



Virginia Capes (VACAPES) Range Complex

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

Geography of the VACAPES Range Complex Study Area

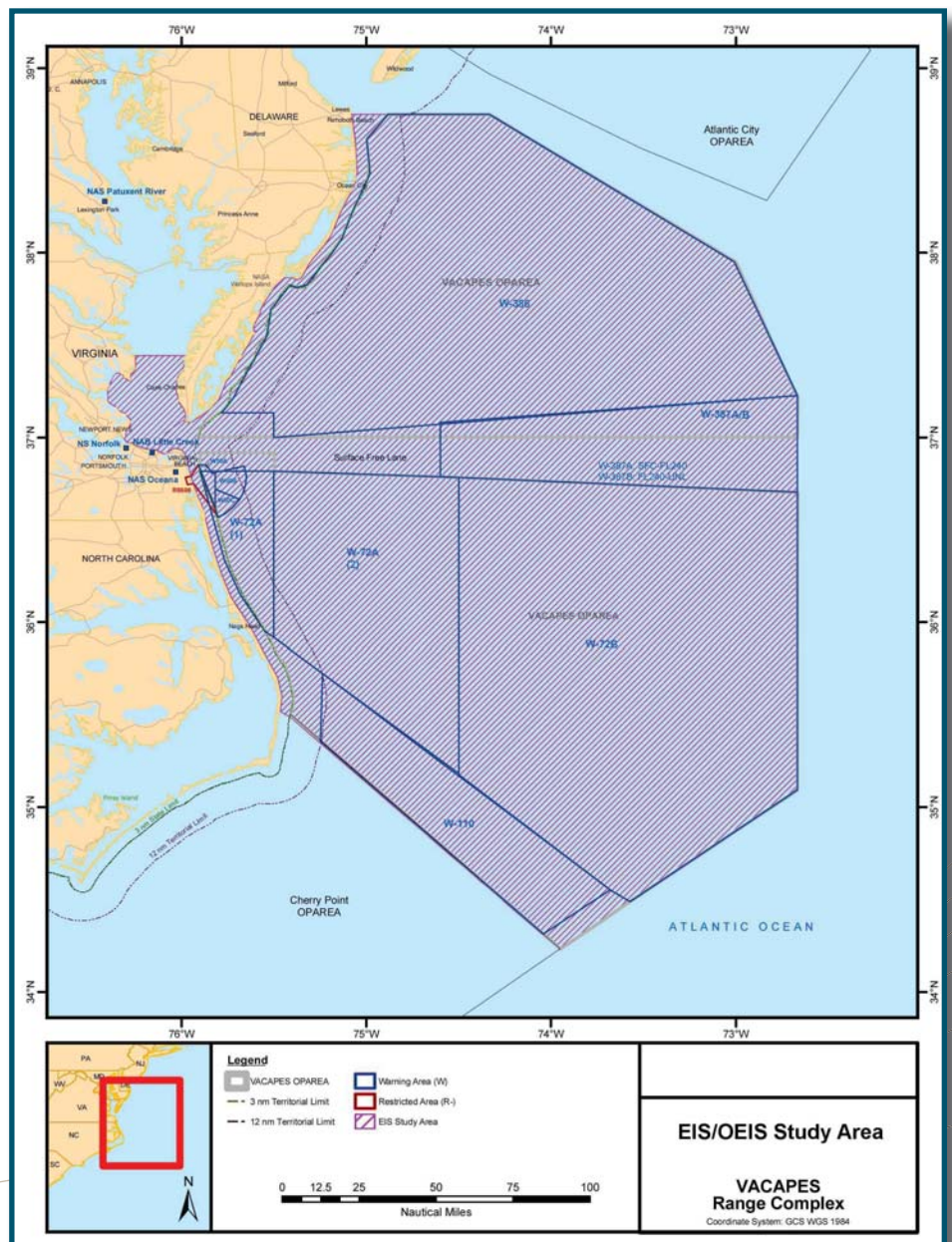
THE VIRGINIA CAPES (VACAPES) RANGE COMPLEX STUDY AREA

The geographic scope of this EIS/OEIS is referred to as the VACAPES Study Area (See Figure). The VACAPES Study Area does not include any dry land. However, it does include the area from the mean high tide line east (seaward) to the 3-nautical-mile (nm) boundary of the states of Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina. This 3-nm state boundary also serves as the western boundary of the VACAPES OPAREA. The VACAPES Study Area also includes 420 nm² of the lower Chesapeake Bay, where proposed Mine Warfare training would occur.

The chief area analyzed in the Study Area is referred to as the VACAPES Range Complex, including its defined airspace, seaspace, and undersea space. This area includes offshore areas of Delaware, Maryland, Virginia and North Carolina. This area extends 155 nautical miles into the Atlantic Ocean.

The VACAPES Range Complex represents an essential three-dimensional space that provides a realistic and safe training area for Navy personnel. For nearly a century the area has supported Navy training activities, and is now host to a wide range of training every year to ensure our military members are ready for combat.

The VACAPES Range Complex is the principal training area for air, surface and submarine units located in Hampton Roads, Virginia. The VACAPES Range Complex is also the primary homeport of the Atlantic Fleet. The Hampton Roads area includes more than 80,000 active duty Navy personnel. In addition to serving as the site for essential Navy training, the VACAPES Range Complex is host to activities for the research, development, test and evaluation of emerging technologies.



VACAPES Range Complex EIS/OEIS Study Area Boundaries



WHAT IS A RANGE COMPLEX?

Ranges and operational areas (OPAREAs) are locations where Navy personnel train to accomplish their mission of national defense. The Navy has geographically grouped its ranges and OPAREAs to form range complexes, which are organized and managed to optimize training opportunities in a safe and controlled environment. The ranges and facilities of the VACAPES Range Complex are unique and provide training opportunities essential for the safety and readiness of military personnel and the success of the military mission. The protection of natural and cultural resources is also an integral component of this training. Navy training activities incorporate protective measures as standard operating procedures to promote environmental conservation.

VACAPES RANGE COMPLEX

The VACAPES Range Complex is a three-dimensional training area that includes sea space, land ranges and Special Use Airspace (SUA). The Range Complex also includes facilities and instrumentation areas that support the training conducted there.

Sea Space. Often referred to as an OPAREA, sea space includes areas used on or below the water's surface.

Land Ranges. Land ranges include one or more targets used for a variety of training exercises, such as strike warfare or marksmanship. Land ranges can also include gun firing positions or target launching areas. The VACAPES air-to-ground training range (Navy Dare County Bombing Range) is not included in the EIS/OEIS Study Area because an environmental assessment was recently completed for the land range (United States Fleet Forces, 2008).

Special Use Airspace (SUA). Special use airspace is airspace designated by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) for the confinement of certain activities, such as military flight operations. The FAA also may impose limitations on aircraft operations that are not part of the designated activities.

Supporting Infrastructure. The land, sea and airspace training areas are supported by training facilities and instrumentation facilities.



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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