
5 Standard Operating Procedures, Mitigation, and Monitoring

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5 STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES, MITIGATION, AND MONITORING

This chapter describes the United States (U.S.) Department of the Navy (Navy) standard operating procedures, mitigation measures, and marine species monitoring and reporting efforts. Standard operating procedures are essential to maintaining safety and mission success, and in many cases have the added benefit of reducing potential environmental impacts. Mitigation measures are designed to help reduce or avoid potential impacts on marine, terrestrial, and cultural resources. Marine species monitoring efforts are designed to track compliance with take authorizations, evaluate the effectiveness of mitigation measures, and improve understanding of the effects training and testing activities have on marine resources within the Mariana Islands Training and Testing (MITT) Study Area (Study Area).

5.1 STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

Effective training, maintenance, research, development, testing, and evaluation (hereafter referred to collectively as the Proposed Action) require that participants utilize their sensors and weapon systems to their optimum capabilities as required by the activity objectives. The Navy currently employs standard practices to provide for the safety of personnel and equipment, including vessels and aircraft, as well as the success of the training and testing activities. For the purpose of this document, the Navy will refer to standard practices as standard operating procedures. Because of their importance for maintaining safety and mission success, standard operating procedures have been considered as part of the Proposed Action under each alternative, and therefore are included in the Chapter 3 (Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences) environmental analyses for each resource.

Navy standard operating procedures have been developed and refined over years of experience, and are broadcast via numerous naval instructions and manuals, including the following sources:

- Ship, Submarine and Aircraft Safety Manuals
- Ship, Submarine and Aircraft Standard Operating Manuals
- Fleet Area Control and Surveillance Facility Range Operating Instructions
- Fleet Exercise Publications and Instructions
- Naval Sea Systems Command Test Range Safety and Standard Operating Instructions
- Navy Instrumented Range Operating Procedures
- Naval Shipyard Sea Trial Agendas
- Research, Development, Test and Evaluation Plans
- Naval Gunfire Safety Instructions
- Navy Planned Maintenance System Instructions and Requirements
- Federal Aviation Administration Regulations

In many cases there are incidental environmental, socioeconomic, and cultural benefits resulting from standard operating procedures. Standard operating procedures serve the primary purpose of providing for safety and mission success, and are implemented regardless of their secondary benefits. This is what distinguishes standard operating procedures, which are a component of the Proposed Action, from mitigation measures, which are designed entirely for the purpose of reducing environmental impacts resulting from the Proposed Action. Because standard operating procedures are crucial to safety and mission success, the Navy will not modify them as a way to further reduce impacts on environmental resources. Rather, mitigation measures will be used as the tool for avoiding and reducing potential

environmental impacts. Standard operating procedures that are recognized as providing a potential secondary benefit are provided below.

5.1.1 VESSEL SAFETY

For the purposes of this chapter, the term ‘ship’ is inclusive of surface ships and surfaced submarines. The term ‘vessel’ is inclusive of ships and small boats (e.g., rigid-hull inflatable boats).

Ships operated by or for the Navy, have personnel assigned to stand watch at all times, day and night, when moving through the water (underway). Watch personnel undertake extensive training in accordance with the U.S. Navy Lookout Training Handbook or civilian equivalent, including on-the-job instruction and a formal Personal Qualification Standard Program (or equivalent program for supporting contractors or civilians), to certify that they have demonstrated all necessary skills (such as detection and reporting of floating or partially submerged objects). Watch personnel are composed of officers and enlisted men and women, and civilian equivalents. Their duties may be performed in conjunction with other job responsibilities, such as navigating the ship or supervising other personnel. While on watch, personnel employ visual search techniques, including the use of binoculars, using a scanning method in accordance with the United States Navy Lookout Training Handbook. After sunset and prior to sunrise, watch personnel employ night visual search techniques, which include the use of night vision devices.

A primary duty of watch personnel is to detect and report all objects and disturbances sighted in the water that may be indicative of a threat to the ship and its crew, such as debris, a periscope, surfaced submarine, or surface disturbance. Per safety requirements, watch personnel also report any marine mammals sighted that have the potential to be in the direct path of the ship, as a standard collision avoidance procedure. Because watch personnel are primarily posted for safety of navigation, range clearance, and man-overboard precautions, they are not normally posted while ships are moored to a pier. When anchored or moored to a buoy, a watch team is still maintained but with fewer personnel than when underway. When moored or at anchor, watch personnel may maintain security and safety of the ship by scanning the water for any indications of a threat (as described above).

While underway, Navy ships (with the exception of submarines) greater than 65 feet (ft.) (20 meters [m]) in length have at least two watch personnel; Navy ships less than 65 ft. (20 m) in length, surfaced submarines, and contractor ships, have at least one watch person. While underway, watch personnel are alert at all times and have access to binoculars. Due to limited manning and space limitations, small boats do not have dedicated watch personnel, and the boat crew is responsible for maintaining the safety of the boat and surrounding environment.

All vessels use extreme caution and proceed at a “safe speed” so they can take proper and effective action to avoid a collision with any sighted object or disturbance, and can be stopped within a distance appropriate to the prevailing circumstances and conditions.

5.1.2 AIRCRAFT SAFETY

Pilots of Navy aircraft make every attempt to avoid large flocks of birds in order to reduce the safety risk involved with a potential bird strike.

5.1.3 LASER PROCEDURES

The following procedures are applicable to lasers of sufficient intensity to cause human eye damage.

5.1.3.1 Laser Operators

Only properly trained and authorized personnel operate lasers.

5.1.3.2 Laser Activity Clearance

Prior to commencing activities involving lasers, the operator ensures that the area is clear of unprotected or unauthorized personnel in the laser impact area by performing a personnel inspection or a flyover. The operator also ensures that any personnel within the area are aware of laser activities and are properly protected.

5.1.4 WEAPONS FIRING PROCEDURES

5.1.4.1 Notice to Mariners

A Notice to Mariners is routinely issued in advance of missile firing activities. A notice is also issued in advance of explosive bombing activities when they are conducted in an area that does not already have a standing Notice to Mariners. For activities involving large caliber gunnery, the Navy evaluates the need to publish a Notice to Mariners based on the scale, location, and timing of the activity. More information on the Notices to Mariners is found in Section 3.13 (Public Health and Safety).

5.1.4.2 Weapons Firing Range Clearance

The weapons firing hazard range must be clear of non-participating vessels and aircraft before firing activities will commence. The size of the firing hazard range is based on the farthest firing range capability of the weapon being used. All missile and rocket firing activities are carefully planned in advance and conducted under strict procedures that place the ultimate responsibility for range safety on the Officer Conducting the Exercise or civilian equivalent. All weapons firing is secured when cease fire orders are received from the Range Safety Officer or when the line of fire is endangering any object other than the designated target.

Pilots of Navy aircraft are not authorized to expend ordnance, fire missiles, or drop other airborne devices through extensive cloud cover where visual clearance of the air and surface area is not possible. The two exceptions to this requirement are: (1) when operating in the open ocean, air and surface clearance through visual means or radar surveillance is acceptable; and (2) when the operational commander conducting the exercise accepts responsibility for the safeguarding of airborne and surface traffic.

During activities that involve recoverable targets (e.g., aerial drones) the Navy recovers the target and any associated decelerator/parachutes to the maximum extent practicable consistent with operational requirements and personnel safety.

5.1.4.3 Target Deployment Safety

Firing exercises involving the integrated maritime portable acoustic scoring system are typically conducted in daylight hours in Beaufort number 4 conditions or better to ensure safe operating conditions during buoy deployment and recovery. The Beaufort sea state scale is a standardized measurement of the weather conditions, based primarily on wind speed. The scale is divided into levels from 0 to 12, with 12 indicating the most severe weather conditions (e.g., hurricane force winds). At Beaufort number 4, wave heights typically range from 3.5 to 5 ft. (1.1 to 1.5 m).

5.1.5 SWIMMER DEFENSE TESTING PROCEDURES

5.1.5.1 Notice to Mariners

A Notice to Mariners is issued in advance of all swimmer defense testing.

5.1.5.2 Swimmer Defense Testing Clearance

A daily in situ calibration of the source levels is used to establish a clearance area to the 145 decibels (dB) referenced to (re) 1 micropascal (μPa) sound pressure level threshold for non-participant personnel safety. A hydrophone is stationed during the calibration sequences in order to confirm the clearance area. Small boats patrol the 145 dB re 1 μPa sound pressure level area during all test activities. Boat crews are equipped with binoculars and remain vigilant for non-participant divers and boats, swimmers, snorkelers, and dive flags. If a non-participating swimmer, snorkeler, or diver is observed entering into the area of the swimmer defense system, the power levels of the defense system are reduced. An additional 100-yard (yd.) (91.4 m) buffer is applied to the initial sighting location of the non-participant as an additional precaution. If the area cannot be maintained free of non-participating swimmers, snorkelers, and divers, testing will cease until the non-participant has moved outside the area.

