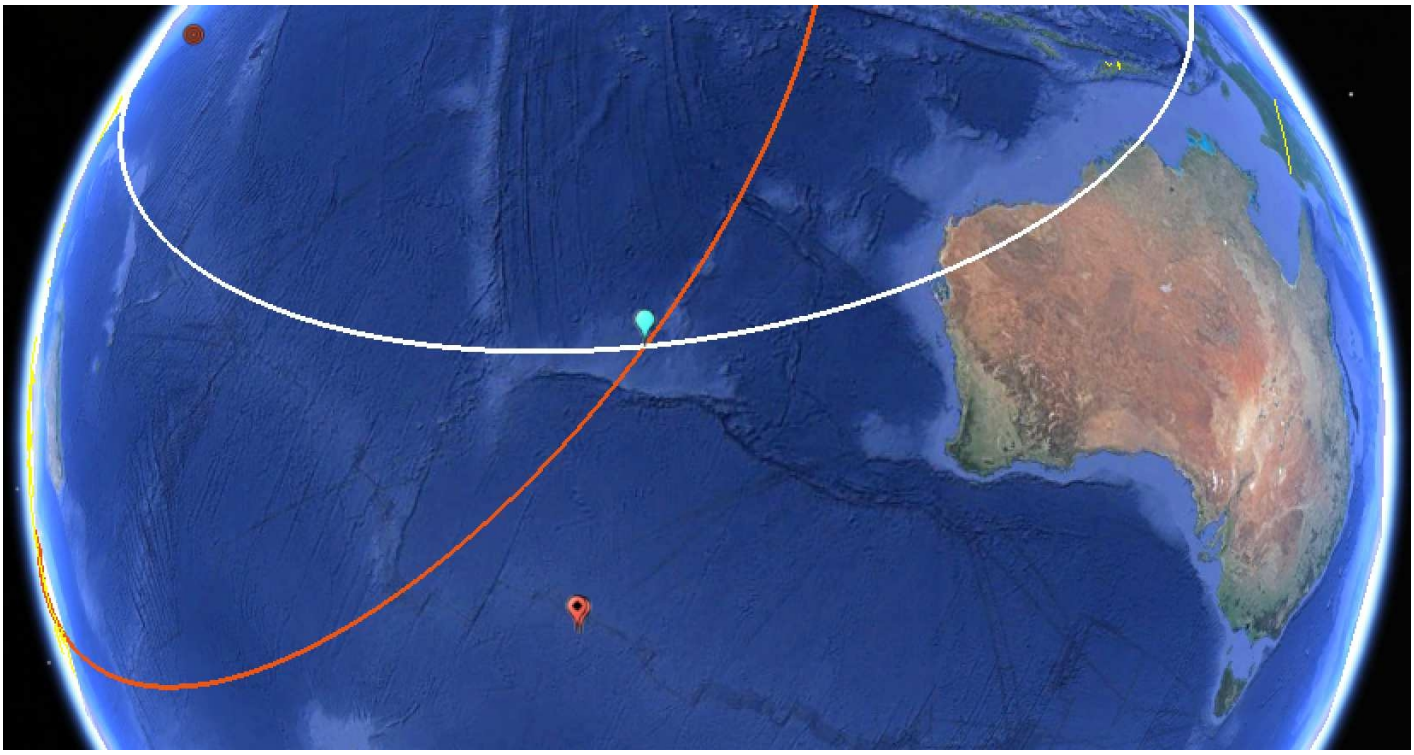
WRECKAGE "WILL BE FOUND" WITHIN WEEKS, BOEING PILOT SAYS

News / Airlines



The protracted search for Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370 will now focus on a specific region within the current search zone based on claims made by a British pilot who flies Boeing 777 planes. The multi-million dollar search for the plane, which went missing in March 2014, has dragged on for months without success.

Captain Simon Hardy's theory is reportedly based on an assumption that Flight MH370 made a controlled ditch into the sea. Hardy, a Boeing 777 pilot, first revealed his analysis in The Sunday Times in March when the search operation was focused on a region over 100 nautical miles from the crash site he identified. The plane, a Boeing 777-200, went missing on March 8, 2014, with 239 people on board while on its way from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing.

"I am fairly confident that wreckage will be found within the next four to eight weeks," Hardy reportedly said Sunday. According to his theory, the plane's fuselage may be found intact though it may have drifted from the ditching point.

Hardy's comments come as China's Premier Li Keqiang offered to contribute US$14.5 million to Australia, which is leading the search, in a bid to expand the search for the missing plane. Most of the passengers aboard the plane were Chinese nationals.

Li made the offer to Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull at the sidelines of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) summit in Kuala Lumpur, and Malaysia's Transport Minister

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Liow Tiong Lai expressed his "deepest appreciation" to China for the contribution.

Australian authorities, who believe Hardy's theory to be credible, confirmed that two search vessels -- Fugro Discovery and Fugro Equator -- had arrived last week in the area proposed by him, the Australian reported.

"The vessels will be searching in the area of Captain Hardy's prediction during the November-December period," Annette Clark, a spokeswoman for the Joint Agency Coordination Centre (JACC), told the Australian.

Clark also reportedly said that the location was within the expanded search area in the southern Indian Ocean, which "takes into account all the credible theories and analyses, including the work of Captain Hardy. He has talked with the team ... we are now reaching the area he has nominated."

Currently, the search is underway in a 46, 332-square-mile area in the southern Indian Ocean, where authorities believe the plane went down. About 27, 027 square miles have been searched so far.

Meanwhile, JACC said in a statement Monday that the search operation was halted after a crew member on board the Fugro Discovery had developed health issues and was "suffering from severe pain."

"The vessel recovered the towfish on Saturday and is currently en route to Fremantle. The journey will take around six days," JACC said, in the statement. "The full-time doctor on Fugro Discovery is attending to the crew member in consultation with onshore medical support."

Earlier this month, a Discovery crew member fell ill forcing the vessel to return to port so the crew member, diagnosed with likely appendicitis, could receive treatment at a hospital in Australia.

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