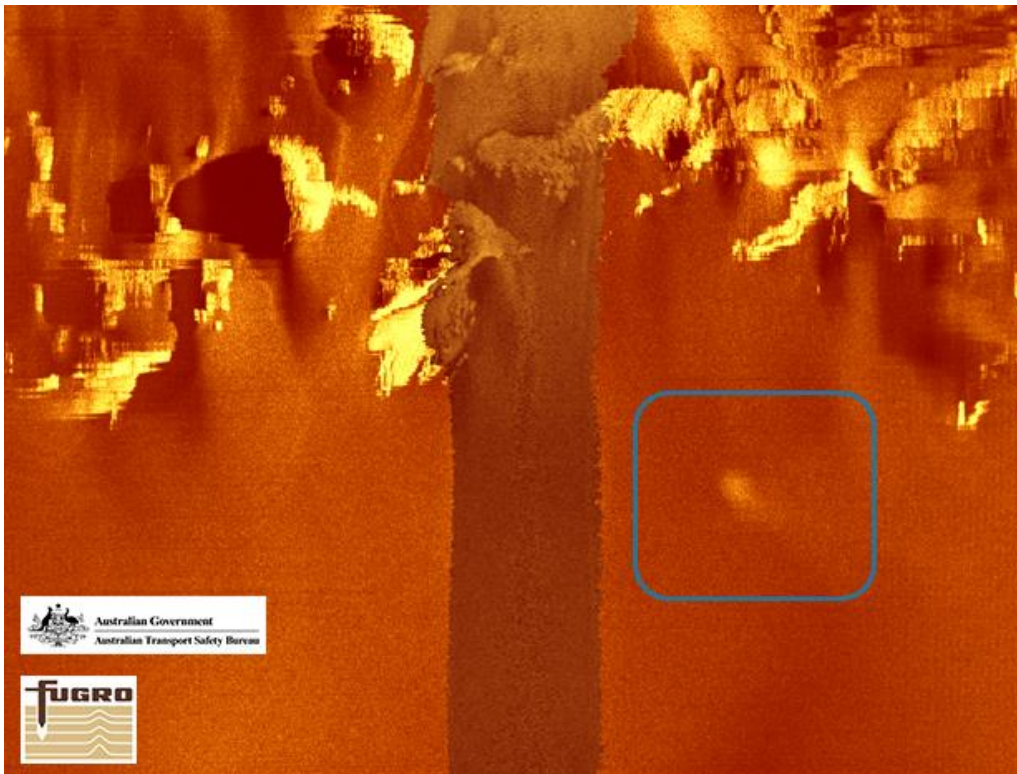


Figure 1: Contact FD0261 wide area search (75kHz, 1000m range, 125m altitude) showed characteristics of a debris trail spreading along the seafloor. Multibeam sonar overlaid on centre track for Nadir coverage. Source: ATSB, image by Fugro

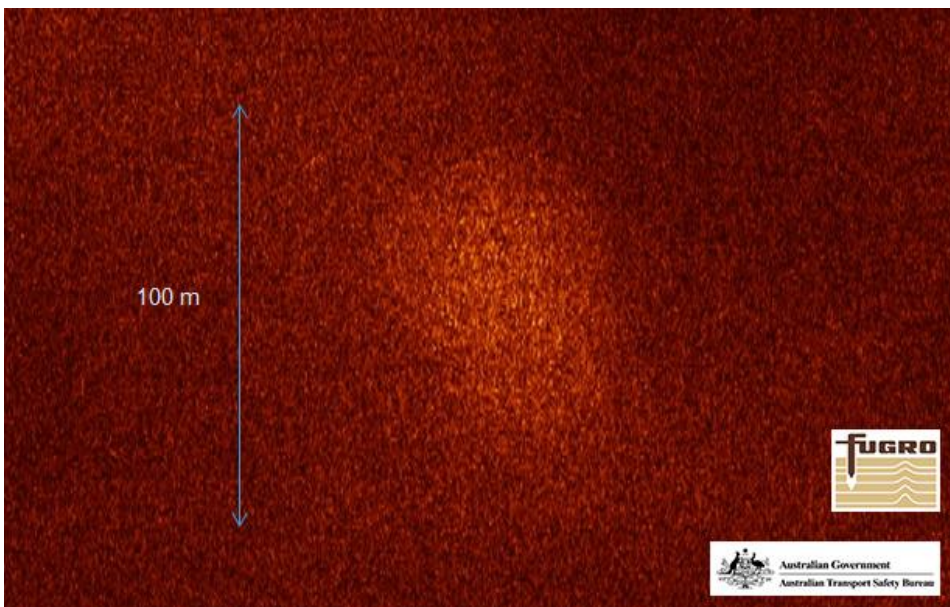


Figure 2: Contact FD0261 resurvey investigation (75kHz, 500m range, 50m altitude). Higher resolution image revealed no large or angular features usually associated with an aircraft debris field. Contact is likely a result of a slight change in seabed relief or a patch of denser seabed. Source: ATSB, image by Fugro

