

# Sikorsky SH-3H “Sea King”

The Hickory Aviation Museum’s SH-3H Sea King Bureau Number 149738 is on loan from the National Museum of Naval Aviation. Coordinated by Kyle & Kregg Kirby.



<b>Role</b>	Carrier Based Anti Submarine Warfare
<b>National origin</b>	United States of America
<b>Manufacturer</b>	Sikorsky Aircraft
<b>First flight</b>	11 March 1959
<b>Introduction</b>	June 1961
<b>Retired</b>	27 January 2006 by the US Navy
<b>Status</b>	Retired, But Still in Service With Several Countries
<b>Primary users</b>	United States Air Navy Various
<b>Produced</b>	1959–1970s
<b>Number built</b>	1,100+ in all versions by all licensees
<b>Propulsion</b>	2 × General Electric T58-GE-10 turbo shaft engines
<b>Unit cost</b>	US\$6.4 million

## General characteristics

**Crew:** Four (2 Pilots/2 ASW Operators)  
**Length:** 54 ft 9 in (16.7 m)  
**Rotor diameter:** 62 ft (19 m)  
**Height:** 16 ft 10 in (5.13 m)  
**Disc area:** 3019 ft<sup>2</sup> (284 m<sup>2</sup>)  
**Empty weight:** 11,865 lb (5,382 kg)  
**Max. takeoff weight:** 20,050 lb (10,000 kg)  
**Power plant:** 2 x General Electric T58-GE-10 rated at 1,400 shp (1045 kW)

## Performance

**Maximum speed:** 166 mph (267 km/h)  
**Range:** 621mi (1,000 km)  
**Service ceiling:** 14,700 ft (4,481 m)  
**Rate of climb:** 1,310-2200 ft/min (400-670 m/m)

## Armament

**Torpedoes:** 2 x MK44/46 anti submarine torpedoes  
**Various:** Sonobuoys and pyrotechnic devices

## Operational history

### U.S. Navy

The **Sikorsky SH-3 Sea King** (company designation **S-61**) is an American twin-engine anti submarine warfare (ASW) helicopter designed and built by Sikorsky Aircraft. A landmark design, it was the world's first amphibious helicopter and one of the first ASW rotorcraft to use turboshaft engines.

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The Sea King has its origins in efforts by the United States Navy as a means of counteracting the growing threat of Soviet submarines during the 1950s. Accordingly, the helicopter was specifically developed to deliver a capable ASW platform; in particular, it combined the roles of *hunter* and *killer*, which had previously been carried out by two separate helicopters. The Sea King was initially designated *HSS-2*, which was intended to imply a level of commonality to the earlier *HSS-1*; it was subsequently re-designated as the *SH-3A* during the early 1960s.

Introduced to service in 1961, it was operated by the United States Navy as a key ASW and utility asset for several decades prior to being replaced by the non-amphibious Sikorsky SH-60 Seahawk in the 1990s. In late 1961 and early 1962, a modified U.S. Navy *HSS-2* Sea King was used to break the FAI 3 km, 100 km, 500 km, and 1000 km helicopter speed records. The Sea King also performed various other roles and missions such as search-and-rescue, transport, anti-shipping, medevac, plane guard, utility and torpedo recovery, combat support, and airborne early warning operations. Several Sea Kings, operated by the United States Marine Corps HMX-1 unit, are used as the official helicopters of the President of the United States, for which the call sign ‘Marine One’ would be used.

The Sea King has also proved to be popular on the export market with foreign military customers, and has also been sold to civil operators as well. As of 2015, many examples of the type remain in service in nations around the world. The Sea King has been built under license by Agusta in Italy, Mitsubishi in Japan, and by Westland in the United Kingdom as the Westland Sea King. The major civil versions are the S-61L and S-61N.

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