



Dr. Harry Huffaker, Honor Swimmer, United States of America, 2011



Platinum Patron



Videos: [Interview 1 Panel 1](#)

Dr. Harry Huffaker was the first to cross: the 47.6 km 'Alenuihāhā Channel in 20 hours and 8 minutes between the Big Island of Hawaii and Maui in 1970 after his initial failure of 17 hours; and (as a dual swim) to cross the 15 km Kalohi Channel from Molokai to Lanai in 1989. He set the speed record for the 45 km Kaiwi Channel from Oahu to Molokai in 13 hours and 35 minutes in 1967 which held until 1974.

Throughout his career in the pre-GPS era, Harry faced sharks, jellyfish, massive ocean swells and strong currents in the tropical waters of Hawaii. During his 1967 Molokai Channel swim, Dr. Huffaker saw a large shark underneath him and immediately headed for his escort boat, but the shark then swam between him and his boat, which was too far away for an easy escape. He swam on and ultimately reached his goal after 16 hours. During his first attempt between Oahu to Molokai he failed after 20 hours when he ran into strong currents, a tiger shark and a smack of Portuguese Man-o-War.

At the age of 50 in 1989, he swam from Lanai to Maui, then Maui to Molokai, then attempted to complete his final Molokai-to-Maui leg before being pulled after 18 hours. He has swum the Maui Channel 3 times and crossed the 13.7 km Palilolo Channel from Maui to Molokai (1989).

[Expanded Biography \(Openwaterpedia\)](#)

[Long Swims Database \(Marathon Swimmers Federation\)](#)