



# ATLANTIC FLEET TRAINING AND TESTING

## ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT/ OVERSEAS ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT for Activities Beginning in 2018



### MEETING FUTURE TRAINING AND TESTING REQUIREMENTS

Using the best available science and methods of analysis, the U.S. Navy is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement/Overseas Environmental Impact Statement (EIS/OEIS) to assess the potential environmental impacts associated with conducting naval training and testing activities within the Atlantic Fleet Training and Testing (AFTT) Study Area, including activities that involve the use of active sonar and explosives. Most of these training and testing activities have been previously analyzed and authorized, and are similar to the types of activities that have been occurring in the Study Area for decades.

#### PROPOSED ACTION

The Navy proposes to conduct training and testing activities within the AFTT Study Area, including activities that involve the use of active sonar and explosives. Training Sailors and testing systems are necessary to achieve and maintain military readiness. Proposed activities are similar to the types of activities that have been occurring in the AFTT Study Area for decades and are generally consistent with those analyzed in the AFTT EIS/OEIS, completed in 2013, and earlier environmental planning documents (see Environmental Review sidebar).



#### ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

- **Phase I:** The Navy accomplished and completed this phase in 2010 through environmental documents for seven separate ranges or activities occurring in the Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of Mexico:
  - Virginia Capes Range Complex
  - Navy Cherry Point Range Complex
  - Jacksonville Range Complex
  - Gulf of Mexico Range Complex
  - Atlantic Fleet Active Sonar Training
  - Undersea Warfare Training Range
  - Naval Surface Warfare Center, Panama City
- **Phase II:** The Navy consolidated these seven separate environmental planning documents into the AFTT EIS/OEIS, completed with public input in 2013.

In the AFTT EIS/OEIS, the Navy re-evaluated impacts from historically conducted activities and updated training and testing activities based on changing requirements.

- **Phase III:** The Navy will analyze the proposal to conduct training and testing activities in the AFTT Study Area beginning in November 2018 into the reasonably foreseeable future.

The Navy must train and test to be able to respond to a wide range of situations while maintaining a continuous presence on the world's oceans.



The Navy is preparing the AFTT EIS/OEIS to support reissuance of federal regulatory permits and authorizations, to re-evaluate impacts from historically conducted activities, and to update activities based on evolving training and testing requirements.



## EVALUATING ALTERNATIVES

The National Environmental Policy Act requires federal agencies to evaluate a range of reasonable alternatives to achieve the purpose of and need for the Proposed Action. The Navy is developing alternatives based on the levels and types of training and testing needed to meet future requirements. Proposed activities would begin in 2018.



During the scoping period, the public helps to identify environmental issues and potential alternatives for consideration in the Draft EIS/OEIS.



## RESOURCES TO BE ANALYZED

For each alternative, the Navy will analyze the potential impacts on the following resource areas from training and testing activities:

- Sediments and water quality
- Air quality
- Vegetation
- Invertebrates
- Habitats
- Fishes
- Marine mammals
- Reptiles
- Birds
- Cultural resources
- Socioeconomic resources
- Public health and safety

## TRAINING CHANGES

The Navy will analyze training activities, including:

- Major training exercises
- Adjustments for the introduction of new vessels, aircraft, weapons systems, unmanned vehicles, and new sensors
- Elimination of vessels, aircraft, and weapons systems no longer in service
- Use of unmanned systems and remotely operated unmanned systems

