



Contact: Shelley Dawicki  
508-495-2378

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**NOAA Fisheries Research Vessel *Henry B. Bigelow* Makes First Port Call in Woods Hole**  
*Public May Tour Vessel on Friday Afternoon, September 24*

NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Northeast Fisheries Science Center is sponsoring guided public tours of the NOAA Ship *Henry B. Bigelow* on Friday, September 24<sup>th</sup> from 2:00 until 5:00 p.m. in Woods Hole, Mass.

The 209-foot, \$54 million ship was built to meet the research requirements of NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service and operates principally in the Northeast, supporting the research mission of NOAA's Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC.)

This is the first time since coming into service in 2007 that the vessel has made a port call in Woods Hole, where the NEFSC is headquartered. The vessel currently operates out of Newport, R.I. It replaced the NOAA Ship *Albatross IV*, which conducted fisheries research cruises in the Northeast from 1962 until her decommissioning in the fall of 2008.

Friday's guided tours will include the ship's main science and support labs, state-of-the-art fish handling station, and bridge. The ship will be accessible on the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution's pier, accessed by using the entrance between the Smith and Bigelow Laboratories on Water Street.

Scientists, technicians, and ship's crew will be on hand with displays and demonstrations and ready to answer questions about the ship's special design features such as its "quiet" hull, and its recent cruises. In addition to biological and oceanographic sampling, these cruises include work to develop new acoustic survey techniques, to better understand the stresses on marine mammals in an increasingly noisy ocean, and to track oil spilled in the Gulf of Mexico during this summer's deepwater Macondo well blow-out.

Visitors to the ship must wear closed-toed shoes and adults need to bring a photo ID. Bags, backpacks, large purses and similar items may not be carried aboard. Secured storage will be provided for these items. Photography is allowed. Children must be accompanied by an adult. The ship is not wheelchair accessible. Visitors will board and debark over railed gangplanks. Doorway hatches have 15-inch thresholds that must be stepped over. Public parking in Woods Hole is limited to on-street, metered spaces.

The *Henry B. Bigelow's* commanding officer is Commander Anne K. Lynch, a NOAA Corps officer. The NOAA Corps is one of the nation's seven uniformed services. Officers, who are also trained scientists or engineers, command many of the agency's research and survey ships and aircraft, and serve in assignments on shore, bringing their operational expertise to NOAA programs. The ship's civilian crew includes highly skilled wage mariners.

In December 2008, a \$2.3 million dredging project in the Woods Hole outer harbor was completed, sufficiently deepening a shoal area to allow safe passage of the *Bigelow* as well as other deeper-draft research vessels bound for science institution piers in the village. Sand from that dredging project was donated to the Town of Falmouth for nourishment of Menauhant Beach in Falmouth.

The *Henry B. Bigelow* was named for the pioneering Boston-born oceanographer in a NOAA – sponsored naming contest won by a team from Winnacunnet High School in Hampton, N.H. Although Bigelow's connection to Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, where he was the founding director, is

well known today he was also deeply connected to the federal fisheries service, which originated in Woods Hole in 1871.

Bigelow's studies in the Gulf of Maine, considered landmarks, were supported and published by the federal fisheries service. The field work on which they are based was conducted aboard federal fisheries service research vessels including the steamer *Albatross*, the schooner *Grampus*, and the *Halycon*.

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