5.1.6 UNMANNED AERIAL AND UNDERWATER VEHICLE PROCEDURES

For activities involving unmanned aerial and underwater vehicles, the Navy evaluates the need to publish a Notice to Airmen or Mariners based on the scale, location, and timing of the activity. Unmanned Aerial Vehicles and Unmanned Aircraft Systems are operated in accordance with Federal Aviation Administration air traffic organization policy as issued in Office of the Chief of Naval Operations Instructions 3710, 3750, and 4790.

5.1.7 TOWED IN-WATER DEVICE PROCEDURES

Prior to deploying a towed device from a manned platform, there is a standard operating procedure to search the intended path of the device for any floating debris (e.g., driftwood) or other potential obstructions (e.g., concentrations of animals), which have the potential to cause damage to the device.

5.2 INTRODUCTION TO MITIGATION

The Navy recognizes that the Proposed Action has the potential to impact the environment. Unlike standard operating procedures, which are established for reasons other than environmental benefit, mitigation measures are modifications to the Proposed Action that are implemented for the sole purpose of reducing a specific potential environmental impact on a particular resource. The procedures discussed in this chapter, most of which are currently or were previously implemented as a result of past environmental compliance documents, Endangered Species Act (ESA) Biological Opinions, Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) Letters of Authorization, or other formal or informal consultations with regulatory agencies, are being coordinated with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) through the consultation and permitting processes.

In order to make the findings necessary to issue an MMPA letter of authorization, it may be necessary for NMFS to require additional mitigation measures or monitoring beyond those contained in this Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)/Overseas EIS (OEIS). These could include measures considered, but eliminated in this EIS/OEIS, or as yet undeveloped measures. The public will have an opportunity to provide information to NMFS through the MMPA process, both during the comment period following NMFS' notice of receipt of the application for a letter of authorization, and during the comment period

following publication of the proposed rule. NMFS may propose additional mitigation measures or monitoring in the proposed rule.

Additionally, the Navy is engaging in consultation processes with both NMFS and the USFWS under the ESA with regard to listed species that may be affected by the Proposed Action described in this EIS/OEIS. For the purposes of the ESA section 7 consultation, the mitigation measures proposed here may be considered by NMFS or USFWS as beneficial actions taken by the Federal agency or applicant (50 Code of Federal Regulations [C.F.R.] 402.14[g][8]). If required to satisfy requirements of the ESA, NMFS or USFWS may develop an additional set of measures contained in reasonable and prudent alternatives, reasonable and prudent measures, or conservation recommendations in any Biological Opinion issued for this Proposed Action.

The Navy also will consider public comments on proposed mitigation measures described in this Draft EIS/OEIS.

5.2.1 REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS FOR MITIGATION

An EIS must analyze the affected environment, discuss the environmental impacts of the Proposed Action and each alternative, and assess the significance of the impacts on the environment. Mitigation measures help reduce the severity or intensity of impacts of the Proposed Action, and their assessment can occur early in the planning process. An agency may choose not to take the action or to move the location of the action. Mitigation measure development also occurs throughout the analysis process whenever an impact is minimized by limiting the degree or magnitude of the action or its implementation. Mitigation measures can also include actions that repair, rehabilitate, or restore the affected environment or reduce impacts over time through constant monitoring and corrective adjustments.

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirement, the environmental benefit of all proposed Navy recommended mitigation measures will apply to all alternatives analyzed in this Draft EIS, and, according to Navy policy, will also apply to the Draft OEIS where applicable and appropriate. Additionally, the White House Council on Environmental Quality issued guidance for mitigation and monitoring on 14 January 2011. This guidance affirms that federal agencies, including the Navy, should:

- commit to mitigation in decision documents when they have based environmental analysis upon such mitigation (by including appropriate conditions on grants, permits, or other agency approvals, and making funding or approvals for implementing the Proposed Action contingent on implementation of the mitigation commitments);
- monitor the implementation and effectiveness of mitigation commitments;
- make information on mitigation and monitoring available to the public, preferably through agency web sites; and
- remedy ineffective mitigation when the federal action is not yet complete.

The Council on Environmental Quality guidance encourages federal agencies to develop internal processes for post-decision monitoring to ensure the implementation and effectiveness of the mitigation. It also states that federal agencies may use adaptive management as part of an agency's action. Adaptive management, when included in the NEPA analysis, allows for the agency to take alternate mitigation actions if mitigation commitments originally made in the planning and decision documents fail to achieve projected environmental outcomes. Adaptive management generally involves

four phases: plan, act, monitor, and evaluate. This process allows the use of the results to update knowledge and adjust future management actions accordingly. Through implementing mitigation measures from the Navy's previous planning, consultations, permits, and monitoring of those efforts, the Navy has collected data to further refine its recommended mitigation measures.

Through the planning, consultation, and permitting processes, federal regulatory agencies may also suggest that the Navy analyze additional mitigation measures for inclusion in the Final EIS/OEIS and associated consultation and permitting documents. Any proposals for additional mitigation measures should be based on the federal agency's assessment of the likelihood that such measures will contribute to a notable reduction of the environmental impact. If additional measures are identified, the Navy will apply the effectiveness and operational assessment protocols discussed in Section 5.3 (Mitigation Assessment) to determine whether the additional measure will be proposed for implementation. The final suite of mitigations resulting from the ongoing planning, consultation, and permitting processes will be documented in the Navy and NMFS Records of Decision, the MMPA Letters of Authorization, and the ESA Biological Opinions.

5.2.2 OVERVIEW OF MITIGATION APPROACH

This section describes the approach that the Navy took to develop its recommended mitigation measures. The Navy's overall approach to assessing potential mitigation measures was based on two principles: (1) mitigations will be effective at reducing potential impacts to the resource; and (2) from a military perspective, the mitigations are practical to implement, and personnel safety and readiness will not be impacted. The assessment process involved using information directly from Chapter 3 (Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences) and assessing all existing mitigation and proposals for new or modified mitigation in order to determine if recommending a mitigation measure for implementation would be appropriate.

This document organized, and where appropriate, analyzed training and testing activities separately. This separation was needed because the training and testing communities perform activities for differing purposes, and in some cases, with different personnel and in different locations. For example there is a fundamental difference between testing of a new mine warfare system with civilian scientists and engineers, and the eventual training of sailors and aviators with that same system. As such, mitigations that the Navy recommends for both training and testing activities are presented together, while mitigations that are designed for and executable only by the training or testing community will be presented separately.

5.2.2.1 Lessons Learned from Previous Environmental Impact Statements/Overseas Environmental Impact Statements

In an effort to improve upon past processes, the Navy considered all mitigations previously implemented and adapted its mitigation assessment approach based on lessons learned from previous EISs, ESA Biological Opinions, MMPA Letters of Authorizations, and other formal or informal consultations with regulatory agencies.

Navy planners, scientists, and the operational community assessed the effectiveness of a full suite of potential mitigation measures (a portion of which were specific mitigation areas) on a case-by-case basis, using information and lessons learned from the Navy's internal adaptive management process. The resulting assemblage of recommended measures is comprised of currently implemented measures, modifications of currently implemented measures, and newly proposed measures. Details on the assessment methods are provided in Section 5.2.3 (Assessment Method). The rationale for

recommending, modifying, adding, or discontinuing each measure is provided in Section 5.3 (Mitigation Assessment).

5.2.2.2 Protective Measures Assessment Protocol

The Protective Measures Assessment Protocol is a decision support and situational awareness software tool that the Navy uses to facilitate compliance with mitigation measures when conducting certain training and testing activities at sea. The Navy runs the Protective Measures Assessment Protocol program during the event planning process to ensure that personnel involved in the activity are aware of the mitigation requirements and to help ensure that all mitigations are implemented appropriately. In addition to providing notification of the required mitigation, the tool also provides a visual display of the activity location, unit’s position in relation to the target area, and any relevant environmental data. The final suite of mitigation measures contained in the Navy and NMFS Records of Decision, the MMPA Letters of Authorization, and the ESA Biological Opinions will be integrated into the Protective Measures Assessment Protocol.

Section 5.3.1.1.1.1 (United States Navy Afloat Environmental Compliance Training Series) contains information about the newly developed Protective Measures Assessment Protocol training module.

5.2.3 ASSESSMENT METHOD

As shown in Figure 5.2-1, the Navy undertook an effectiveness assessment and operational assessment for each potential mitigation measure to ensure its compatibility with Section 5.2.2 (Overview of Mitigation Approach). The Navy used information from published and readily available sources, as well as Navy after-action and monitoring reports. When available, these data were used when they represented the best available science and if they were generally accepted by the scientific community to ensure that they were applicable and contributed to the analysis.

