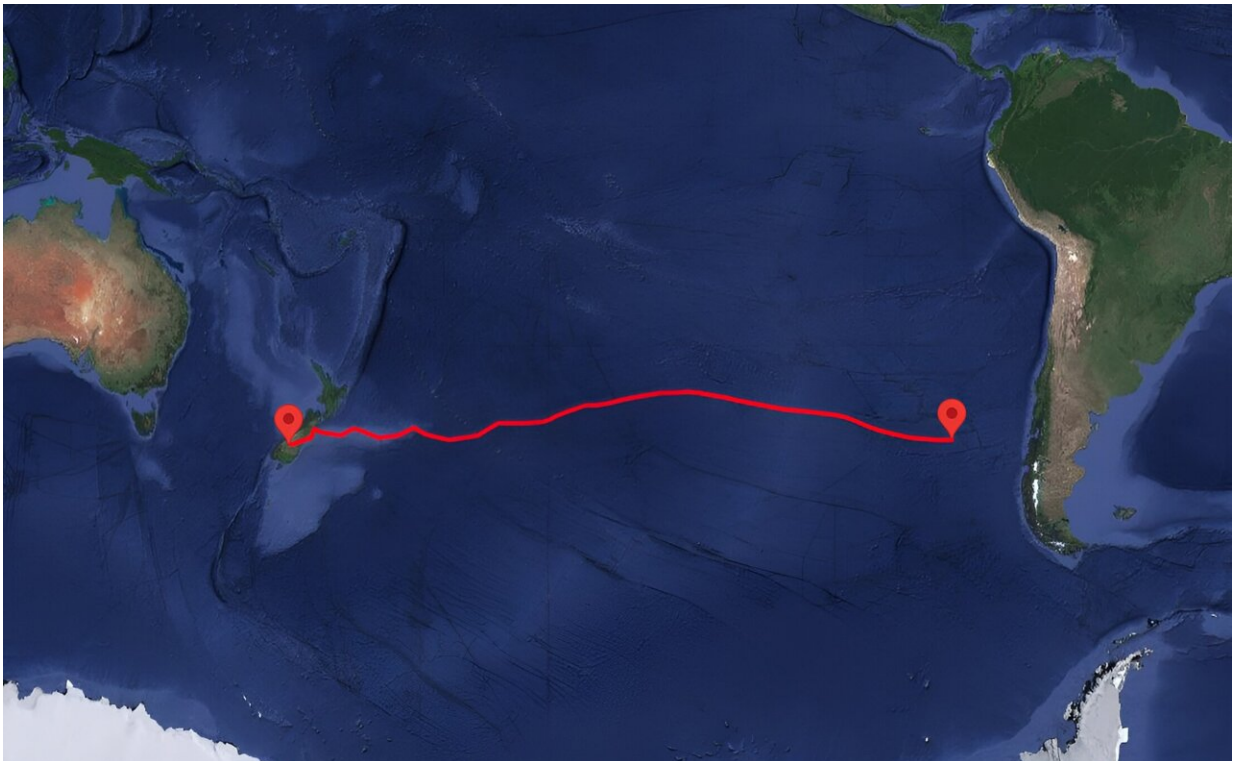


NASA scientific balloon prepares to cross South America

April 21 2023, by Jamie Adkins



Map of SuperBIT Crossing Pacific Ocean. Credit: NASA

A NASA super pressure balloon carrying the SuperBIT scientific payload has crossed the Pacific Ocean after just 5 days of flight and is on track to reach South America Thursday, April 20, at approximately 9:30 p.m. EDT (Friday, April 21, at 1:30 a.m. UTC).

The [scientific balloon](#), which lifted off from Wānaka Airport, New Zealand, April 15 (U.S. Eastern Time), will quickly transit Chile and Argentina as it continues its globetrotting journey about the southern hemisphere's mid-latitudes.

Before any land overflight occurs, a thorough assessment is made of the balloon's health and the performance of the command and control electronics onboard. In addition, the forecast trajectory is analyzed from a safety perspective before beginning overflight operations.

"The balloon is healthy and performing brilliantly maintaining a steady altitude at around 108,000 feet, which has been the primary goal of this mission," said Debbie Fairbrother, NASA's Scientific Balloon Program chief. "This is the first of many flight milestones to come—we aim to cross the Pacific several more times as we verify and validate this balloon technology while supporting some real cutting-edge science."

The SuperBIT science team has already returned stunning images from the balloon-borne telescope, said Fairbrother. The first images were released by the science team recently and can be viewed [here](#).

The ongoing science balloon flight is monitored real-time from NASA's Columbia Scientific Balloon Facility in Palestine, Texas, and anyone can track the position of the balloon [here](#).

NASA predicts the balloon will complete a circumnavigation once every week to three weeks.

Provided by NASA

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