



# ATLANTIC FLEET TRAINING AND TESTING

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



## PUBLIC ACCESS AND SAFETY

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.



### SHARING THE SEA

The Atlantic and Gulf coasts and bays within the AFTT Study Area are used by many people for commercial and recreational purposes. Tourism, shipping, and commercial fishing play a significant role in the regional economy. Recreational activities, including boating, sport fishing, and diving also contribute to the economy and quality of life.

Navy personnel share the ocean and coastal areas with the community and recognize the importance of public access. The Navy strives to be a good neighbor by maintaining access to public areas whenever possible while ensuring safety at all times. Some access restrictions must occur, however, for public safety. The Navy has designated operating areas, warning areas, and restricted areas for both airspace and marine waters to indicate where and when it may not be safe for recreational and commercial activities to take place.

**The Navy strives to train and test in a manner that is compatible with civilian activity at sea.**



The Navy takes active steps to minimize potential restrictions on public access to ocean and coastal areas whenever possible, but some restrictions must occur for public safety. The Navy issues notices to mariners to help the public plan accordingly and avoid temporarily restricted areas.





## PUBLIC SAFETY MEASURES

The safety of military personnel and the public is of utmost importance. The Navy observes every precaution when planning and conducting training and testing activities. Some precautionary measures in place include:

- Ensuring impact areas and targets are unpopulated prior to potentially dangerous activities
- Cancelling or delaying activities if public or personnel safety is a concern
- Notifying the public of the location, date, and time of potentially dangerous activities
- Implementing temporary access restrictions to training and testing areas

These measures are intended to ensure public safety during scheduled Navy training and testing activities. These measures, along with the cooperation of the public and commercial and recreational users of the air and sea spaces, enable safe training and testing. The Navy publishes notices to mariners with location, activity, and duration information. Mariners are requested to read and adhere to the published notices.



Thorough environmental and safety reviews are conducted for all test systems. Prior to going into the water, most systems go through land-based testing, and many have been tested in smaller fresh water areas or tanks. After an initial review, modifications are made, as needed, to minimize the potential impacts on public safety and the natural environment.



## PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

The Navy provides advance notice of area closures and access limitations to the U.S. Coast Guard, which helps the public plan accordingly and increases safety. This information is accessible on the Coast Guard's Local Notice to Mariners website at [www.navcen.uscg.gov](http://www.navcen.uscg.gov). The published notices advise the public to allow them to adjust their routes. Temporary access limitations (usually lasting several hours) occur during training or testing activities for the safety of commercial and recreational users.

