

**Final
Environmental Impact Statement/Overseas Environmental Impact Statement
Atlantic Fleet Training and Testing
September 2018**

Lead Agency: United States Department of Navy
Cooperating Agency: National Marine Fisheries Service
Title of Proposed Action: Atlantic Fleet Training and Testing Activities
Designation: **Final Environmental Impact Statement/Overseas Environmental Impact Statement**

Abstract

The United States Department of the Navy (Navy) prepared this Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)/Overseas Environmental Impact Statement (OEIS) to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Executive Order (EO) 12114. This EIS/OEIS evaluates the potential environmental impacts of conducting training and testing activities in the Atlantic Fleet Training and Testing (AFTT) Study Area after November 2018 into the future. The AFTT Study Area is located within the in-water areas of the western Atlantic Ocean along the eastern coast of North America, in portions of the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico, 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).

Three alternatives were analyzed in the EIS/OEIS:

- The No Action Alternative considers that the Proposed Action would not take place (i.e., the proposed training and testing would not occur in the AFTT Study Area).
- Alternative 1 (Preferred Alternative) reflects a representative year of training to account for the natural fluctuation of training cycles and deployment schedules that generally influence the maximum level of training that may occur year after year in any 5-year period. Alternative 1 also includes an annual level of testing that reflects the fluctuations in testing programs by recognizing that the maximum level of testing will not be conducted each year. This alternative contains a more realistic annual representation of activities, but includes years of a higher maximum amount of testing to account for these fluctuations. This alternative would not include the contingency for augmenting some weapon system tests and presumes a typical level of readiness requirements.
- Alternative 2 includes a higher number of training unit exercises and sonar hours than Alternative 1 but is still a reduction from the past. This alternative, reflects the maximum number of training activities that could occur within a given year and assumes that the maximum level of activity would occur every year over any 5-year period. Alternative 2 includes the testing of new platforms, systems, and related equipment. This alternative assumes that the maximum annual testing efforts predicted for each individual system or program could occur concurrently in any given year. This alternative includes the contingency for augmenting some weapon systems tests in response to potential increased world conflicts and changing Navy leadership priorities as the result of a direct challenge from a naval opponent that possesses near-peer capabilities.

The Navy analyzed potential impacts on environmental resources resulting from activities under Alternatives 1 and 2. This EIS/OEIS also includes an analysis of environmental effects from taking no action as a comparison to the effects of the Proposed Action. Evaluated resources included air quality, sediments and water quality, vegetation, invertebrates, marine habitats, reptiles, fishes, marine mammals, birds, bats, cultural resources, socioeconomic resources, public health and safety, and cumulative impacts.

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