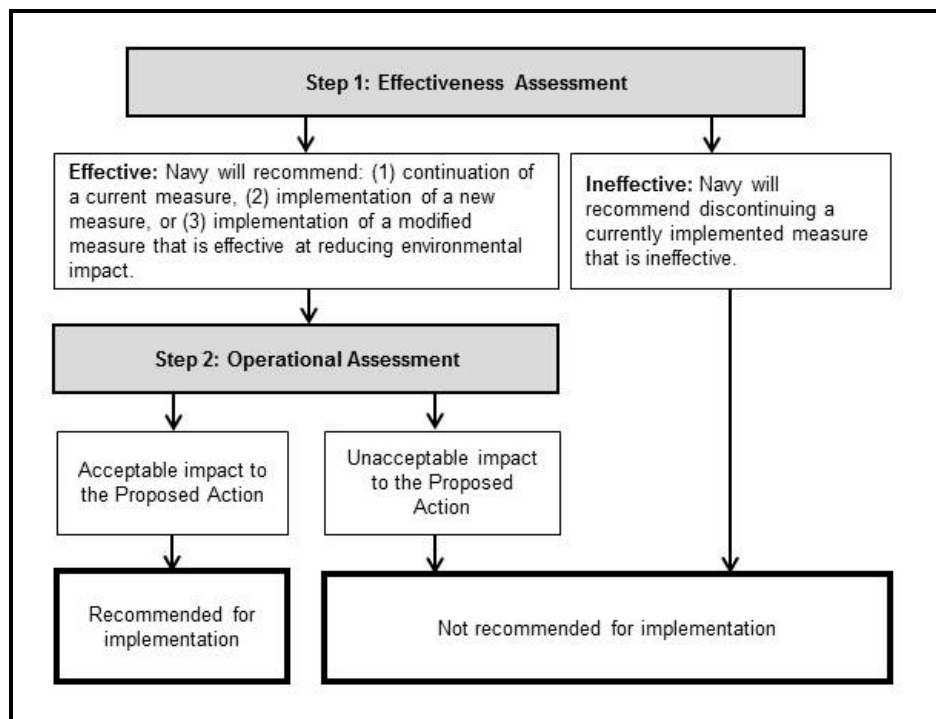


Figure 5.2-1: Flowchart of Process for Determining Recommended Mitigation Measures

5.2.3.1 Effectiveness Assessment

5.2.3.1.1 Procedural Measures

Procedural measures could involve employing techniques or technology during a training or testing activity in order to avoid or reduce a potential impact on a particular resource. For the purposes of organization, procedural measures are discussed within two subcategories: Lookouts and mitigation zones.

A proposed procedural measure was deemed effective if implementing the measure was likely to result in avoidance or reduction of an impact on a resource. The level of avoidance or reduction of the impact gained from implementing a procedural measure was weighed against the potential for a shift in impacts resulting from the activity modification. For example, if predictive modeling results indicate that the use of underwater explosives could cause unacceptable impacts on a particular resource; those impacts could possibly be reduced by substituting non-explosive activities for explosive activities. However, if the increased use of non-explosive activities would consequently produce an unacceptable impact on habitats due to an associated physical disturbance or strike risk from military expended materials, the measure would not necessarily be justifiable.

A proposed procedural measure was deemed ineffective if its implementation would not result in avoidance or reduction of an impact on a resource, or if an unacceptable impact will simply be shifted from one resource to another. For ineffective procedural measures that are currently being implemented, the rationale for terminating, modifying, or continuing to carry out the measure is included in the discussion.

5.2.3.1.2 Mitigation Areas

In order to avoid or reduce a potential impact on a particular resource the Navy would either limit the time of day or duration in which a particular activity could take place, or move or relocate a particular activity outside of a specific geographic area. Within mitigation areas, the measures would only apply to the specific activity that resulted in the requirement for mitigation, and would not prevent or restrict other activities from occurring during that time or in that area.

A proposed mitigation area was deemed effective if implementing the measure would likely result in avoidance or reduction of the impact on the resource. The specific season, time of day, or geographic area must be important to the resource. In determining importance, special consideration was given to time periods or geographic areas having characteristics such as especially high overall density or percent population use, seasonal bottlenecks for a migration corridor, and identifiable key foraging and reproduction areas.

Avoidance or reduction of the impact in the specific time period or geographic area was weighed against the potential for causing new impacts in alternative time periods or geographic areas. For example, if the use of underwater explosives was predicted to cause unacceptable impacts on a particular resource in a known foraging location, those impacts could possibly be reduced by relocating those activities to a new location. However, if the use of explosives at the new location would consequently produce an unacceptable impact on the same or a different resource at the new location, the measure would not necessarily be justifiable.

A proposed mitigation area was deemed ineffective if implementing the measure would not result in avoidance or reduction of an impact on a resource, or if an unacceptable impact would simply be shifted

from one time period or location to another. For ineffective mitigation areas that are currently being implemented, the rationale for terminating, modifying, or continuing to carry out the measure is included in the discussion.

5.2.3.2 Operational Assessment

The Navy conducted the operational assessment for procedural measures and proposed mitigation areas using the criteria described below. The Navy deemed procedural and mitigation area measures to have acceptable operational impacts on a particular proposed activity if the following four conclusions were reached:

1. Implementation of the measure will not increase safety risks to Navy personnel and equipment.
2. Implementation of the measure is practicable. Practicability was defined by the following factors:
 - The measure does not result in an unacceptable increase in resource requirements (e.g., wear and tear on equipment, additional fuel, additional personnel, increased training or testing requirement, or additional reporting requirements).
 - The measure does not result in an unacceptable increase in time away from homeport for Navy personnel.
 - The measure does not result in national security concerns. Should national security require conducting more than the designated number of activities, or a change in how the Navy conducts those activities, the Navy reserves the right to provide the regulatory federal agency with prior notification and include the information in any associated exercise or monitoring reports.
 - The measure is consistent with Navy policy. Navy policy requires that mitigation measures are developed through consultation with regulatory agencies (e.g., the MMPA and ESA processes), would likely result in avoidance or reduction of an impact on a resource as determined by the effectiveness assessment, and would not negatively impact training and testing fidelity. This policy applies to the full suite of potential mitigation measures that the Navy assessed, including measures that were considered but eliminated, and, as appropriate, to currently implemented measures that the Navy is no longer recommending to implement.
3. Implementation of the measure will not result in an unacceptable impact on the effectiveness of the military readiness activity. A primary factor that will be considered for all mitigation measures is that the measure must not modify the activity in a way that no longer allows the activity to meet the intended objectives, and ultimately must not interfere with the Navy meeting all of its military readiness requirements. Specifically, for proposed mitigation area measures, the following additional factors were considered:
 - The activity is not dependent on a specific range or range support structure within the proposed mitigation area and there are alternate areas with the necessary environmental conditions (e.g., oceanographic conditions).
 - The proposed mitigation area does not hold any current or foreseeable future readiness value. This assessment will be revisited if Navy operations or national security interests conclude that training or testing needs to occur within the proposed mitigation area.
 - Implementation of the measure will not prohibit conducting shipboard maintenance, repair, and testing pierside prior to at-sea operations.

4. The Navy has legal authority to implement the measure.

If all four of the conditions above can be achieved, then the Navy will recommend the mitigation measure for implementation.

5.3 MITIGATION ASSESSMENT

The effectiveness and operational assessments resulted in potential mitigation measures being organized into the following four sections:

- Section 5.3.1 (Lookout Procedural Measures) includes recommended measures specific to the use of Lookouts or trained marine species observers.
- Section 5.3.2 (Mitigation Zone Procedural Measures) includes recommended measures specific to visual observations with a mitigation zone.
- Section 5.3.3 (Mitigation Areas) includes recommended measures specific to particular locations.
- Section 5.3.4 (Mitigation Measures Considered but Eliminated) includes measures that the Navy does not recommend for implementation due to the measure being ineffective at reducing environmental impacts, having an unacceptable operational impact, or being incompatible with Section 5.2.2, (Overview of Mitigation Approach).

A summary of the Navy recommended measures is provided in Table 5.4-1.

5.3.1 LOOKOUT PROCEDURAL MEASURES

As described in Section 5.1 (Standard Operating Procedures) ships have personnel assigned to stand watch at all times while underway. Watch personnel may perform watch duties in conjunction with job responsibilities that extend beyond looking at the water or air (such as supervision of other personnel). This section will introduce Lookouts who perform similar duties to watch personnel and whose duties satisfy safety of navigation and mitigation requirements.

The Navy will have two types of Lookouts for the purposes of conducting visual observations: (1) those positioned on ships, and (2) those positioned in aircraft or on small boats. Lookouts positioned on ships will be dedicated solely to diligent observation of the air and surface of the water. They will have multiple observation objectives, which include but are not limited to detecting the presence of biological resources and recreational or fishing boats, observing the mitigation zones described in Section 5.3.2 (Mitigation Zone Procedural Measures), and monitoring for vessel and personnel safety concerns.

