



# ATLANTIC FLEET TRAINING AND TESTING

## SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT/ OVERSEAS ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT for Activities in 2025 and Beyond



### MEETING FUTURE TRAINING AND TESTING REQUIREMENTS

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard are using best available science and methods of analysis to assess the potential environmental impacts associated with conducting 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 under the Marine Mammal Protection Act and Endangered Species Act, and are similar to the types of activities that have been occurring in the Study Area for decades. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is a cooperating agency and has been involved during the NEPA process in preparing the Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Overseas Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS/OEIS).

#### PROPOSED ACTION

The Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard propose to continue to conduct military readiness training and testing activities in the Atlantic Fleet Training and Testing (AFTT) Study Area. Proposed activities would continue training and testing with active sonar and explosives. Training Sailors, Marines, and Coast Guardsmen and testing new technologies is necessary to ensure they are prepared to accomplish their mission. Proposed activities are generally consistent with those that have occurred in the AFTT Study Area for decades and those that were analyzed in the 2018 AFTT EIS/OEIS and earlier environmental planning documents (see Environmental Review sidebar). New information to be analyzed in the Supplemental EIS/OEIS will include an updated acoustic effects analysis, updated marine mammal density data, and evolving and emergent best available science.

The Navy, Marine Corps,  
and Coast Guard must  
train and test so they are  
prepared to respond while  
maintaining a continuous  
presence on the world's  
oceans.



The Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard are preparing the AFTT Supplemental EIS/OEIS to support issuance of federal regulatory permits and authorizations, to re-evaluate impacts from ongoing training and testing activities, and to update activities based on evolving training and testing requirements.



#### ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

- **Phase I:** The Navy completed seven environmental documents between 2009 and 2011, which included:
  - 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 Phase II AFTT EIS/OEIS, the Navy re-evaluated impacts from ongoing training and testing activities and updated training and testing activities based on changing requirements.

- **Phase III:** In addition to re-evaluating environmental impacts of training and testing in the AFTT study area, the Phase III EIS/OEIS included new mitigation measures to reduce impacts to marine species and identified new habitats established in cooperation with National Marine Fisheries Service. New mitigation measures to reduce impacts to marine species and habitats were also established in cooperation with the National Marine Fisheries Service.
- **Phase IV:** The Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard are now analyzing potential effects of ongoing and future at-sea military readiness activities conducted within the AFTT Study Area beyond 2025. This analysis is a supplement to the Phase III EIS/OEIS and considers new data that became available after the release of the 2018 Phase III EIS/OEIS.



## EVALUATING ALTERNATIVES

NEPA requires federal agencies to evaluate a range of reasonable alternatives to achieve the purpose of and need for the Proposed Action. The Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard developed alternatives based on the levels and types of training and testing needed to meet future requirements.

### Alternative 1 (Preferred Alternative)

- Conduct training and testing activities needed to meet current and future readiness requirements
- Includes new activities at an intensity based on changing world events, advances in technology, and tactical and strategic priorities
- Reflects a representative level of annual training and testing

### Alternative 2

- Completion of unit-level active sonar training requirements would be achieved independent of other events
- Adds a Composite Training Unit Exercise in the Gulf of Mexico
- Increases number of Composite Training Unit Exercises over a seven-year period
- Provides higher levels of annual anti-submarine warfare and mine warfare systems testing

### No Action Alternative

- Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard would not conduct proposed training and testing activities in the AFTT Study Area
- Marine Mammal Protection Act permit would not be issued
- Would fail to meet the purpose and need for the Proposed Action



## RESOURCES ANALYZED

For each alternative, the Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard analyzed the following resource areas to determine the potential impacts from training and testing activities:

- Air Quality
- Sediment and water quality
- Habitats
- Vegetation
- Invertebrates
- Fishes
- Marine mammals
- Reptiles
- Birds and bats

## ACTIVITIES ANALYZED

The Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard analyzed training and testing activities generally categorized under the following warfare areas:

- Air Warfare
- Amphibious Warfare
- Anti-Submarine Warfare
- Electronic Warfare
- Expeditionary Warfare
- Mine Warfare
- Surface Warfare

During the public review and comment period, the public is invited to provide comments on the Draft Supplemental EIS/OEIS for consideration in the Final Supplemental EIS/OEIS.

