



Australian Government

Joint Agency Coordination Centre

MH370 Operational Search Update

23 November 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 continuing underwater search operations in the north of the 120,000 square-kilometre search area using the Autonomous Underwater Vehicle (AUV). As of today, *Fugro Equator* has undertaken a total of 16 missions this swing. Three AUV missions were successfully completed this week, with an average duration of 27 hours.
- *Dong Hai Jiu 101* is continuing underwater search operations using the Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV) in the south of the search area but operations have been affected by unsuitable weather conditions. *Dong Hai Jiu 101* has conducted a total of 13 ROV dives during the swing. Two dives were completed by *Dong Hai Jiu 101* in the past week with one sonar contact identified as geology. Dive 13 identified a sonar contact as a debris field from a nearby shipwreck (Shipwreck #2). Dive 14 is currently underway.

Underwater Search Imagery

The underwater search continues with an AUV searching areas of challenging terrain and an ROV examining a range of sonar contacts which have been previously identified. The first figure below shows the original sonar data featuring a contact (designated HH0009a) detected earlier in the search. The second image is a frame grab of video taken by the ROV on the seafloor. The contact was confirmed as being manmade and is almost certainly debris from a nearby shipwreck.

These images show the complexity of imagery of the search and the difference in sonar and visual interpretations of contacts.

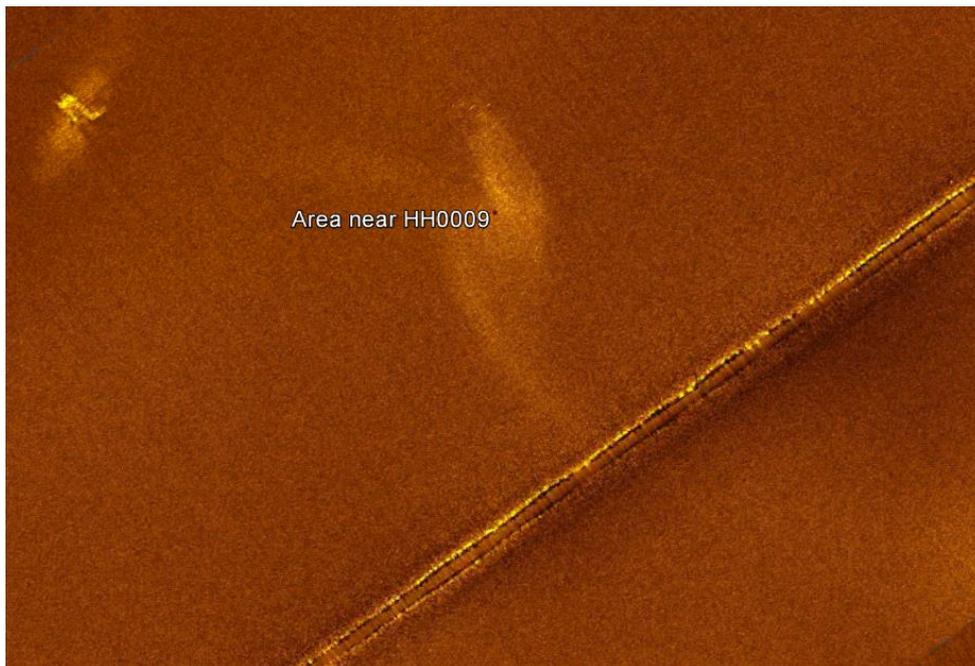


Figure 1: HH0009A Contact cluster on original sonar record; source: ATSB



Figure 2: ROV video frame grab from dive 13 showing metal box debris almost certainly from the shipwreck 700 m to the west; source: ATSB

Underwater Search Operations

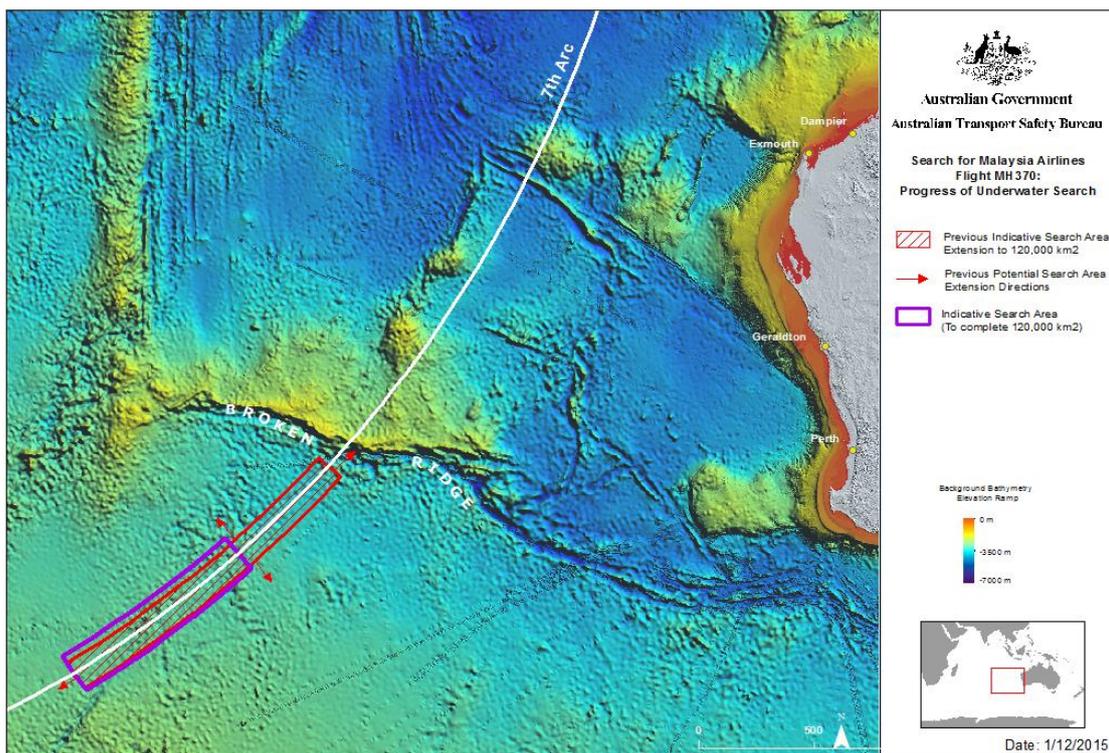
More than 110,000 square kilometres of the seafloor have been searched so far.

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.

Due to poor weather conditions over the Southern hemisphere winter, it is expected searching the entire 120,000 square kilometre search area will be completed by around January/February 2017.

Ministers went to great lengths to explain 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.



Weather

Weather conditions are suitable for AUV and marginally suitable for ROV operations during the week and are expected to impact ROV operations on *Dong Hai Jiu 101* but not on *Fugro Equator*.

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