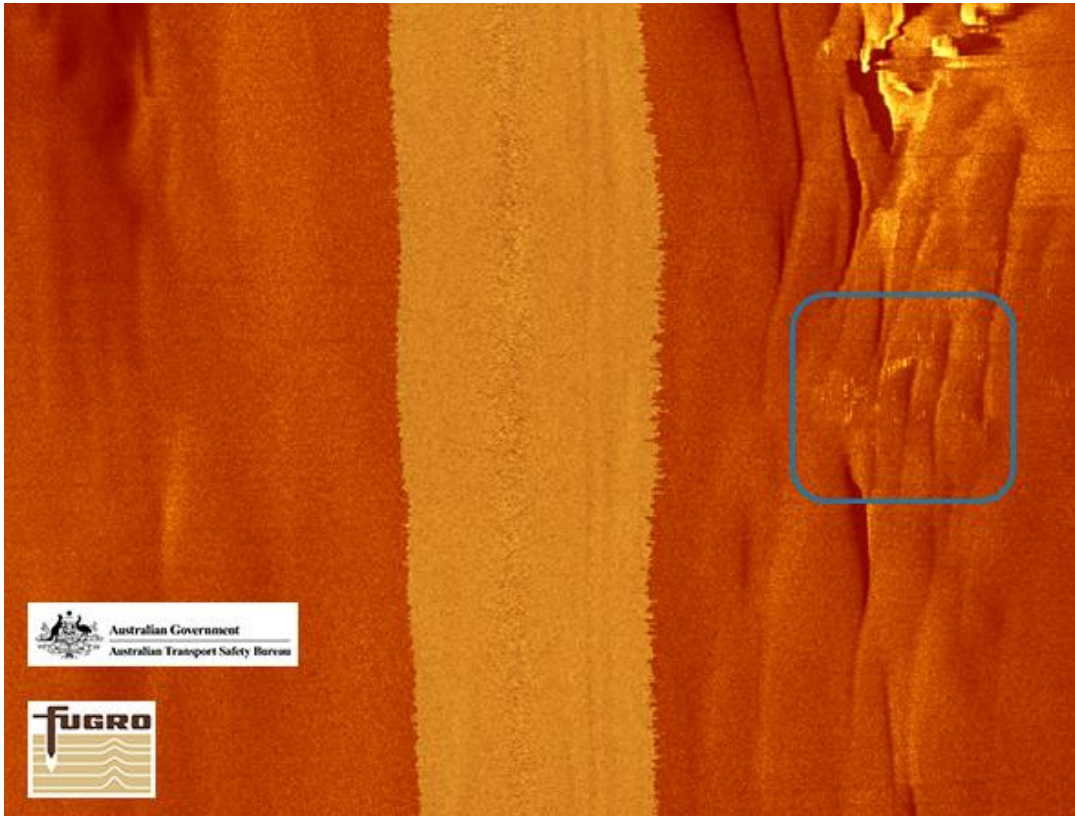


Figure 3: Contact FE0116 wide area search (75kHz, 1000m range, 125m altitude) covered an area with several bright discrete features on the seafloor. Multibeam sonar overlaid on centre track for Nadir coverage. Source: ATSB, image by Fugro

