



# Virginia Capes (VACAPES) Range Complex

Environmental Impact  
Statement/Overseas  
Environmental Impact  
Statement (EIS/OEIS)

The Navy's Analysis of Potential Effects

## Minimizing Potential Effects to the Environment

Defending the U.S. and protecting military personnel requires continuous and realistic training in the air, on land and at sea. The VACAPES Range Complex provides unique conditions and an ideal setting for the Navy to conduct this essential training.

Protection of our environmental and natural resources is an integral part of the Navy training program. The Navy is preparing the VACAPES Range Complex Environmental Impact Statement/Overseas Environmental Impact Statement (EIS/OEIS) to assess the potential effects of training on environmental, cultural and socioeconomic resources in and around the Range Complex.

The EIS/OEIS process also provides an opportunity for the Navy to openly review and assess its current and planned operations in a comprehensive manner to ensure that the benefits of operational, scientific and technological advances are applied toward minimizing effects.

## Evaluating Resources

The natural resources in and around the VACAPES Range Complex are enjoyed by many for their livelihoods, recreation purposes and aesthetics. The waters and coastal areas around the Range Complex are popular for sport fishing, commercial fishing, diving, shipwreck exploration and other recreational activities (e.g., boating or kayaking). They also serve as critical routes for commercial shipping interests.

Navy operations and commercial and recreational ocean activity have coexisted in the VACAPES Range Complex for decades. The Navy's public safety and protective measures, such as, advance notification of scheduled activities, minimize inconveniences to public interests and help ensure the continued safe and cooperative coexistence.

The Navy understands and recognizes the potential for training activities to affect the community and local industries and takes proactive steps to minimize these effects. As part of preparing the EIS/OEIS, the Navy carefully evaluated potential effects of its current and proposed activities on:

- Marine mammals
- Sea turtles
- Fish
- Birds
- Invertebrates
- Corals/live hard bottom
- Air quality
- Water quality
- Hazardous Materials
- Cultural resources
- Socioeconomics



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*North Atlantic right whale with calf*

The Navy assessed the potential impacts of stressors on the Study Area resources. The following are examples of the stressors evaluated:

- Vessel Movements
- Aircraft Overflights
- Mine Shape Deployment/Recovery
- Towed Mine Warfare Devices



- Non-explosive Practice Munitions
- Underwater Detonations and High Explosive Ordnance
- Military Expended Materials



THE DRAFT EIS/OEIS ANALYSIS RESULTED IN THE FOLLOWING CONCLUSIONS:

#### National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

- No significant impacts

#### Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA)

- The Navy is consulting with the National Marine Fisheries Service to obtain a Letter of Authorization for anticipated harassment to Marine Mammals

#### Magnuson-Stevens Fisheries Conservation Management Act (MSFCMA)

- The Navy completed an Essential Fish Habitat Assessment and concluded no adverse impact

#### Endangered Species Act (ESA)

- The Navy is consulting with the National Marine Fisheries Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on Alternative 2 (Preferred Alternative) for federally listed species.

#### Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA)

- The Navy will coordinate with states for Coastal Consistency Determinations

#### Clean Air Act (CAA)

- No significant impacts to regional air quality

#### Clean Water Act (CWA)

- No significant impacts to water quality

#### National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)

- No significant impacts to cultural resources

#### Rivers and Harbors Act (RHA)

- The Navy is coordinating with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to obtain a Section 10 Permit for potential effects to Waters of the U.S.

#### Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BGEPA)

- No significant adverse effects



Public involvement is a fundamental part of the VACAPES Range Complex EIS/OEIS development and the Navy wants and appreciates your comments. The Navy has established several venues and informational resource areas for the public to learn more and provide input.

Comments on the Draft VACAPES Range Complex EIS/OEIS will be accepted via mail, fax, or the project Web site. All comments should be submitted no later than August 11, 2008 for consideration in the Final VACAPES Range Complex EIS/OEIS.

**THE NAVY  
WANTS  
YOUR  
INPUT!**

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