Due to aircraft and small boat manning and space restrictions, Lookouts positioned in aircraft or on small boats may include the aircraft crew, pilot, or boat crew. Lookouts positioned in aircraft and small boats may be responsible for tasks in addition to observing the air or surface of the water (e.g., navigation of a helicopter or small boat). However, aircraft and small boat Lookouts will, considering personnel safety, practicality of implementation, and impact on the effectiveness of the activity, comply with the observation objectives described above for Lookouts positioned on surface ships.

The procedural measures described below primarily consist of having Lookouts during specific training and testing activities.

5.3.1.1 Specialized Training

5.3.1.1.1 Training for Navy Personnel and Civilian Equivalents

5.3.1.1.1.1 United States Navy Afloat Environmental Compliance Training Series

The Navy is proposing to continue implementing the Marine Species Awareness Training for watch personnel and Lookouts, and to add the requirement for additional Navy personnel and civilian equivalents to complete one or more environmental training modules.

The Navy has developed the U.S. Navy Afloat Environmental Compliance Training Series to help ensure Navy-wide compliance with environmental requirements, and to help Navy personnel gain a better understanding of their personal roles and responsibilities. The training series contains four interactive multimedia training modules. Personnel will be required to complete all modules identified in their career path training plan.

The first module is the Introduction to the U.S. Navy Afloat Environmental Compliance Training Series. The introduction module provides information on environmental laws (e.g., ESA and MMPA) and responsibilities relevant to Navy training and testing activities. The material is put into context of why environmental compliance is important to the Navy, from the most junior sailor to Commanding Officers. All personnel completing the U.S. Navy Marine Species Awareness Training will also be required to take this module.

The second module is the U.S. Navy Marine Species Awareness Training. Consistent with current requirements, all bridge watch personnel, Commanding Officers, Executive Officers, maritime patrol aircraft aircrews, anti-submarine warfare helicopter crews, civilian equivalents, and Lookouts will successfully complete the Marine Species Awareness Training prior to standing watch or serving as a Lookout. The module contained within the U.S. Navy Environmental Compliance Training Series is an update to the current Marine Species Awareness Training version 3.1. The updated training is designed to improve the effectiveness of visual observations for marine resources, including marine mammals and sea turtles. The Marine Species Awareness Training provides information on sighting cues, visual observation tools and techniques, and sighting notification procedures.

The third module is the U.S. Navy Protective Measures Assessment Protocol. The Protective Measures Assessment Protocol is a decision support and situational awareness software tool that the Navy uses to facilitate compliance with worldwide mitigation measures during the conduct of training and testing activities at sea. The module provides instruction for generating and reviewing Protective Measures Assessment Protocol reports. Section 5.2.2.2 (Protective Measures Assessment Protocol) contains additional information on the benefits of the software tool.

The fourth module is the U.S. Navy Sonar Positional Reporting System and marine mammal incident reporting. The Navy developed the Sonar Positional Reporting System as its official record of underwater sound sources (e.g. active sonar) used under its MMPA permits. Marine mammal incidents include vessel strikes and animal strandings. The module provides instruction on the reporting requirements and procedures for both the Sonar Positional Reporting System and marine mammal incident reporting.

Effectiveness and Operational Assessment

Navy personnel undergo extensive training in order to stand watch on the bridge. Standard training includes on-the-job instruction under the supervision of experienced personnel, followed by completion of the Personal Qualification Standard program. The Personal Qualification Standard program certifies

that personnel have demonstrated the skills needed to stand watch, such as detecting and reporting floating or partially submerged objects.

The U.S. Navy Afloat Environmental Compliance Training Series, including the updated Marine Species Awareness Training, is a specialized multimedia training program designed to help Navy operational and test communities best avoid potentially harmful interactions with marine species. The program provides training on how to sight marine species, focusing on marine mammals. The training also includes instruction for visually identifying sea turtles, jellyfish aggregations, and flocks of seabirds, which are often indicators of marine mammal or sea turtle presence (aggregation of sargassum or floating vegetation are also indicators; however, they are not present in the MITT Study Area). The Marine Species Awareness Training also addresses the role that watch personnel and Lookouts play in helping the Navy maintain compliance with environmental protection requirements, as well as supporting Navy environmental stewardship commitments.

In summary, the Navy believes that the U.S. Navy Afloat Environmental Compliance Training Series, including the updated Marine Species Awareness Training, is the best and most appropriate forum for teaching watch personnel and Lookouts about their responsibilities for helping reduce impacts on the marine environment. The Marine Species Awareness Training provides the Navy with invaluable training for a relatively large number of personnel. Constantly shifting personnel assignments presents a real challenge; however, the format and structure of the U.S. Navy Afloat Environmental Compliance Training Series will help the Navy reduce costs during fiscally constrained periods and provide constant access to training. Overall, the Marine Species Awareness Training is an effective tool for improving the potential for Lookouts to detect marine species while on duty.

Implementation of the Marine Species Awareness Training has been analyzed as acceptable with regard to personnel safety, practicality of implementation, impact on effectiveness of the military readiness activity, and Navy policy.

5.3.1.2 Lookouts

The Navy proposes to use one or more Lookouts during the training and testing activities described below, which are organized by stressor category. A comparison of the currently implemented mitigation measures and recommended mitigation measures are provided where applicable. The effectiveness and operational assessments are discussed for all Lookout measures collectively in Section 5.3.1.2.5 (Effectiveness Assessment for Lookouts) and Section 5.3.1.2.6 (Operational Assessment for Lookouts). A number of training and testing activities involve the participation of multiple vessels and aircraft, which could ultimately increase the cumulative number of personnel standing watch per standard operating procedures or Lookouts posted in the vicinity of the activity (e.g., sinking exercises). The following sections discuss the minimum number of Lookouts that the Navy will use during each activity.

5.3.1.2.1 Acoustic Stressors – Non-Impulse Sound

5.3.1.2.1.1 Low-Frequency and Hull Mounted Mid-Frequency Active Sonar

Mitigation measures do not currently exist for low-frequency active sonar sources analyzed in this Draft EIS/OEIS associated with new platforms or systems, such as the Littoral Combat Ship. The Navy is proposing to (1) add mitigation measures for low-frequency active sonar and new platforms and systems, and (2) maintain the number of Lookouts currently implemented for ships using hull-mounted mid-frequency active sonar. The recommended measures are provided below.

Ships using low-frequency or hull-mounted mid-frequency active sonar sources associated with anti-submarine warfare and mine warfare activities at sea (with the exception of ships less than 65 ft. [20 m] in length, and ships that are minimally manned) will have two Lookouts at the forward position. For the purposes of this document, low-frequency active sonar does not include Surveillance Towed Array Sensor System Low-Frequency Active Sonar.

While using low-frequency or hull-mounted mid-frequency active sonar sources associated with anti-submarine warfare and mine warfare activities at sea, ships less than 65 ft. (20 m) in length, and ships that are minimally manned will have one Lookout at the forward position of the vessel due to space and manning restrictions.

Ships conducting active sonar activities while moored or at anchor (including pierside) will maintain one Lookout.

5.3.1.2.1.2 High-Frequency and Non-Hull Mounted Mid-frequency Active Sonar

Mitigation measures do not currently exist for high-frequency active sonar activities associated with anti-submarine warfare and mine warfare, or for new platforms, such as the Littoral Combat Ship; therefore, the Navy is proposing to add a new measure for these activities or platforms. The Navy is proposing to continue using the number of Lookouts currently implemented for ships or aircraft conducting non-hull mounted mid-frequency active sonar, such as helicopter dipping sonar systems. The recommended measure is provided below.

The Navy will have one Lookout on ships or aircraft conducting high-frequency or non-hull mounted mid-frequency active sonar activities associated with anti-submarine warfare and mine warfare activities at sea.

5.3.1.2.2 Acoustic Stressors – Explosives and Impulse Sound

5.3.1.2.2.1 Improved Extended Echo Ranging Sonobuoys

The Navy is proposing to continue using the number of Lookouts currently implemented for this activity. The Navy will have one Lookout in aircraft conducting improved extended echo ranging sonobuoy activities.

5.3.1.2.2.2 Explosive Sonobuoys Using 0.6–2.5 Pound Net Explosive Weight

Lookout measures do not currently exist for explosive sonobuoy activities using 0.6–2.5 pound (lb.) net explosive weight. The Navy is proposing to add this measure. Aircraft conducting explosive sonobuoy activities using 0.6–2.5 lb. net explosive weight will have one Lookout.

5.3.1.2.2.3 Anti-Swimmer Grenades

Lookout measures do not currently exist for activities using anti-swimmer grenades. The Navy is proposing to add this measure. The Navy will have one Lookout on the vessel conducting anti-swimmer grenade activities.