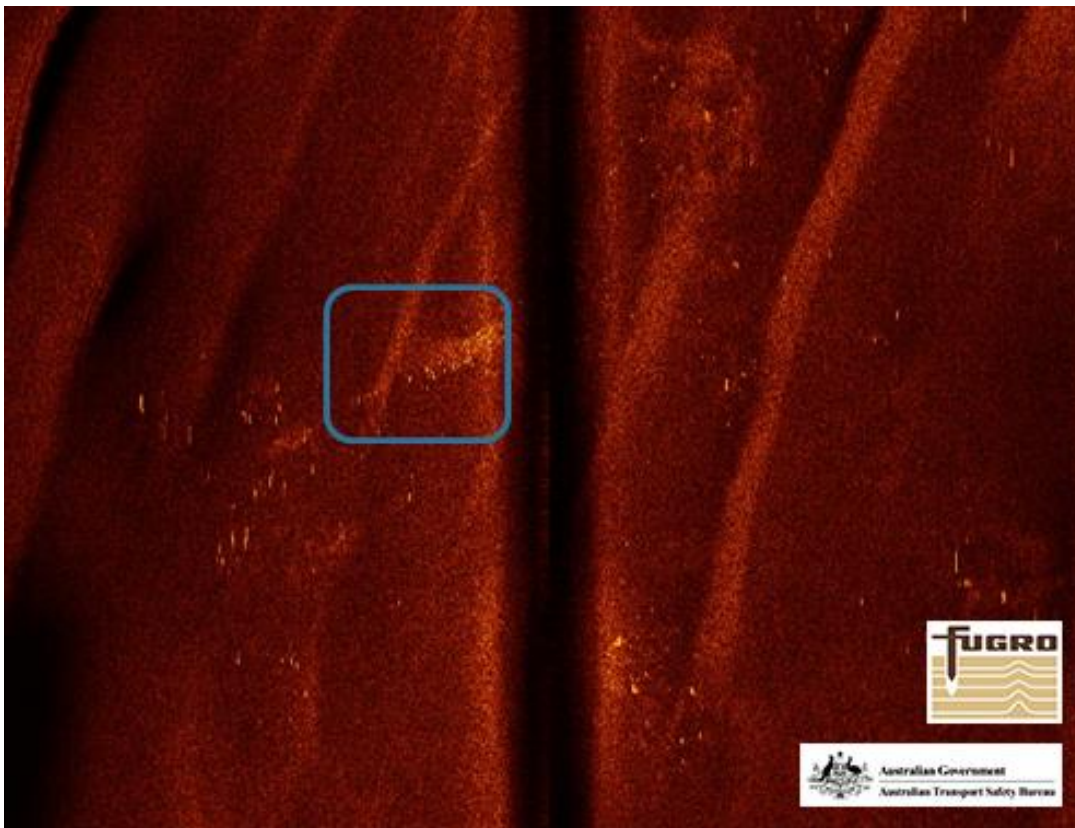


Figure 4: Contact FE0116 resurvey investigation (75kHz, 300m range, 30m altitude, Nadir of approximately 23m width covered by adjacent reconnaissance line). Higher resolution images show the contacts of interest are consistent with the surrounding geologic features and trends. Likely edges of rock exposed above the seabed and associated scattered rock. Source: ATSB, image by Fugro

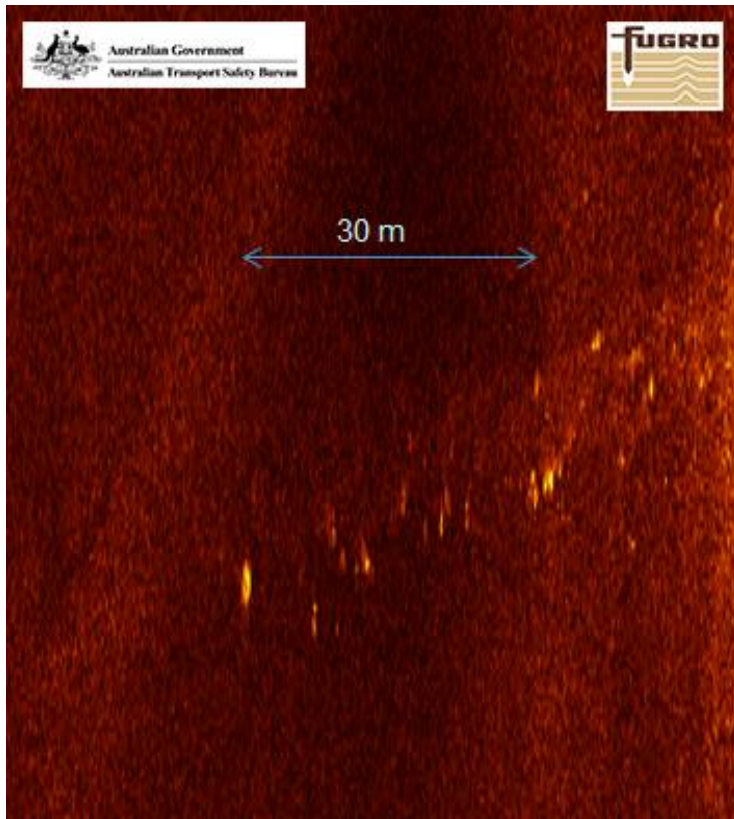


Figure 5: Contact FE0116 resurvey investigation of area within Figure 4 box (75kHz, 150m range, 30m altitude). Higher resolution images show the contacts of interest are consistent with the surrounding geologic features and trends. Likely edges of rock exposed above the seabed and associated scattered rock. Source: ATSB, image by Fugro

The resurvey by *Fugro Discovery* over the past week was able to assist in assessing these contacts as not related to the search for MH370.

Weather

The weather is currently unfavourable, and projected to remain so over the coming days. Troughs and cold fronts are expected to bring gale-force winds. Search operations by *Fugro Discovery* were suspended on 28 September, and will be resumed when safe to do so.

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