

U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Healy departs Seattle for fall 2024 Arctic deployment



U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Healy (WAGB 20) transits with assist tugs through Elliott Bay near Seattle following its departure from Base Seattle, Oct. 1, 2024. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Steve Strohmaier)

From U.S. Coast Guard Pacific Area, Oct. 2, 2024

SEATTLE – U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Healy (WAGB 20) departed Seattle Tuesday, beginning their months-long Arctic deployment. Healy's earlier science mission was cut short due to an onboard electrical fire. The Healy [returned to Seattle](#) for a thorough inspection and repairs.

The crew will support scientists conducting three distinct science missions during Healy's fall 2024 Arctic deployment. Other science of opportunity across a broad spectrum of disciplines will also be supported as time and weather allow.

The first mission supports the Arctic Port Access Route Study (PARS). During this mission, the cutter will perform bathymetric mapping in the Chukchi and Beaufort Seas. The Coast Guard has initiated an Arctic PARS to analyze current vessel patterns, predict future vessel needs, and balance the needs of all waterway users by developing and recommending vessel routing measures for the Arctic. The Arctic PARS may lead to future rulemaking or international agreements that consider coastal communities, fishing, commercial traffic, military needs, resource development, wildlife presence and habit, tribal activities, and recreational uses.

For the second mission, Healy will embark 20 early career

polar scientists and their mentors on an Arctic Chief Scientists Training Cruise sponsored by the National Science Foundation and University-National Oceanographic Laboratory System. These early career scientists will conduct multidisciplinary research, including mapping to fill critical bathymetric gaps and scientific sampling across various disciplines, in addition to developing skills in shipboard leadership, coordination, and execution.

The final mission of the deployment will support other science of opportunity to include sea floor mapping for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Office of Coast Survey.

“We are thrilled to support numerous diverse research objectives in the northern polar region this fall. In an era of increasing vessel traffic, our work will contribute to navigation safety in a region where existing soundings are sparse,” said Capt. Michele Schallip, Healy’s commanding officer. “We are elated to have been able to reschedule our opportunity to help inspire future principal investigators in the Early Career Scientist mission. Healy’s crew, port engineering staff, and General Electric Verona worked diligently during our inport to ensure the cutter is ready to safely operate in the remote, unforgiving Arctic environment.”

Healy is the United States’ largest polar icebreaker and the Coast Guard’s only icebreaker explicitly designed to support Arctic research. The platform is ideally specialized for scientific missions, providing access to the most remote reaches of the Arctic Ocean. Healy is designed to break 4.5 feet of ice continuously at three knots and can operate in temperatures as low as -50 degrees Fahrenheit.