5.3.1.2.2.4 Mine Countermeasure and Neutralization Activities Using Positive Control Firing Devices

As background mine countermeasure and neutralization activities can be divided into two main categories: (1) general activities that can be conducted from a variety of platforms and locations, and (2) activities involving the use of diver-placed charges that typically occur close to shore. When either of

these activities are conducted using a positive control firing device, the detonation is controlled by the personnel conducting the activity and is not authorized until the area is clear at the time of detonation.

Lookout measures do not currently exist for general mine countermeasure and neutralization activities (those not involving diver-placed charges) using positive control firing devices. The Navy is proposing to add this measure. During general mine countermeasure and neutralization activities using up to a 20 lb. net explosive weight detonation (bin E6 and below), vessels greater than 200 ft. (61 m) will have two Lookouts, while vessels less than 200 ft. (61 m) or aircraft will have one Lookout.

The Navy is proposing to clarify the number of Lookouts implemented for mine neutralization activities involving positive control diver-placed charges using up to a 20 lb. net explosive weight detonation. A charge with a 20 lb. net explosive weight is the maximum net explosive weight proposed for activities involving diver-placed charges in the Study Area. The recommended measures are below.

- During activities involving diver-placed charges under positive control, activities using up to a 20 lb. net explosive weight (bin E6) detonation will have a total of two Lookouts (one Lookout positioned on two small boats, or one small boat in combination with a helicopter).
- All divers placing the charges on mines will support the Lookouts while performing their regular duties. The Lookouts, divers, and any other personnel who may spot marine mammals and sea turtles will report all marine mammal and sea turtle sightings to their dive support vessel or range safety officer.

5.3.1.2.2.5 Mine Neutralization Activities Using Diver-Placed Time-Delay Firing Devices

As background, when mine neutralization activities using diver placed charges (up to a 20 lb. net explosive weight) are conducted with a time-delay firing device, the detonation is fused with a specified time delay by the personnel conducting the activity and is not authorized until the area is clear at the time the fuse is initiated. During these activities, the detonation cannot be terminated once the fuse is initiated due to human safety concerns.

The Navy is proposing to modify the number of Lookouts currently used for mine neutralization activities using diver-placed time-delay firing devices. As a reference, the current mitigation involves the use of six Lookouts and three small boats (two Lookouts positioned in each of the three boats) for mitigation zones equal to or larger than 1,400 yd. (1,280 m), or four Lookouts and two boats for mitigation zones smaller than 1,400 yd. (1,280 m). The Navy is proposing to modify the number of Lookouts currently used for mine neutralization activities using diver-placed time-delay firing devices because the measure is impractical to implement and is currently resulting in an unacceptable impact on military readiness. The Navy does not have the resources to maintain six Lookouts and three small boats during mine neutralization activities using diver-placed time-delay firing devices. Due to a lack of personnel and small boats available for this activity, the requirement for six Lookouts and three small boats would require reassigning personnel from other assigned duties or training activities, thus impacting the ability of the reassigned personnel to complete his or her assigned duties or other training requirements. Therefore, the Navy is currently unable to conduct the activities that require six Lookouts and three small boats, which is reducing the Navy's ability to maintain military readiness for these activities. Four Lookouts and two small boats represent the maximum level of effort that the Navy can commit to observing mitigation zones for this activity given the number of personnel and assets available. To prevent these unacceptable impacts, the Navy recommends the measures below.

During activities using up to a 20 lb. net explosive weight (bin E6) detonation, the Navy will have four Lookouts and two small boats (two Lookouts positioned in each of the two boats). In addition, when aircraft are used, the pilot or member of the aircrew will serve as an additional Lookout. All divers placing the charges on mines will support the Lookouts while performing their regular duties. The divers will report all marine mammal and sea turtle sightings to their supporting small boat or Range Safety Officer.

5.3.1.2.2.6 Gunnery Exercises – Small- and Medium-Caliber Using a Surface Target

Lookout measures do not currently exist for small- and medium-caliber gunnery exercises using a surface target. The Navy is proposing to add this measure. The Navy will have one Lookout on the vessel or aircraft conducting small- and medium-caliber gunnery exercises against a surface target.

5.3.1.2.2.7 Gunnery Exercises – Large-Caliber Using a Surface Target

The Navy is proposing to clarify the number of Lookouts currently implemented for this activity. The Navy will have one Lookout on the ship conducting large-caliber gunnery exercises against a surface target.

5.3.1.2.2.8 Missile Exercises (Including Rockets) Up to 250 Pound Net Explosive Weight Using a Surface Target

The Navy is proposing to clarify the number of Lookouts currently implemented for this activity. When aircraft are conducting missile exercises up to 250 lb. net explosive weight against a surface target, the Navy will have one Lookout positioned in an aircraft.

5.3.1.2.2.9 Missile Exercises Using 251–500 Pound Net Explosive Weight Using a Surface Target

Lookout measures do not currently exist for missile exercises using 251–500 lb. net explosive weight. The Navy is proposing to add this measure. When aircraft are conducting missile exercises using 251–500 lb. net explosive weight against a surface target, the Navy will have one Lookout positioned in an aircraft.

5.3.1.2.2.10 Bombing Exercises

The Navy is proposing to clarify the number of Lookouts currently implemented for this activity. The Navy will have one Lookout positioned in an aircraft conducting bombing exercises.

5.3.1.2.2.11 Torpedo (Explosive) Testing

Lookout measures do not currently exist for torpedo (explosive) testing. The Navy is proposing to add this measure. The Navy will have one Lookout positioned in an aircraft during torpedo (explosive) testing.

5.3.1.2.2.12 Sinking Exercises

The Navy is proposing to continue using the number of Lookouts currently implemented for this activity. The Navy will have two Lookouts (one positioned in an aircraft and one on a surface vessel) during sinking exercises.

5.3.1.2.3 Physical Disturbance and Strike

5.3.1.2.3.1 Vessels

The Navy is proposing to clarify the mitigation measures currently implemented for this activity (including full power propulsion testing). While underway, vessels (other than minimally manned

vessels) will have two Lookouts. Minimally manned vessels (ships less than 65 ft. [20 m] in length and ships that are minimally manned) will have a minimum of one Lookout.

5.3.1.2.3.2 Towed In-Water Devices

The Navy is proposing to clarify the number of Lookouts currently implemented for activities using towed in-water devices (e.g., towed mine neutralization). The Navy will have one Lookout during activities using towed in-water devices when towed from a manned platform.

5.3.1.2.3.3 Non-Explosive Practice Munitions – Small-, Medium-, and Large-Caliber Gunnery Exercises Using a Surface Target

The Navy is proposing to clarify the number of Lookouts currently implemented for these activities. The Navy will have one Lookout during activities involving non-explosive practice munitions (e.g., small-, medium-, and large-caliber gunnery exercises) against a surface target.

5.3.1.2.3.4 Non-Explosive Practice Munitions – Bombing Exercises

The Navy is proposing to clarify the number of Lookouts currently implemented for these activities. The Navy will have one Lookout positioned in an aircraft during non-explosive bombing exercises.

5.3.1.2.3.5 Non-Explosive Practice Munitions – Missile Exercises (Including Rockets) Using a Surface Target

The Navy is proposing to continue using the number of Lookouts currently implemented for these activities. When aircraft are conducting non-explosive missile exercises (including exercises using rockets) against a surface target, the Navy will have one Lookout positioned in an aircraft.

5.3.1.2.4 Effectiveness Assessment for Lookouts

Personnel standing watch in accordance with Navy standard operating procedures have multiple job responsibilities. While on duty, these standard watch personnel often conduct marine species observation in addition to their primary job duties (e.g., aiding in the navigation of the vessel). By having one or more Lookouts dedicated solely to observing the air and surface of the water during certain training and testing activities, the Navy increases the likelihood that marine species will be detected. It is also important to note that a number of training and testing activities involve multiple vessels and aircraft, thereby increasing the cumulative number of Lookouts or watch personnel that could potentially be present during a given activity.

Although using Lookouts is expected to increase the likelihood that marine species will be detected at the surface of the water, it is unlikely that using Lookouts will be able to help avoid impacts on all species entirely due to the inherent limitations of sighting marine mammals, as discussed in the sections below. Refer to Section 3.4.3.3 (Implementing Mitigation to Reduce Sound Exposures) for a quantitative discussion on the Navy's effectiveness assessment for Lookouts during sound-producing activities.

