

RESEARCH VESSEL *SIKULIAQ*

ABOUT

The research vessel *Sikuliaq*—pronounced See-KOO-lee-auk and translated from Inupiaq as "young sea ice"—is a 261-foot Global Class, ice-capable research vessel designed to operate in harsh oceanographic conditions to advance polar and subpolar scientific research. Owned by the National Science Foundation and operated by the University of Alaska Fairbanks College of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences (CFOS), *Sikuliaq* is the only ice-capable vessel in the U.S. Academic Research fleet.

SHIP SPECIFICATIONS

Sikuliaq allows researchers to collect oceanographic samples directly from the water column and seafloor, host remotely operated vehicles, use a flexible suite of winches to raise and lower scientific equipment, and conduct surveys throughout the water column and sea bottom using a variety of sampling systems.

Characteristics	
Overall length	261 feet
Draft	18.9 feet
Beam	52 feet
Performance	
Cruising speed	10 knots
Endurance	45 days
Ice-breaking	2.5 feet at 2 knots
Capacities	
Scientist berths	24
Crew berths	20 plus 2 marine technicians
Science labs	2100 square feet
Lab or storage vans	4 vans
Deck working area	4360 square feet
Freshwater storage	13,190 gallons
Water-making capacity	6000 gallons/day
Fuel capacity	170,000 gallons

COLLEGE OF FISHERIES AND OCEAN SCIENCES
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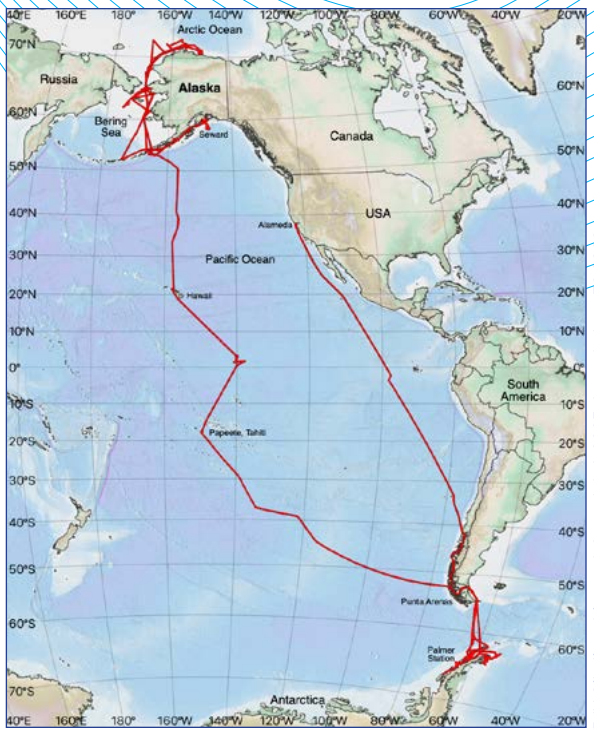
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FY2026 Research Cruises

During its 10th year of operation, the research vessel *Sikuliaq* supported eight science cruises led by researchers from the University of Alaska Fairbanks and other institutions. The ship covered more than 37,000 nautical miles, traveling from the Arctic Ocean to Antarctica.

Sikuliaq and its crew began fiscal year 2026 in the Gulf of Alaska, where the ship continued its support of a long-term project to study the processes that drive the area's ecosystem. After hosting several other science cruises in Alaska waters, *Sikuliaq* traveled to Hawaii for an oceanographic monitoring project before continuing south for its first visit to Antarctica. Research efforts along the Antarctic Peninsula included a study of summer sea ice, research on an intriguing invertebrate species, and an ambitious coring project on Seymour Island. The year concluded in an Alameda, California, shipyard, where *Sikuliaq* underwent an extended round of maintenance, repairs and upkeep.

From the Beaufort Sea to the Southern Ocean, *Sikuliaq* provided a safe and effective platform during its 249 days at sea in 2026.



R/V *Sikuliaq* ship track from July 1, 2025 through June 30 2026.



Photo by Kim Kenny/CEOAS, OSU.

Community Outreach

Sikuliaq strives to work closely with Alaska coastal communities to ensure our activities do not interfere with Native hunting or cultural events. *Sikuliaq* is the first university-operated vessel to adopt standard operating procedures outlining when and how our Arctic researchers are expected to work with coastal communities.



FY 2026 STATISTICS

37,480 nautical miles traveled • **255** paid ship days • **249** days at sea • **119** days in the Arctic (as defined by the Arctic Research and Policy Act of 1984) and Antarctic • **44** days in the ice • **8** ice stations • **373** CTD casts • **26** trace metal CTD casts • **107** XBT casts • **165** net tows • **35** moorings deployed • **37** moorings recovered • **218** small boat operations • **59** ROV dives • **6** gliders deployed • **10** gliders recovered • **37** corings • **191** bottom samples • **151** buoys/floats deployed • **113** buoys/floats recovered • **30** towed cameras • **12** sediment traps deployed • **1** geodetic BM deployed • **24** aerosol stations • **67** scuba dive operations

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