



Australian Government

Joint Agency Coordination Centre

MH370 Operational Search Update

24 August 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

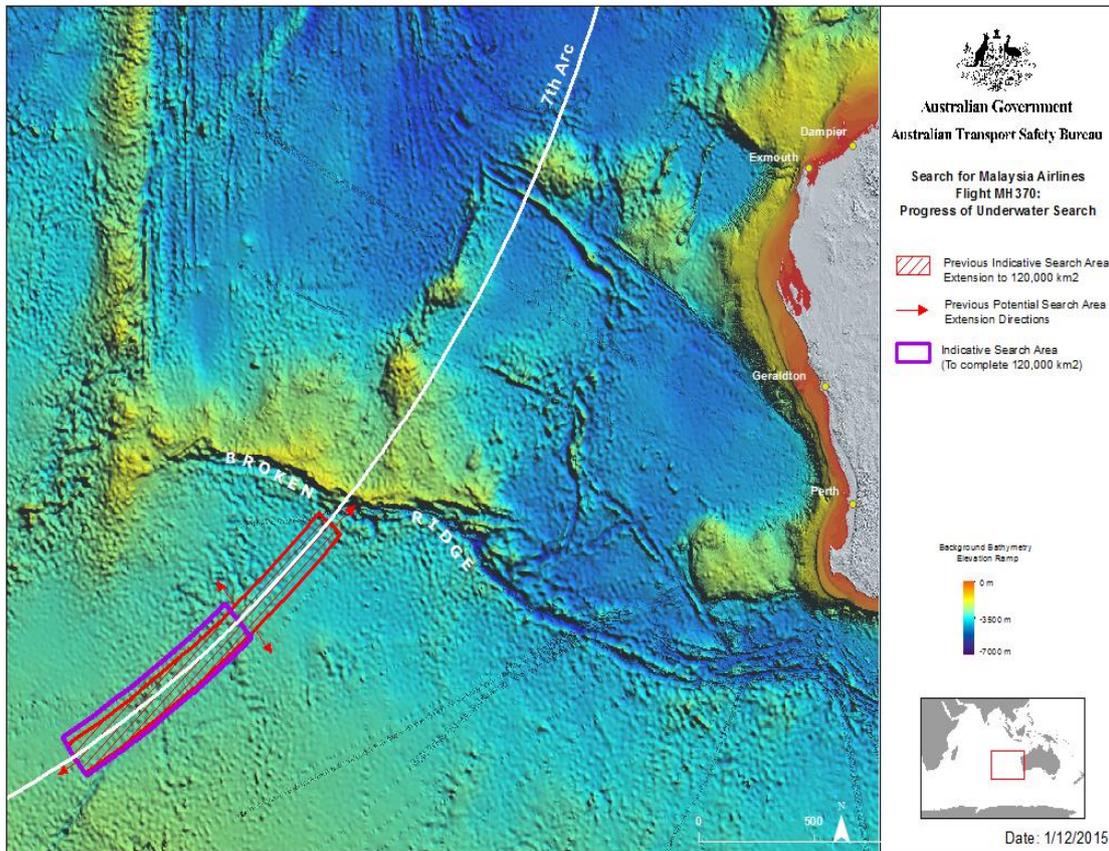
- *Fugro Equator* is in the search area and conducting search operations.
- *Dong Hai Jiu 101* is at anchor off Fremantle undertaking maintenance to ensure readiness for its next mission. It is anticipated that around October weather conditions will have improved sufficiently to allow the deployment of a Remotely Operated Vehicles (ROV) from *Dong Hai Jiu 101*. This equipment will be used to further investigate a range of sonar contacts.
- It is expected that searching the entire 120,000 square kilometre search area will be completed by approximately December 2016.

Underwater Search Operations

More than 110,000 square kilometres of the seafloor have been searched so far.

At a meeting of Ministers from Malaysia, Australia and the People's Republic of China held on 22 July 2016, it was agreed that should the aircraft not be located in the current search area, and in the absence of credible new evidence leading to the identification of a specific location of the aircraft, the search would be suspended upon completion of the 120,000 square kilometre search area.

Ministers went to great lengths to explain that this does not mean the termination of the search. Should credible new information emerge that can be used to identify the specific location of the aircraft, consideration will be given to determining next steps.



Drift modelling study

In July 2015 wreckage from an aircraft was found on La Réunion in the Indian Ocean near Madagascar. As La Réunion is French Territory, the wreckage was taken into custody by French judicial authorities who transported it to France where it was examined.

On 3 September 2015 French authorities confirmed that the wreckage was a wing part from a Boeing 777, known as a flaperon. Furthermore, unique identifiers on the flaperon identified it as definitely coming from MH370.

Over the last nine months there has been a range of debris found along western Indian Ocean shorelines that has been linked to MH370. The flaperon is, however, particularly important as it was the first piece of debris to be found and therefore it spent the least amount of time adrift.

The Australian Transport Safety Bureau has been working with the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation over the past 18 months to model the drift of MH370 debris. Over the coming months a further intensive study will be undertaken.

Phase one involves setting adrift ocean drifter buoys used in the Global Drifter Program along with models of the flaperon which have been fitted with satellite trackers. The models will be tracked to establish the rate and direction of drift relative to the drifter buoys in open ocean conditions when subject to similar winds, currents and waves. Thirty years of real life Global Drifter Program data will then be used to model the drift of the flaperon.

On its own this information will not be able to identify the precise location of the aircraft. It is hoped, however, that when added to our existing knowledge and any future learnings a specific location of the aircraft will be able to be identified.

Weather

Weather conditions are forecast to improve from tomorrow.

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