Scripps Institution of Oceanography at UC San Diego has one of the largest academic research fleets in the world, with four research vessels and the research platform FLIP. Scripps oceanographic vessels have played a critical role in the exploration of our planet, and since 1907 have enabled scientists at Scripps to conduct significant research in all the world’s oceans.

**RESEARCH AT SEA**

The Scripps research fleet supports a wide range of seagoing science, including studies of global climate change, ocean circulation, plate tectonics and earthquakes, marine biodiversity and biomedicine, and seafloor processes. Scripps research vessels are seagoing laboratories with state-of-the-art sensing systems and instruments, which scientists use to study marine life, the ocean floor, the atmosphere, and physical and chemical properties and phenomena in the oceans. Cruises vary from day trips along the California coast to 50-day expeditions to the most remote parts of our planet.

Students and scientists from Scripps and other research institutions rely on the Scripps fleet and its skilled crews and technical support teams for their seagoing research. Scripps research vessels have been vital to many of the institution’s most important research projects, including half a century of sampling for the California Cooperative Oceanic Fisheries Investigations (CalCOFI), which was established in the late 1940s to seek fundamental understanding of the collapse of the California sardine fishery. Today, CalCOFI data constitute one of the most extensive studies of an ocean ecosystem ever undertaken. Due to the global reach of its research fleet, Scripps today houses the Scripps Oceanographic Collections, the largest and most comprehensive university-based oceanographic collection in the world, with millions of biological specimens and geological samples gathered from the world’s oceans over the past 100 years.

**NIMITZ MARINE FACILITY (MARFAC)**

Access to the sea is fundamentally important for an oceanographic research institution, which makes Scripps’ Nimitz Marine Facility a priceless asset. Home port for the Scripps fleet since 1965, the six-acre campus is located at the entrance to San Diego Bay and affords rapid access to the open ocean. The campus is named for Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, commander-in-chief of the U.S. Pacific Fleet during World War II, and a regent of the University of California from 1948 to 1956. MarFac’s buildings (machine shop, warehouse, and administrative complex) were constructed in the early 1960s through grants from the Office of Naval Research and the National Science Foundation. MarFac’s piers were built in 1974 with National Science Foundation funding, and provide ships with utilities and environmental services while in port.

**CONTACT US**

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From small borrowed sailboats to one of the largest academic fleets in the world, the history of seagoing vessels at Scripps spans more than 100 years. Over the course of a century, Scripps has operated more than 27 oceanographic research ships that have steamed more than 6 million nautical miles in support of science.

**R/V ROGER REVELLE**

- **Built:** 1996
- **Crew:** 22
- **Scientific party:** 37
- **Endurance:** 60 days
- **Owner:** U.S. Navy

The newest of Scripps’ research vessels, R/V Revelle is packed with advanced sensors and precise positioning systems. Revelle is a general-purpose research vessel, with large deck and laboratory spaces, powerful deep-sea winches and endurance that enables oceanographic research in challenging ocean environments around the world.

**R/V MELVILLE**

- **Built:** 1969
- **Crew:** 23
- **Scientific party:** 38
- **Endurance:** 60 days
- **Owner:** U.S. Navy

The oldest active vessel in the U.S. academic research fleet, R/V Melville remains one of the most capable general-purpose global-class ships in the world. With generous laboratory and deck space, as well as modern communications and navigation electronics, Melville is an effective, thoroughly tested platform for conducting long-duration science missions.

**R/V NEW HORIZON**

- **Built:** 1978
- **Crew:** 12
- **Scientific party:** 19
- **Endurance:** 40 days
- **Owner:** UC San Diego

R/V New Horizon is an intermediate-class vessel capable of month-long research expeditions in the Pacific. New Horizon hosts advanced instruments enabling scientists to assess fish stocks, measure deep-water currents, and assess seawater while underway. The ship’s name commemorates the retired Scripps ship R/V Horizon (1949-1969).

**R/V ROBERT GORDON SPROUL**

- **Built:** 1981
- **Crew:** 5
- **Scientific party:** 12
- **Endurance:** 14 days
- **Owner:** UC San Diego

The smallest workhorse of the Scripps fleet, R/V Sproul primarily operates offshore California. Sproul hosts powerful deep-sea winches and modern scientific instrumentation, enabling both nearshore and deep-water scientific operations. The vessel is named for Robert Gordon Sproul, president of the University of California (1930-1958).

**R/P FLIP**

- **Built:** 1962
- **Crew:** 5
- **Scientific party:** 11
- **Endurance:** 60 days
- **Owner:** U.S. Navy

FLIP (Floating Instrument Platform) serves as a stable research platform for a wide variety of ocean and earth science investigations. FLIP is towed out to sea, then ballast tanks are flooded, causing a 90-degree horizontal-to-vertical flip. FLIP was developed by Scripps scientists Fred Fisher and Fred Spiess and is the only oceanographic platform of its kind.