



Australian Government

Joint Agency Coordination Centre

MH370 Operational Search Update

25 November 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* is en route to Fremantle, evacuating an unwell crew member. The vessel is expected to arrive in port on Friday 27 November and conduct resupply before returning to the search area.
- *Fugro Equator* continues to conduct bathymetry and underwater search operations in the search area.
- A third search vessel, *Havila Harmony* is currently being mobilised with the Hugin 4500 Autonomous Underwater Vehicle (AUV) search system at the Australian Marine Complex at Henderson, south of Fremantle.

Medical evacuation

A crew member on the search vessel *Fugro Discovery* has fallen ill, suffering from severe pain. The vessel halted search operations on Saturday 21 November, recovering the towfish and commencing transit back to Fremantle. The full-time doctor on *Fugro Discovery* is attending to the crew member in consultation with onshore medical support.

The remoteness of the search area has been an ongoing challenge in the search for MH370. At the time the crew member became unwell, *Fugro Discovery* was approximately 2,800 kilometres from Fremantle – well beyond the range of any land-based helicopter. The only viable option was to return to port.

This incident is a reminder of the difficult conditions in which crew members work. The vessels spend 42 days at sea between port calls in weather conditions which can be physically arduous and fatiguing for the crew. Some of the work performed can be hazardous, particularly handling the heavy deep tow search system on a ship's wet deck moving in a seaway.

The risk of a serious illness or injury on board a search vessel is a real possibility and for this reason the vessels have a doctor on board with appropriate medical equipment and supplies. The risk of a medical emergency is partly mitigated with regular health checks for the crew and a comprehensive system of safe working procedures, however incidents can and will occur.

Underwater search operations

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.

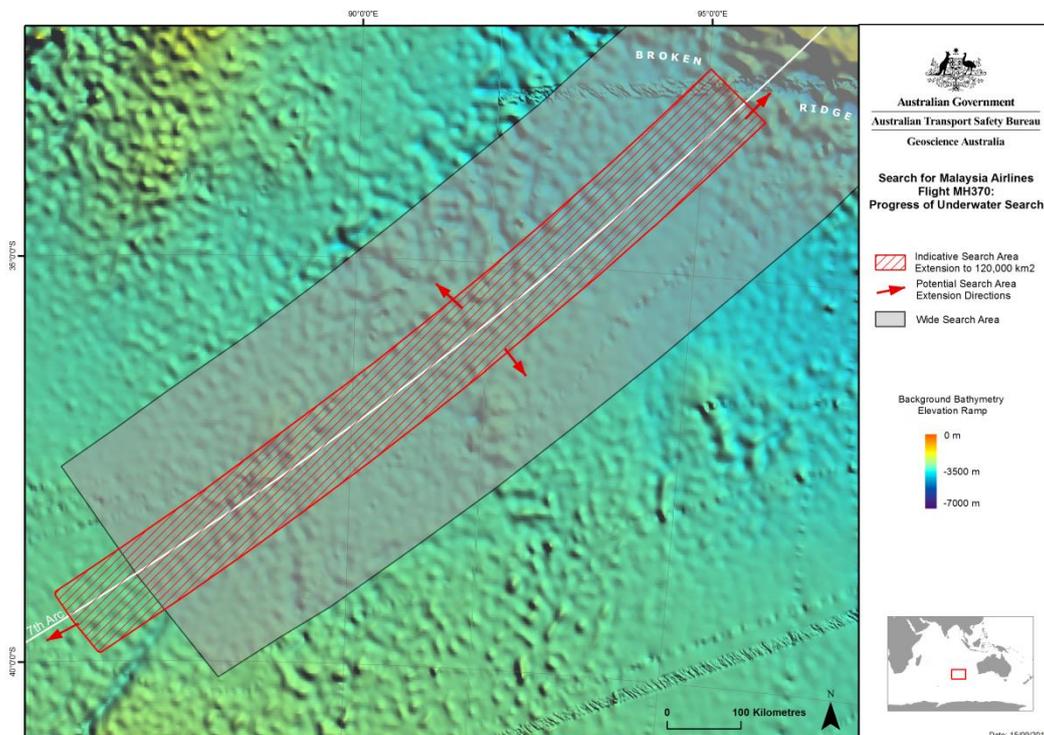
Weather continues to impact on search operations but conditions are expected to be improved over the coming months. The safety of the search crews, as always, remains a priority, and the vessels and equipment utilised will vary to reflect operational needs.

