

Two New Oceanographic Vessels Will Join the NOAA Fleet



NOAA is in the process of acquiring two new oceanographic ships as part of the agency's fleet rebuilding effort. Once in service, the new ships will support a wide variety of missions, ranging from general oceanographic research and exploration to marine life, climate and ocean ecosystem studies.

The first ship, to be named *Oceanographer*, will be homeported in

Honolulu. The second ship, to be named *Discoverer*, will be assigned a homeport at a future date. Both ships will continue the legacies of their namesakes, the first *Oceanographer* having served in the agency's fleet from 1966 to 1996 and her sister ship, *Discoverer*, from 1967 to 1996.



NOAA's fleet will be extended.

Design of the vessels is currently underway and NOAA expects to award contracts for the construction of the ships by the end of the year. Both will be built in the United States and construction timelines and target launch dates for the vessels will be determined after the shipbuilding contracts have been awarded.

Recapitalization of NOAA's Ship Fleet

"The acquisition represents a major step forward in the recapitalization of NOAA's ship fleet and will help ensure that the agency has the seagoing capability to collect the best information possible about the marine environment," said Rear Adm. Michael J. Silah, director of the NOAA Commissioned Officer Corps and NOAA Office of Marine and Aviation Operations (OMAO).

NOAA currently has a fleet of 15 active research and survey ships, which are operated by OMAO and crewed by NOAA Corps officers and civilian professional mariners. Each year, NOAA ships conduct more than 100 missions to collect data critical for nautical charts, fishery quotas, exploration of the nation's 4.3-million-square-mile Exclusive Economic Zone, storm surge modelling and climate research.

Two new ships to be built for NOAA will greatly enhance the agency's ocean exploration and scientific research capabilities. In the top photo, a remotely operated vehicle is brought aboard NOAA ship Okeanos Explorer. (NOAA)