It was announced in mid-November from Washington by the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) that video documentation of the cargo ship *El Faro* and the associated debris field has been completed but the vessel’s voyage data recorder has not been located.

NTSB Chairman Christopher A Hart said: ‘*Over the years we have completed many investigations without the aid of recorders and other investigative tools. While it is disappointing that the voyage data recorder was not located, we are hopeful that we will be able to determine the probable cause of this tragedy and the factors that may have contributed to it.*’

The 790-foot ship went missing on 1 October during Hurricane Joaquin and was located on 31 October in about 15,000 feet of water in the vicinity of its last known position near Crooked Island, Bahamas.

In early October, the NTSB contracted with the US Navy to locate the missing ship, document the wreckage and debris field, and if possible, recover the voyage data recorder.

Sonar equipment towed from USNS *Apache* detected what was believed to be *El Faro* on 31 October. The finding was confirmed on 1 November when investigators were able to view video of the vessel obtained from *CURV-21*, a remotely operated vehicle capable of deep sea search activity.

Video revealed that the navigation bridge structure and the deck below it had separated from the ship. The missing structure included the mast and its base where the voyage data recorder was mounted.

On 11 November the navigation bridge was found but neither the mast nor the VDR was found in the vicinity of the navigation bridge structure.

After five more days of searching with *CURV-21*, it was determined that the VDR could not be located. The search and video documentation efforts of *El Faro* were completed on 15 November. No further search missions are planned, it is understood.

Additional information and resources are available on the NTSB’s webpage for the *El Faro* accident investigation: [http://go.usa.gov/3Smre](http://go.usa.gov/3Smre)