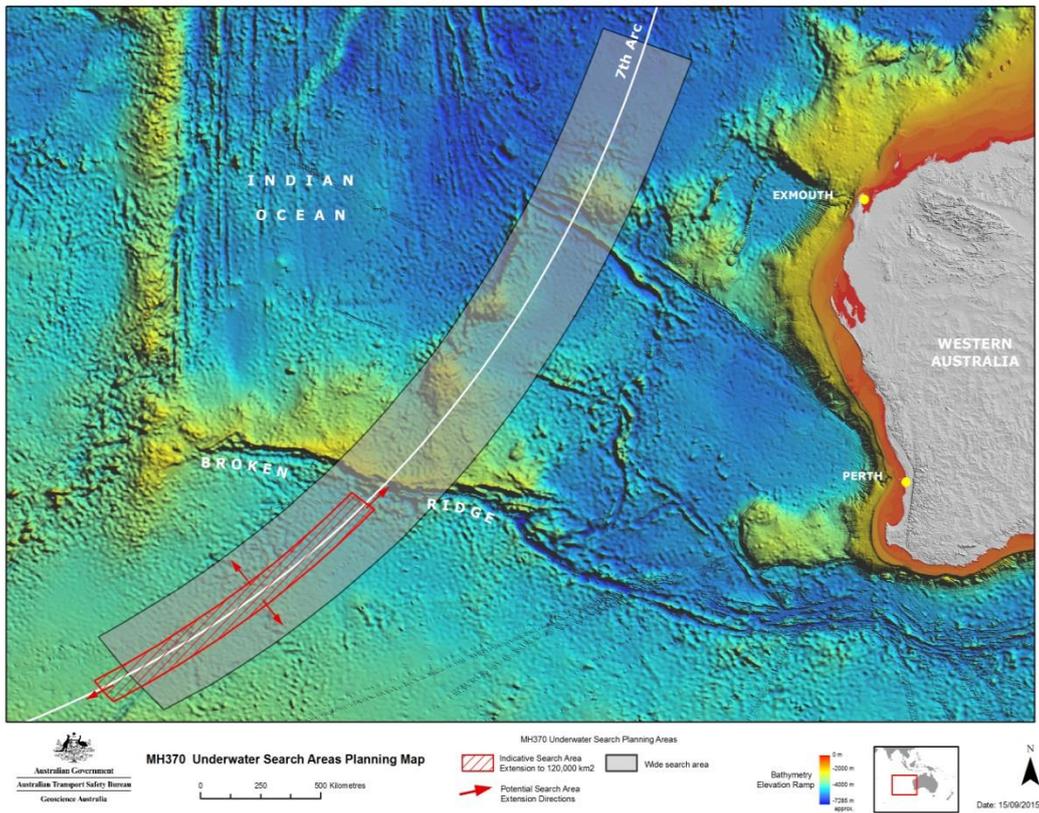
More than 70,000 square kilometres of the seafloor have been searched so far.

Havila Harmony is a Fugro vessel and will have the Hugin 4500 autonomous underwater vehicle (AUV) on board. After calibration trials off the coast of Fremantle, the vessel is expected to depart for the search area on Saturday for an expected arrival date in the the search area of 3 December. The AUV will again be used to survey the most difficult portions of the search area that cannot be searched as effectively by the deep tow search systems on the other search vessels.

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

Weather is forecast to be favourable for the coming week.

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