



Australian Government
Joint Agency Coordination Centre

MH370 Operational Search Update

10 February 2016

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* arrived back in the search area on 6 February, but adverse weather conditions prevented the safe deployment of the towfish until 9 February. During calibration of the towfish, damage to the cable was noticed and while both the cable and towfish were secured, the vessel will need to return to Fremantle to obtain a replacement cable. The vessel departed the search area this morning and is anticipated to arrive in port around 15 February.
- *Fugro Equator* arrived at Fremantle yesterday for a scheduled port visit, and is scheduled to depart today.
- *Havila Harmony* arrived back in the search area on 3 February and successfully recovered the towfish *Intrepid* that was separated from *Fugro Discovery*. Subsequently, adverse weather prevented *Havila Harmony* from undertaking search operations however improved conditions have now allowed these to resume. *Havila Harmony* rendezvoused with *Fugro Discovery* this morning and transferred the towfish *Intrepid* to the vessel before *Fugro Discovery* departed.
- *Dong Hai Jiu 101* will arrive in Fremantle today for resupply before departing to commence search operations.

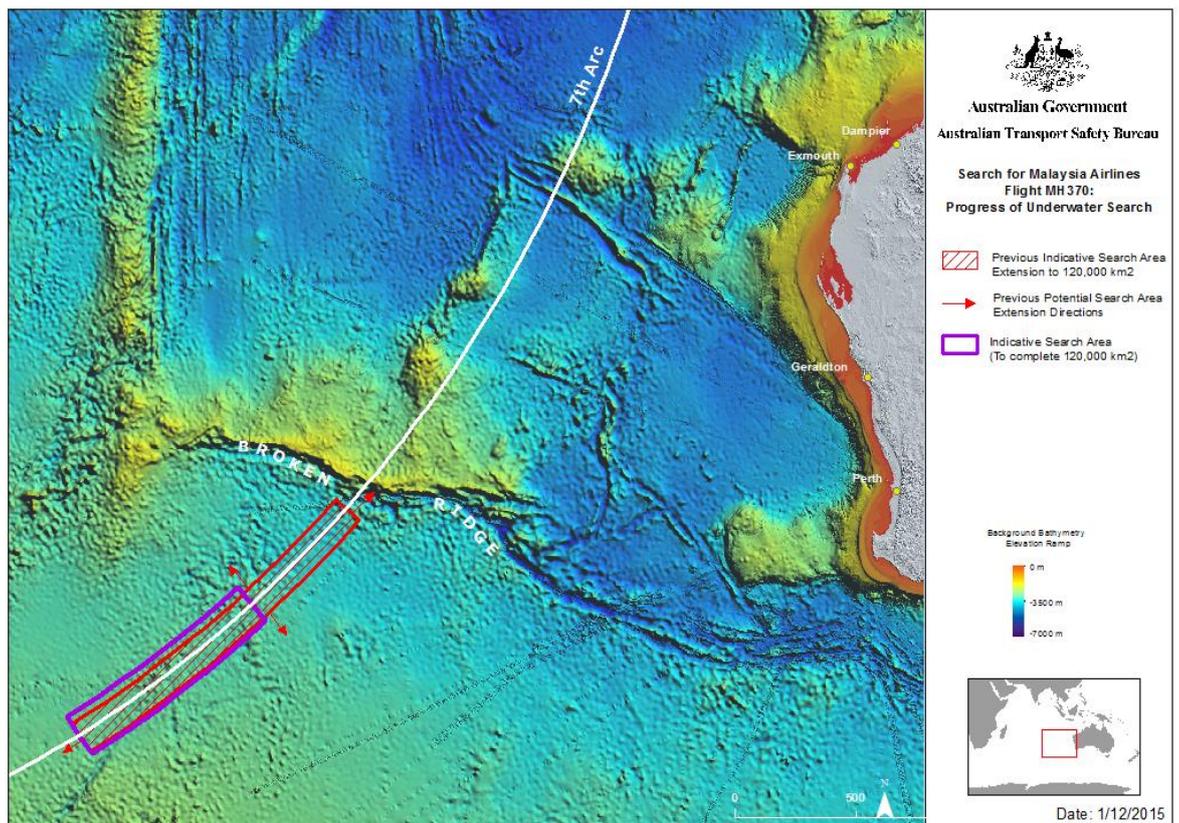
Underwater search operations

Weather may continue to impact on search operations but more favourable conditions are currently being experienced.

More than 85,000 square kilometres of the seafloor have been searched so far.

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.

Consistent with the undertaking given by the Governments of Australia, Malaysia and the People's Republic of China in April last year, 120,000 square kilometres will be thoroughly searched. It is anticipated this will be completed around the middle of the year. In the absence of credible new information that leads to the identification of a specific location of the aircraft, Governments have agreed that there will be no further expansion of the search area.



Recovery of deep tow sonar vehicle

The Fugro vessel, *Havila Harmony*, successfully recovered the deep tow sonar vehicle (towfish) which was separated from *Fugro Discovery* on 24 January when it collided with an underwater seamount while conducting search operations.

On the evening of 3 February, the crew of the *Havila Harmony* deployed an FCV3000 remotely operated vehicle (ROV) via its umbilical cord to the seafloor. When the ROV reached the seafloor at a depth of around 2,550 m, the towfish was quickly located and the ROV pilots used a cutting tool fitted to the ROV to sever the soft tow connecting the depressor weight to the towfish. A manipulator on the ROV was used to raise the neutrally-buoyant towfish to 2,000 metres. It was then attached to a hook that had been lowered from the crane on board *Havila Harmony*, and raised to the surface for retrieval.



Image of the lost towfish fed from the ocean floor back to the surface by the ROV; source ATSB, photo by John Bethea.

The towfish recovery was executed safely and successfully with little delay to the ongoing search; the entire operation took under four hours. Early examination of the recovered towfish shows minimal external damage.



The recovered towfish on the deck of *Havila Harmony*; source: ATSB, photo by John Bethea.

The towfish has been transferred to *Fugro Discovery* and will be returned to port to receive a full check and test of all systems before it is reinstated in the search. *Fugro Discovery* is currently equipped with a spare towfish.

In an ultra-deep water search operation of this scale, over such complex seafloor terrain, events of this type are not unexpected, however the circumstances that led to the loss of the towfish will be reviewed in an effort to minimise the likelihood of a future similar occurrence.

Weather

The weather is forecast to be favourable over the coming week.

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