



Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Navy Publishes Record of Decision for Atlantic Fleet Training and Testing Final Environmental Impact Statement

The Navy, after carefully weighing the strategic, operational and environmental consequences of the Proposed Action, announces its decision to conduct training and testing (also referred to as military readiness activities) as identified in Alternative 1 in the Atlantic Fleet Training and Testing (AFTT) Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)/Overseas Environmental Impact Statement (OEIS).

This decision will enable Navy to support and conduct current, emerging, and future training and testing activities in the Study Area, which is made up of the in-water areas of the western Atlantic Ocean along the eastern coast of North America, the Gulf of Mexico, in portions of the Caribbean Sea, at select Navy pierside locations, within port transit channels, near select civilian ports, and in bays, harbors, and inshore waterways (e.g., lower Chesapeake Bay).

The AFTT Final EIS/OEIS supports the issuance of new authorizations of marine mammal incidental take permits under the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) and incidental takes of threatened and endangered species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

The Navy is committed to protecting the marine and coastal environments of the AFTT Study Area, and employs mitigation measures to reduce potential effects from training and testing activities. The Navy used the best available science and collaborated with other government stakeholders to ensure the mitigation approach is reasoned, practical, and sustainable.

The Navy will continue to use previously agreed upon mitigation measures as well as implement new mitigation measures discussed in the Final EIS/OEIS to reduce impacts to marine species and habitats, including the North Atlantic right whale population.

Specific new mitigations include:

- Enlarging the Northeast North Atlantic right whale mitigation area to cover the full extent of Critical Habitat designated after previous permits were issued;

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AFTT EIS RECORD OF DECISION

- Implementing annual reporting of active sonar and in-water explosives to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) in designated Northeast and Southeast mitigation areas; and
- Expanding the area in which Navy units conducting training and testing activities in the southeast will obtain North Atlantic right whale sighting information (to cover the entire Jacksonville Operating Area).

The Record of Decision, as well as the Final EIS/OEIS and additional information can be found on the project website at www.AFTTEIS.com. The website provides background information on the environmental topics referenced in the project documents, informational videos, fact sheets and related links.

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