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### **Teacher Selected to Sail Aboard NOAA Ship *Oregon II***

When she applied to the NOAA Teacher at Sea program last fall, Peggy Deichstetter, a science teacher at St. Edward High School in Elgin, Ill., hoped to experience ocean research first hand. Onboard the NOAA Ship *Oregon II* in the Gulf of Mexico, she will get that experience and more.

Deichstetter and the *Oregon II* scientific crew are going on a longlining mission to study sharks and red snapper as part of a project planned prior to the BP Deepwater Horizon oil catastrophe. A newly added part of the mission will support NOAA's seafood safety program in the Gulf. The crew will be catching fish to be analyzed for oil contamination.

The data that Deichstetter is helping to collect could also ultimately help scientists understand the health of shark and red snapper populations in the Gulf.

"NOAA's Teacher at Sea program immerses teachers in hands-on research experiences that give them clearer insight into our ocean planet, a greater understanding of maritime work and studies, and increased knowledge of environmental literacy," said Jennifer Hammond, the program's director. "Participating in real-world research allows teachers to gain experience actually doing science, which makes a significant impact when they bring back their knowledge to their classrooms, teaching students how the oceans affect their lives."

Deichstetter will board the research vessel in Pascagoula, Miss., on August 30, and will spend 13 days assisting scientists with their shark and red snapper research in the Gulf of Mexico. She will write logs that include information about important research of the day, life at sea, interviews with scientists, and photos. The logs will be posted on NOAA's Teacher at Sea website at <http://teacheratsea.noaa.gov>.

"I am thrilled to be participating in real-world scientific research and experiencing life at sea," Deichstetter said. "I have already begun lesson planning on sharks and marine ecosystems for my students to study during my participation in NOAA Teacher at Sea program. This way they can get the best from this exciting, first-hand research project at sea. Hands-on, inquiry based learning is vital to getting students excited about science."

Now in its 20<sup>th</sup> year, the program has provided nearly 600 teachers the opportunity to gain first-hand experience participating in science at sea. This year NOAA received more than 250 applications. They selected 35 individuals to participate in cruises. According to Hammond, educators can enrich their curricula with a depth of understanding made possible by living and working side-by-side with those who contribute to the world's body of scientific knowledge.

NOAA's mission is to understand and predict changes in the Earth's environment, from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and to conserve and manage our coastal and marine resources. Visit us at <http://www.noaa.gov> or on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/usnoaagov>.