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Immediate Use

SEA SEARCH UNDERWAY IN GREAT AUSTRALIAN BIGHT

Australian Search and Rescue is coordinating an extensive aerial search for two men missing in a shark fishing boat in Australia's remote south-west.

The men left Esperance, WA last Friday (8/11) in the 13.2 metre *Adriatic Star* on a 340 nautical mile (630 km) trip to Wanteen near Eucla in the Great Australia Bight and have not been heard from since an intermittent satellite phone call to the vessel's owner last Saturday night which did not provide position details.

WA police were first notified of the overdue fishing boat and because of the very limited number of search assets available in the area passed coordination to AusSAR in Canberra last night.

While police are conducting a shore search, an emergency broadcast has been issued to shipping in the area and seven fixed wing aircraft are being deployed from as far as Geraldton with a special communications aircraft from Canberra, ACT.

Today the air search will cover a 2000 sq nm area from Esperance to Twilight Cove about 250 nm (460 kms) to the east.

A search was undertaken with an aircraft from Eucla to Esperance last night but nothing was sighted of the two men aged 57 and 60 years or their timber boat.

Four fishing boats have also been requested to search the coastline within the aerial search area.

Search and Rescue in the region is difficult with limited availability of aircraft, particularly helicopters, communications with aircraft and aviation fuel which is being trucked in from Kalgoorlie and Perth.

Further information:

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