

# Solar plane powers on over Atlantic after turbulence

June 22 2016

---



Solar Impulse 2 has completed three-quarters of its 6,000-kilometre (3,700-mile) flight across the Atlantic

The Solar Impulse 2 plane went through "a long night of turbulence" over the Atlantic, its weary pilot said Wednesday as he continued on the challenging leg of its sun-powered trip around the world.

The experimental [plane](#), which took off from New York's John F.

Kennedy airport on Monday, is flying over the Atlantic at the hands of Swiss adventurer Bertrand Piccard and is due to land in Spain's southern Seville airport early Thursday.

By around 1100 GMT on Wednesday, the aircraft—which is powered in the night sky by energy supplied by its 17,000 photovoltaic cells—had completed three-quarters of its 6,000-kilometre (3,700-mile) flight across the Atlantic.

"After a long night of turbulence and little sleep, I see the first light of the day," Piccard tweeted earlier on Wednesday.

"Awake and enjoying the Atlantic even after 51 hours of flight. Exploration is always exhilarating," he tweeted later, with a photo of a cloudy sky.

The voyage marks the first solo transatlantic crossing in a solar-powered airplane, and Piccard has been getting little sleep as he survives on short catnaps.

During his crossing, he has seen whales cavorting in the waters beneath the plane, a gorgeous full moon in the nighttime sky, and more.

"You will not believe me, but to my right, I see an iceberg in the Atlantic Ocean. Check it out!" he tweeted a day ago.

No heavier than a car but with the wingspan of a Boeing 747, Solar Impulse is being flown on its 35,400-kilometer trip round the world in stages, with Piccard and his Swiss compatriot Andre Borschberg taking turns at the controls of the single-seat plane.

Borschberg piloted a 6,437-kilometer flight between Japan and Hawaii that lasted 118 hours, smashing the previous record for the longest

uninterrupted journey in aviation history.

The plane, now on the 15th leg of its east-west trip, set out on March 9, 2015 in Abu Dhabi, and has flown across Asia and the Pacific to the United States with the sun as its only source of power.

The plane typically travels at a mere 48 kilometres per hour, although its [flight](#) speed can double when exposed to full sunlight.

© 2016 AFP

Citation: Solar plane powers on over Atlantic after turbulence (2016, June 22) retrieved 23 June 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2016-06-solar-plane-powers-atlantic-turbulence.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.