Pursuant to Phase I (e.g., Hawaii Range Complex EIS/OEIS) and in cooperation with NMFS, the Navy has undertaken monitoring efforts to track compliance with take authorizations, help evaluate the effectiveness of implemented mitigation measures, and gain a better understanding of the impacts of the Navy activities on marine resources. In 2010, the Navy initiated a study designed to evaluate the effectiveness of the Navy Lookout team. The University of St. Andrews, Scotland, under contract to the U.S. Navy, developed an initial data collection protocol for use during the study. Between 2010 and 2012, trained Navy marine mammal observers collected data during nine field trials as part of a "proof of concept" phase. The goal of the proof of concept phase was to develop a statistically valid protocol

for quantitatively analyzing the effectiveness of Lookouts during Navy training exercises. Field trials were conducted in the Hawaii Range Complex, Southern California Range Complex, and Jacksonville Range Complex onboard one frigate, one cruiser, and seven destroyers. A preliminary analysis of the proof of concept data is ongoing. The Navy is also working to finalize the data collection process for use during the next phase of the study. While data was collected as part of this proof of concept phase, that data is not fairly comparable as protocols were being changed and assessed, nor is that data statistically significant. Therefore, it is improper to use this data to draw any conclusions on the effectiveness of Navy Lookouts.

5.3.1.2.4.1 Detection Probabilities of Marine Mammals in the Study Area

Until the results of the Navy's Lookout effectiveness study are available, the Navy must rely on the best available science to determine detection probabilities of marine mammals by Navy Lookouts. To do so, the Navy has compiled the results of available literature on line-transect analyses, which are typically used to estimate cetacean abundance. In line-transect analyses, the factors affecting the detection of an animal or group of animals directly on the transect line may be probabilistically quantified as $g(0)$. As a reference, a $g(0)$ value of 1 indicates that animals on the transect line are always detected. Table 5.3-1 provides detection probabilities for cetacean species based largely on $g(0)$ values derived from shipboard and aerial surveys in the Study Area, which vary widely based on $g(0)$ derivation factors (e.g., species, sighting platforms, group size, and sea state conditions). Refer to Section 3.4.3.3 (Implementing Mitigation to Reduce Sound Exposures) for additional background on $g(0)$ and a discussion of how the Navy used $g(0)$ to quantitatively assess the effectiveness of Lookouts during sound-producing activities.

Table 5.3-1: Detection Probability $g(0)$ Values for Marine Mammal Species in the Mariana Islands Training and Testing Study Area

Species/Stocks	Family	Vessel Sightability	Aircraft Sightability
Baird's Beaked Whale	Ziphiidae	0.96	0.18
Blainville's Beaked Whale	Ziphiidae	0.40	0.074
Blue Whale, Fin Whale; Omura's Whale; Sei Whale	Balaenopteridae	0.921	0.407
Bottlenose Dolphin, Fraser's Dolphin	Delphinidae	0.808	0.96
Bryde's Whale	Balaenopteridae	0.91	0.407
Cuvier's Beaked Whale; Ginkgo-toothed Beaked Whale	Ziphiidae	0.23	0.074
Dwarf Sperm Whale, Pygmy Sperm Whale, Kogia spp.	Kogiidae	0.35	0.074
False Killer Whale, Melon-headed Whale	Delphinidae	0.76	0.96
Humpback Whale	Balaenopteridae	0.921	0.495
Killer Whale	Delphinidae	0.91	0.96
Longman's Beaked Whale, Pygmy Killer Whale	Ziphiidae, Delphinidae	0.76	0.074
<i>Mesoplodon</i> spp.	Ziphiidae	0.34	0.11
Minke Whale	Balaenopteridae	0.856	0.386
Northern Right Whale Dolphin	Delphinidae	0.856	0.96
Pantropical Spotted/Risso's/Rough	Delphinidae	0.76	0.96
Short-finned Pilot Whale	Delphinidae	0.76	0.96
Sperm Whale	Physeteridae	0.87	0.495

Note: For species having no data, the $g(0)$ for Cuvier's aircraft value (where $g(0)=0.074$) was used; or in cases where there was no value for vessels, the $g(0)$ for aircraft was used as a conservative underestimate of sightability following the assumption that the availability bias from a slower moving vessel should result in a higher $g(0)$. Some $g(0)$ values in the tables above are estimates of perception bias only, some are estimates of availability bias only, and some reflect both, depending on the species and data that are currently available.

Sources: Barlow 2010; Barlow and Forney 2007; Carretta et al. 2000

Several variables that play into how easily a marine mammal may be detected by a dedicated observer are directly related to the animal: including its external appearance and size; surface, diving and social behavior; and life history. The following is a generalized discussion of the behavior and external appearance of the marine mammals with the potential to occur in the Study Area as these characters relate to the detectability of each species. The species are grouped loosely based on either taxonomic relatedness or commonalities in size and behavior, and include large whales, cryptic species, and delphinids. Not all statements may hold true for all species in a grouping, and exceptions are mentioned where applicable. The information presented in this section may be found in Jefferson et al. (2008) and sources within unless otherwise noted (Jefferson et al. 2008).

Large Whales

Species of large whales found in the Study Area include all the baleen whales and the sperm whale. Baleen whales are generally large, with adults ranging in size from 30 to 89 ft. (9 to 27 m), often making them immediately detectable. Many species of baleen whales have a prominent blow ranging from 10 ft. (3 m) to as much as 39 ft. (12 m) above the surface. However, there are at least two species (Bryde's whale and common minke whale) that often have no visible blow. Baleen whales tend to travel singly or in small groups ranging from pairs to groups of five. The exception to this is the fin whale, which is known to travel in pods of seven or more individuals. All species of baleen whales are known to form larger-scale aggregations in areas of high localized productivity or on breeding grounds. Baleen whales may or may not fluke at the surface before they dive; some species fluke regularly (e.g., the humpback whale), some fluke variably (e.g., the blue whale and fin whale) and some rarely fluke (e.g., the sei whale, common minke whale, and Bryde's whale). Baleen whales may remain at the surface for extended periods of time as they forage or socialize. Humpback whales are known to corral prey at the surface. Dive behavior varies amongst species, as well. Many species will dive and remain at depth for as long as 30 minutes. Some will adjust their diving behavior according to the presence of vessels (e.g., the humpback whale and fin whale). Sei whales are known to sink just below the surface and remain there between breaths.

Sperm whales also belong to the large whales, with adult males reaching as much as 50 ft. (18 m) in total length. Sperm whales at the surface would likely be easy to detect. They have a prominent, 16 ft. (5 m) blow, and may remain at the surface for long periods of time. They are known to raft (i.e., loll at the surface) and to form surface-active groups when socializing. Sperm whales may travel or congregate in large groups of as many as 50 individuals. Although sperm whales engage in conspicuous surface behavior such as fluking, breaching, and tail-slapping, they are long, deep divers and may remain submerged for over 1 hour.

Cryptic Species

Cryptic and deep-diving species are those that do not surface for long periods of time and are often difficult to see when they surface, which ultimately limits the ability of observers to detect them even in good sighting conditions (Barlow et al. 2006). Cryptic species include beaked whales (family Ziphiidae), dwarf and pygmy sperm whales (*Kogia* species), and harbor porpoises. Beaked whales are notoriously difficult to detect at sea. In the Study Area, beaked whales may occur in a variety of group sizes, ranging from single individuals to groups of as many as 22 individuals (MacLeod and D'Amico 2006). Beaked whale diving behavior in general consists of long, deep dives that may last for nearly 90 minutes followed by a series of shallower dives and intermittent surfacings (Tyack et al. 2006, Baird et al. 2008). Some individuals remain at the surface for an extended period of time (perhaps 1 hour or more) or make shorter dives (MacLeod and D'Amico 2006). Detection of beaked whales is further complicated

because beaked whales often dive and surface in a synchronous pattern and they travel below the surface of the water (MacLeod and D'Amico 2006).

Dwarf and pygmy sperm whales (referred to broadly as *Kogia* species) are small cetaceans (10–13 ft. [3–4 m] adult length) that are not commonly seen. *Kogia* species are some of the most commonly stranded species in some areas, which suggests that sightings are not indicative of their overall abundance. This supports the idea that they are cryptic, perhaps engaging in inconspicuous surface behavior or actively avoiding vessels. When *Kogia* species are sighted, they are typically seen in groups of no more than five to six individuals. They have no visible blow, do not fluke when they dive, and are known to log (i.e., lie motionless) at the surface. When they do dive, they often will sink out of sight with no prominent behavioral display.

Delphinids

Delphinids are some of the most likely species to be detected at sea by observers. Many species of delphinids engage in very conspicuous surface behavior, including leaping, spinning, bow riding, and traveling along the surface in large groups. Delphinid group sizes may range from 10 to 10,000 individuals, depending upon the species and the geographic region. Species such as pilot whales, rough-toothed dolphins, white-beaked dolphins, white-sided dolphins, bottlenose dolphins, stenellid dolphins, common dolphins, and Fraser's dolphins are known to either actively approach and investigate vessels, or bow ride along moving vessels. Fraser's dolphins and common dolphins form huge groups that travel quickly along the surface, churning up the water and making them visible from a great distance. Delphinids may dive for as little as 1 minute to more than 30 minutes depending upon the species.

