

# NOAA Unveils Newest Research Vessel

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## By Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Robert Stirrup, Commander, Navy Region Hawaii Public Affairs

PEARL HARBOR (NNS) -- Personnel assigned to various areas of the Oahu-region gathered at Rainbow Bay Marina on Pearl Harbor for a ceremony to unveil the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) newest research vessel, the R/V Hihimanu on Sept. 3.

The Hihimanu joined the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries Pacific Island Region's fleet, as the second research vessel for the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument.

"We are here to bless and dedicate this great new boat that NOAA has brought out here today," said U.S. Sen. Daniel Akaka, the guest of honor. "The Hihimanu looks sleek in design and is very powerful. It will help out the Hawaiian Islands tremendously."

Dan Basta, director of the National Marine Sanctuaries Program for NOAA, was also on hand at the ceremony to say a few words about the Hihimanu.

"We want to be safe and effective. The Hihimanu will allow us to do both," said Basta. "This boat may be small but it's able to bring great things to help NOAA continue the research of marine life."

With the Hihimanu on display in front of the audience, Kahu Kimokeo Kapahulehua performed a traditional Hawaiian blessing to conclude the ceremony.

The Hihimanu serves as a platform for the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary on Maui where it is used for disentanglement and ship-strike response, tagging, observation, and health assessment of whales.

The Hihimanu's primary mission is research and conservation. Other key missions include local research dives on various islands with other agencies and proficiency skills testing.

NOAA is a scientific agency within the Department of Commerce focused on the conditions of the oceans and the atmosphere. NOAA warns of dangerous weather, charts seas and skies, guides the use and protection of ocean and coastal resources, and conducts research to improve understanding and stewardship of the environment.

For more news from Commander, Navy Region Hawaii, visit [www.navy.mil/local/cnrh/](http://www.navy.mil/local/cnrh/).

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090903-N-3666S-043 PEARL HARBOR Hawaii (Sept. 3, 2009) Kahu Kimokeo Kapahulehua performs a traditional Hawaiian blessing during a boat blessing ceremony. During the ceremony held by National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) at Rainbow Bay Marina on Naval Station Pearl Harbor, NOAA unveiled their new research vessel, the R/V Hihimanu. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Robert Stirrup/Released)

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