



Press Release

Thursday, October 6, 2011

JIMAR named NOAA's Pacific Islands Region Cooperative Institute

Honolulu, HI – The University of Hawaii was selected by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to host the Cooperative Institute (CI) in the Pacific Islands Region as part of a 5-year award with funding up to \$95M. The Pacific Islands Region CI, one of 18 NOAA CI's across the country, will be known as the Joint Institute for Marine and Atmospheric Research (JIMAR). JIMAR will focus on research relevant to NOAA's mission "to understand and predict changes in the Earth's environment and conserve and manage coastal and marine resources to meet our Nation's economic, social and environmental needs." The theme research areas for the Pacific Islands Region include ecosystem monitoring and forecasting, ecosystem-based management, protection and restoration of natural resources, climate research and impacts, equatorial oceanography, tropical meteorology, and tsunamis and other long-period ocean waves.

JIMAR, located in the School of Ocean and Earth Science and Technology (SOEST) at the University of Hawaii at Manoa campus, has hosted previous NOAA Joint/Cooperative Institutes over the past 34 years. The new JIMAR director is Dr. Mark Merrifield, a professor in the Oceanography Department at UH and director of the University of Hawaii Sea Level Center. Dr. Merrifield will succeed meteorologist Dr. Tom Schroeder, who has served as the JIMAR director since 1995.

An important function of the CI is to provide an opportunity to train the next generation of young scientists through innovative collaborations between NOAA and CI researchers. The University of Hawaii was selected in part because of its access to outstanding graduate education programs in oceanic, atmospheric, and geophysical research. An important NOAA partner in the CI is the Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center of the National Marine Fisheries Service, which administers scientific research and monitoring programs that support conservation and management of living marine resources throughout the Pacific.

Research programs that have flourished under JIMAR, and that are expected to continue under the new CI, include assessment of local fish stocks, monitoring and ecosystem-based management policies for coral reef ecosystems including the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands, development of remediation strategies for endangered Monk Seal populations, monitoring of



Pelagic Fisheries Research Program (PFRP) Scientist, David Itano, installs an acoustic listening station to a buoy chain in offshore Hawaiian waters, which will allow tracking of pelagic fish movements.

Image courtesy of SOEST/UHM.

global sea level rise and local sea level impacts, modeling of volcanic smoke and haze (VOG), improved forecasts of hurricane intensities, projections of ENSO variability and impacts on Pacific island states, and provision of water level observations for tsunami warning.

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The School of Ocean and Earth Science and Technology at the University of Hawaii at Manoa was established by the Board of Regents of the University of Hawai'i in 1988 in recognition of the need to realign and further strengthen the excellent education and research resources available within the University. SOEST brings together four academic departments, three research institutes, several federal cooperative programs, and support facilities of the highest quality in the nation to meet challenges in the ocean, earth and planetary sciences and technologies.

www.soest.hawaii.edu