5.3.1.2.4.2 Detection Probabilities of Sea Turtles in the Study Area

Sea turtles spend a majority of their time below the surface and are difficult to sight from a vessel until the animal is at close range (Hazel et al. 2007). Sea turtles often spend over 90 percent of their time underwater and are not visible more than 6.5 ft. (2 m) below the surface (Mansfield 2006). Sea turtles are generally much smaller than cetaceans, so while shipboard surveys designed for sighting marine mammals are adequate for detecting large sea turtles (e.g., adult leatherbacks), they are usually not adequate for detecting the smaller-sized turtles (e.g., juveniles and Kemp's ridleys). Juvenile sea turtles may be especially difficult to detect. Aerial detection may be more effective in spotting sea turtles on the surface, particularly in calm seas and clear water, but it is possible that the smallest age classes are not detected even in good conditions (Marsh and Saalfeld 1989). Visual detection of sea turtles, especially small turtles, is further complicated by their startle behavior in the presence of vessels. Turtles on the surface may dive below the surface of the water in the presence of a vessel before it is detected by shipboard or aerial observers (Kenney 2005). The detection probability of sea turtles is generally lower than that of cetaceans. The use of Lookouts for visual detection of sea turtles is likely effective only at close range, and is thought to be less effective for small individuals than large individuals.

5.3.1.2.4.3 Summary of Lookout Effectiveness

Due to the various detection probabilities, levels of Lookout experience, and variability of sighting conditions, Lookouts will not always be effective at avoiding impacts on all species. However, Lookouts are expected to increase the overall likelihood that certain marine mammal species and some sea turtles will be detected at the surface of the water, when compared to the likelihood that these same species would be detected if Lookouts are not used. The continued use of Lookouts contributes to helping reduce potential impacts on these species from training and testing activities.

5.3.1.2.5 Operational Assessment for Lookouts

As written, implementation of the mitigation measures recommended in Section 5.3.1.2 (Lookouts) has been analyzed as acceptable with regard to personnel safety, practicality of implementation, impact on effectiveness of the military readiness activities, and Navy policy. The number of Lookouts recommended for each measure often represents the maximum Lookout capacity based on limited resources (e.g., space and manning restrictions).

5.3.2 MITIGATION ZONE PROCEDURAL MEASURES

Safety zones described in Section 5.1 (Standard Operating Procedures) are zones designed for human safety, whereas this section will introduce mitigation zones. A mitigation zone is designed solely for the purpose of reducing potential impacts on marine mammals and sea turtles from training and testing activities. Mitigation zones are measured as the radius from a source. Unique to each activity category, each radius represents a distance that the Navy will visually observe to help reduce injury to marine species. Visual detections of applicable marine species will be communicated immediately to the appropriate watch station for information dissemination and appropriate action. If the presence of marine mammals is detected acoustically, Lookouts posted in aircraft and on vessels will increase the vigilance of their visual surveillance. As a reference, aerial surveys are typically made by flying at 1,500 ft. (457 m) altitude or lower at the slowest safe speed.

Many of the proposed activities have mitigation measures that are currently being implemented, as required by previous environmental documents or consultations. Most of the current Phase I (e.g., Mariana Islands Range Complex [MIRC] EIS/OEIS) mitigation zones for activities that involve the use of impulse and non-impulse sources were originally designed to reduce the potential for onset of temporary threshold shift (TTS). For the MITT EIS/OEIS, the Navy updated the acoustic propagation modeling to incorporate updated hearing threshold metrics (i.e., upper and lower frequency limits), updated density data for marine mammals, and factors such as an animal's likely presence at various depths. An explanation of the acoustic propagation modeling process can be found in the *Determination of Acoustic Effects on Marine Mammals and Sea Turtles for the Mariana Islands Training and Testing Environmental Impact Statement/Overseas Environmental Impact Statement* technical report (Marine Species Modeling Team 2013).

As a result of the updates to the acoustic propagation modeling, in some cases, the ranges to onset of TTS effects are much larger than those output by previous Phase I models. Due to the ineffectiveness and unacceptable operational impacts associated with mitigating these large areas, the Navy is unable to mitigate for onset of TTS for every activity. In this MITT analysis, the Navy developed each recommended mitigation zone to avoid or reduce the potential for onset of the lowest level of injury, permanent threshold shift (PTS), out to the predicted maximum range. In some cases where the ranges to effects are smaller than previous models estimated, the mitigation zones were adjusted accordingly to provide consistency across the measures. Mitigating to the predicted maximum range to PTS consequently also mitigates to the predicted maximum range to onset mortality (1 percent mortality), onset slight lung injury, and onset slight gastrointestinal tract injury, since the maximum range to effects for these criteria are shorter than for PTS. Furthermore, in most cases, the predicted maximum range to PTS also consequently covers the predicted average range to TTS. Table 5.3-2 summarizes the predicted average range to TTS, average range to PTS, maximum range to PTS, and recommended mitigation zone for each activity category, based on the Navy's acoustic propagation modeling results.

The activity-specific mitigation zones are based on the longest range for all the functional hearing groups (based on the hearing threshold metrics described in Section 3.4, Marine Mammals, and Section 3.5, Sea Turtles). The mitigation zone for a majority of activities is driven by either the high-frequency cetaceans or the sea turtle functional hearing groups. Therefore, the mitigation zones are even more protective for the remaining functional hearing groups (i.e., low-frequency cetaceans and mid-frequency cetaceans) and likely cover a larger portion of the potential range to onset of TTS.

In some instances, the Navy recommends mitigation zones that are larger or smaller than the predicted maximum range to PTS based on the effectiveness and operational assessments. The recommended mitigation zones and their associated assessments are provided throughout the remainder of this section. The recommended measures are either currently implemented, modifications of current measures, or new measures.

Table 5.3-2: Predicted Range to Effects and Recommended Mitigation Zones

Activity Category	Representative Source (Bin)*	Predicted Average (Longest) Range to TTS	Predicted Average (Longest) Range to PTS	Predicted Maximum Range to PTS	Recommended Mitigation Zone
Non-Impulse Sound					
Low-frequency and Hull Mounted Mid-frequency Active Sonar	SQS-53 ASW hull-mounted sonar (MF1)	3,821 yd. (3.5 km) for one ping	100 yd. (91 m) for one ping	Not Applicable	6 dB power down at 1,000 yd. (914 m); 4 dB power down at 500 yd. (457 m); and shutdown at 200 yd. (183 m)
	Low-frequency sonar (LF4 and LF5)**	3,821 yd. (3.5 km) for one ping	100 yd. (91 m) for one ping	Not Applicable	200 yd. (183 m)**
High-frequency and Non-hull Mounted Mid-frequency Active Sonar	AQS-22 ASW dipping sonar (MF4)	230 yd. (210 m) for one ping	20 yd. (18 m) for one ping	Not applicable	200 yd. (183 m)
Explosive and Impulse Sound					
Improved Extended Echo Ranging Sonobuoys	Explosive sonobuoy (E4)	434 yd. (397 m)	156 yd. (143 m)	563 yd. (515 m)	600 yd. (549 m)
Explosive Sonobuoys using 0.6–2.5 lb. NEW	Explosive sonobuoy (E3)	290 yd. (265 m)	113 yd. (103 m)	309 yd. (283 m)	350 yd. (320 m)
Anti-swimmer Grenades	Up to 0.5 lb. NEW (E2)	190 yd. (174 m)	83 yd. (76 m)	182 yd. (167 m)	200 yd. (183 m)
Mine Countermeasure and Neutralization Activities Using Positive Control Firing Devices	NEW dependent (see Table 5.3-3)				
Mine Neutralization Activities Using Diver-Placed Time-Delay Firing Devices	Up to 20 lb. NEW (E6)	407 yd. (372 m)	98 yd. (90 m)	102 (93 m) yd.	1,000 yd. (915 m)
Gunnery Exercises – Small- and Medium-Caliber Using a Surface Target	40 mm projectile (E2)	190 yd. (174 m)	83 yd. (76 m)	182 yd. (167 m)	200 yd. (183 m)
Gunnery Exercises – Large-Caliber Using a Surface Target	5 in. projectiles (E5 at the surface***)	453 yd. (414 m)	186 yd. (170 m)	526 yd. (481 m)	600 yd. (549 m)
Missile Exercises (Including Rockets) up to 250 lb. NEW Using a Surface Target	Maverick missile (E9)	949 yd. (868 m)	398 yd. (364 m)	699 yd. (639 m)	900 yd. (823 m)
Missile Exercises from 251 to 500 lb. NEW Using a Surface Target	Harpoon missile (E10)	1,832 yd. (1,675 m)	731 yd. (668 m)	1,883 yd. (1,721 m)	2,000 yd. (1.8 km)
Bombing Exercises	MK-84 2,000 lb. bomb (E12)	2,513 yd. (2.3 km)	991 yd. (906 m)	2,474 yd. (2.3 km)	2,500 yd. (2.3 km)**
Torpedo (Explosive) Testing	MK-48 torpedo (E11)	1,632 yd. (1.5 km)	697 yd. (637 m)	2,021 yd. (1.8 km)	2,100 yd. (1.9 km)

Table 5.3-2: Predicted Range to Effects and Recommended Mitigation Zones (continued)

Activity Category	Representative Source (Bin)	Predicted Average Range to TTS	Predicted Average Range to PTS	Predicted Maximum Range to PTS	Recommended Mitigation Zone
Explosive and Impulse Sound					
Sinking Exercises	Various sources up to the MK-84 2,000 lb. bomb (E12)	2,513 yd. (2.3 km)	991 yd. (906 m)	2,474 yd. (2.3 km)	2.5 nm**

* This table does not provide an inclusive list of source bins; bins presented here represent the source bin with the largest range to effects within the given activity category.

