Coast Guard Icebreaker Healy Deploying to Arctic Ocean

SEATTLE — The Coast Guard Cutter Healy is scheduled to depart July 24 for a four-month deployment to the Arctic Ocean to carry out multiple scientific research missions, the 13th Coast Guard District announced in a release.

Healy will provide presence and access to the Arctic while conducting three major science research missions. In partnership with the National Science Foundation, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the Office of Naval Research, scientists will conduct physical and biological oceanographic research in the Arctic Ocean.

Healy's first mission is a NOAA-sponsored mission to increase understanding of biological processes along Alaska's Continental Shelf. This mission comprises three mission subsets: Distributed Biological Observatory, Northern Chukchi Integrated Study, and the Ecosystems and Fisheries-Oceanography Coordinated Investigations.

The second mission of Healy's Arctic deployment is sponsored by the Office of Naval Research and is focused on understanding how upper-level ocean stratification and sea ice in the Beaufort Sea is responding to inflow and surface forcing changes. The Stratified Ocean Dynamics of the Arctic project aims to increase understanding by deploying subsurface moorings and specialized on-ice instruments to observe the fluctuations across an annual cycle.

Healy's final mission is sponsored by the National Science Foundation and will examine the effects of the Pacific water inflow into the Arctic and its associated boundary current on the ecosystem. This study is part of a multiyear endeavor that combines shipboard measurements taken in the spring and fall,

with measurements from a subsea mooring deployed in the center of the boundary current.

Currently under the command of Capt. Greg Tlapa, Healy is the nation’s premiere high-latitude research vessel and is one of the only U.S. military surface vessels that deploys to and is capable of operating in the ice-covered waters of the Arctic. In addition to science operations, Healy and the crew are capable of conducting a range of Coast Guard operations such as search and rescue, ship escorts, environmental protection and the enforcement of laws and treaties in the Polar Regions.

Healy provides access and presence throughout the Arctic region to protect U.S. maritime borders and to safeguard the maritime economy. Homeported in Seattle, Healy is the largest ship in the U.S. Coast Guard at 420 feet long with a displacement of over 16,000 tons and a permanent crew of 87.