



## NEWS FROM NOAA

NATIONAL OCEANIC & ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION • US DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
June 27, 2007

### **NEW NOAA RESEARCH VESSEL EXCEEDS INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS AS QUIET VESSEL**

The newly constructed National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration fishery survey vessel *Henry B. Bigelow* has exceeded international standards as an acoustically quiet vessel, according to a report released by the U.S. Navy.

NOAA received the results from a battery of underwater acoustic tests done by the Navy on the ship at the Atlantic Undersea Test and Evaluation Center on Andros Island in the Bahamas.

"*Henry B. Bigelow* is one of only a handful of research ships in the world that have met this high standard as a quiet research vessel," said retired Navy Vice Adm. Conrad C. Lautenbacher Jr., undersecretary of commerce for oceans and atmosphere and NOAA administrator. "With its dramatically lower background noise levels, this ship will greatly enhance our ability to use the most sophisticated acoustic devices to assess fish stocks."

The noise radiated by the 208-foot vessel was carefully compared by the Navy to noise recommendations established by the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea, a respected international organization that includes more than 1,600 marine scientists from 20 countries that surround the North Atlantic.

"Because *Henry B. Bigelow* does not produce disruptive background noise, we can count fish and assess the size, health and behavior of stocks with highly sensitive acoustic devices," said Dr. William T. Hogarth, director of NOAA Fisheries Service. "Trawl surveys also conducted by *Henry B. Bigelow* will be greatly enhanced by the new acoustic quieting on the vessel because fish and marine mammals will be less likely to react to ship noise. This is an important new tool to support ecosystem research."

*Henry B. Bigelow* is the second in a fleet of four new fisheries survey vessels that will replace older ships. The first quiet vessel to be launched was *Oscar Dyson*, which also met or exceeded ICES standards. *Oscar Dyson* is home ported in Kodiak, Alaska, and conducts research on fisheries in the North Pacific, Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea. Two more ships of the same class are under construction.

*Henry B. Bigelow* also represents a major accomplishment for the U.S. shipbuilding industry, which has shown it can construct dramatically quieter vessels using new hull designs and mounting devices for generators, engines and machines aboard the ship.

*Henry B. Bigelow* was designed in a unique partnership between NOAA's Office of Marine and Aviation Operations and the U.S. Naval Surface Warfare Center, Carderock Division, in Bethesda, Md. The ship was built at VT Halter Marine Inc., in Moss Point, Miss.

With the U.S. military and NOAA leading the world in operating quieter ships, they provide a model for other marine-related industries. There is scientific consensus that underwater sound affects the behavior of marine species that depend on sound as a primary sense for navigation, feeding and other essential activities. Underwater sound has been increasing dramatically as worldwide shipping has grown.

*Henry B. Bigelow* is to be commissioned on July 16, 2007 in Norfolk, Va. She will support research conducted by NOAA's Northeast Fisheries Science Center in Woods Hole, Mass. and be homeported in New England. The New England base of operations is appropriate for a ship named in honor of one of the giants in oceanography and fisheries research.

Henry B. Bigelow worked as a researcher, instructor and professor of zoology at Harvard from 1906 to 1962. He founded Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution in 1931. He is known for transforming the Gulf of Maine from a scientific unknown to one of the most thoroughly studied bodies of water in the world. He was a pioneer in developing the interdisciplinary, ecosystem approach that characterizes modern oceanography.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, an agency of the U.S. Commerce Department, is celebrating 200 years of science and service to the nation. From the establishment of the Survey of the Coast in 1807 by Thomas Jefferson to the formation of the Weather Bureau and the Commission of Fish and Fisheries in the 1870s, much of America's scientific heritage is rooted in NOAA.

NOAA is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and information service delivery for transportation, and by providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources. Through the emerging Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), NOAA is working with its federal partners, more than 60 countries and the European Commission to develop a global monitoring network that is as integrated as the planet it observes, predicts and protects.

NOAA Fisheries Service is dedicated to protecting and preserving our nation's living marine resources and their habitat through scientific research, management and enforcement. NOAA Fisheries Service provides effective stewardship of these resources for the benefit of the nation, supporting coastal communities that depend upon them, and helping to provide safe and healthy seafood to consumers and recreational opportunities for the American public.

The NOAA fleet of research and survey ships and aircraft is operated, managed, and maintained by NOAA's Office Marine and Aviation Operations. OMAO includes commissioned officers of the NOAA Corps and civilians. The NOAA Corps is one of the nation's seven uniformed services, and, as part of NOAA, is under the U.S. Department of Commerce. The Corps is composed of officers – all scientists or engineers – who provide NOAA with an important blend of operational, management and technical skills that support the agency's environmental programs at sea, in the air, and ashore.

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**Media Note:** Photos of vessel available upon request.

On the Web: NOAA: <http://www.noaa.gov>; NOAA Fisheries: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov>; NOAA's Office of Marine and Aviation Operations: <http://www.oma.noaa.gov>

To read the Navy report, "Final Acoustic Trial Results for the Henry B. Bigelow," [click here](#).