

NASA Global Hawk ready for atmospheric chemistry study

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NASA Global Hawk 872 carries the Hawkeye sensors on wing-mounted pylons during a checkout flight of ATTREX instruments. Credit: NASA / Tom Miller

A NASA Global Hawk recently completed a checkout flight of science instruments in preparation for a study of the moisture and chemical composition of the stratosphere over the western Pacific Ocean.

In December, Global Hawk 872 flew more than six hours in restricted airspace during the checkout flight near Edwards Air Force Base, Calif. The flight was the first for a Global Hawk to carry instruments in pods hung on wing-mounted pylons. The pods carried the Hawkeye cloud particle probe instrument. Hawkeye is one of 13 sensors installed in the unmanned Global Hawk for the Airborne Tropical Tropopause

Experiment (ATTREX) mission that begins later this month from a base on Guam.

The Dec. 20 checkout flight was the 29th Global Hawk project flight for 2013, bringing the yearly total of flight hours to 476. Last year also saw a number of firsts for NASA's Global Hawk project including flying new sensors, initial operation of a ground control station at NASA's Wallops Flight Facility in Virginia, the deployment of both Global Hawks to Wallops, flying over a foreign country (Canada) and carrying an instrument in wing-mounted pods.

Provided by NASA

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