** Recommended mitigation zones are larger than the modeled injury zones to account for multiple types of sources or charges being used.

*** The representative source bin E5 has different range to effects depending on the depth of activity occurrence (at the surface or at various depths).

Notes: ASW = Anti-submarine Warfare, km = kilometers, lb.= pound(s), mm= millimeters, m = meters, NEW = net explosive weight, nm= nautical miles, PTS = Permanent Threshold Shift, TTS = Temporary Threshold Shift, yd. = yards

Table 5.3-3: Predicted Range to Effects and Mitigation Zone Radius for Mine Countermeasure and Neutralization Activities Using Positive Control Firing Devices

Charge Size Net Explosive Weight (Bins)	General Mine Countermeasure and Neutralization Activities Using Positive Control Firing Devices*				Mine Countermeasure and Neutralization Activities Using Diver-Placed Charges under Positive Control**			
	Predicted Average Range to TTS	Predicted Average Range to PTS	Predicted Maximum Range to PTS	Recommended Mitigation Zone	Predicted Average Range to TTS	Predicted Average Range to PTS	Predicted Maximum Range to PTS	Recommended Mitigation Zone
2.6–5 lb. (E4)	434 yd. (397 m)	197 yd. (180 m)	563 yd. (515 m)	600 yd. (549 m)	545 yd. (498 m)	169 yd. (155 m)	301 yd. (275 m)	350 yd. (320 m)
6–10 lb. (E5)	525 yd. (480 m)	204 yd. (187 m)	649 yd. (593 m)	800 yd. (732 m)	587 yd. (537 m)	203 yd. (185 m)	464 yd. (424 m)	500 yd. (457 m)
11–20 lb. (E6)	766 yd. (700 m)	288 yd. (263 m)	648 yd. (593 m)	800 yd. (732 m)	647 yd. (592 m)	232 yd. (212 m)	469 yd. (429 m)	500 yd. (457 m)

* These mitigation zones are applicable to all mine countermeasure and neutralization activities conducted in all locations that Tables 2.8-1 through 2.8-5 specifies.

** These mitigation zones are only applicable to mine countermeasure and neutralization activities involving the use of diver placed charges. These activities are conducted in shallow-water and the mitigation zones are based only on the functional hearing groups with species that occur in these areas (mid-frequency cetaceans and sea turtles).

Notes: lb. = pounds, m = meters, PTS = Permanent Threshold Shift, TTS = Temporary Threshold Shift, yd. = yards

5.3.2.1 Acoustic Stressors

5.3.2.1.1 Non-Impulse Sound

5.3.2.1.1.1 Low-Frequency and Hull Mounted Mid-Frequency Active Sonar

Mitigation measures do not currently exist for low-frequency active sonar sources analyzed in this Draft EIS/OEIS, or new platforms or systems. The Navy is proposing to (1) add mitigation measures for low-frequency active sonar, (2) continue implementing the current measures for mid-frequency active sonar, and (3) clarify the conditions needed to recommence an activity after a sighting. The recommended measures are below.

Training and testing activities that involve the use of low-frequency and hull-mounted mid-frequency active sonar (including pierside) will use Lookouts for visual observation from a ship immediately before and during the activity. With the exception of certain low-frequency sources that are not able to be powered down during the activity (e.g., low-frequency sources within bin LF4 and LF5), mitigation will involve powering down the sonar by 6 dB when a marine mammal or sea turtle is sighted within 1,000 yd. (914 m), and by an additional 4 dB when sighted within 500 yd. (457 m) from the source, for a total reduction of 10 dB. If the source can be turned off during the activity, active transmissions will cease if a marine mammal or sea turtle is sighted within 200 yd. (183 m).

Active transmission will recommence if any one of the following conditions is met: (1) the animal is observed exiting the mitigation zone; (2) the animal is thought to have exited the mitigation zone based on its course speed, and the relative motion between the animal and the source; (3) the mitigation zone has been clear from any additional sightings for a period of 30 minutes; (4) the ship has transited more than 2,000 yd. (1.8 kilometer [km]) beyond the location of the last sighting; or (5) the ship concludes that dolphins are deliberately closing in on the ship to ride the ship's bow wave (and there are no other marine mammal sightings within the mitigation zone). Active transmission may resume when dolphins are bow riding because they are out of the main transmission axis of the active sonar while in the shallow-wave area of the vessel bow.

If the source is not able to be powered down during the activity (e.g., low-frequency sources within bins LF4 and LF5), mitigation will involve ceasing active transmission if a marine mammal or sea turtle is sighted within 200 yd. (183 m). Active transmission will recommence if any one of the following conditions is met: (1) the animal is observed existing the mitigation zone; (2) the animal is thought to have exited the mitigation zone based on its course, speed, and the relative motion between the animal and the source; (3) the mitigation zone has been clear from any additional sightings for a period of 30 minutes; or (4) the ship has transited more than 400 yd. (366 m) beyond the location of the last sighting.

Effectiveness and Operational Assessments

See the introduction of Section 5.3.2 (Mitigation Zone Procedural Measures) for a general discussion of mitigation zones, how they are implemented, and the potential impacts they are designed to reduce. As shown in Table 5.3-2, the predicted average range to onset of PTS for low-frequency and hull-mounted mid-frequency active sonar sources is 100 yd. (91 m) for one ping. This range was determined by the high-frequency cetacean functional hearing group. The distance for all other marine mammal functional hearing groups is less than 80 yd. (73 m) for one ping, so the mitigation zone will provide further protection from injury (PTS) for these species. Therefore, implementation of the 200 yd. (183 m) shutdown zone will reduce the potential for exposure to higher levels of energy that would result in injury (PTS) and large threshold shifts that are recoverable (i.e., TTS) when individuals are sighted. Implementation of the 500 yd. (457 m) and 1,000 yd. (914 m) sonar power reductions will further

reduce the potential for injury (PTS) and larger threshold shifts that would result in recovery (i.e., TTS) to occur when individual marine mammals are sighted within these zones, especially in cases where the ship and animal are approaching each other.

The mitigation zones the Navy has developed are within a range for which Lookouts can reasonably be expected to maintain situational awareness and visually observe during most conditions. Since the predicted average range to onset of TTS is 3,821 yd. (3.5 km), the entire predicted range to TTS is not reasonably observable. By establishing mitigation zones that can be realistically maintained from ships, Lookouts will be more effective at sighting individual animals. By keeping Lookouts focused within the ranges where exposure to higher levels of energy is possible, the effectiveness at reducing potential impacts to marine mammals and sea turtles will increase. As discussed in Section 5.3.1.2.4 (Effectiveness Assessment for Lookouts), the likelihood of sighting individual animals, particularly sea turtles and some species of small or cryptic marine mammals, decreases at long distances. Observation for indicators of marine mammal and sea turtle presence will further help avoid impacts on marine mammals and sea turtles. Observations for sea turtles are required only during low-frequency active sonar activities because hull-mounted mid-frequency active sonar are not within the primary sea turtle hearing range.

The post-sighting wait period is designed to give any animals that are sighted an opportunity to leave the area before the exercise recommences but will only be employed if one of the other conditions has not already been met. A 30-minute wait period more than covers the average dive times of most marine mammal species but may not be sufficient for some deep-diving marine mammal species or for sea turtles. However, the analysis in Section 3.4.4.1 (Impacts from Sonar and Other Active Acoustic Sources) shows that injury to deep-diving marine mammals (e.g., sperm whales and beaked whales) is not expected to occur. Requiring additional delay beyond 30 minutes would modify the activity in a way that it would no longer meet its intended objective. Any additional delay would eliminate opportunities to detect submarines, objects, or other exercise targets as would be required in a real world combat situation, reduce the sonar operator's situational awareness of the environment where the training or testing is occurring, and would therefore have an unacceptable impact on the realism and effectiveness of the exercise.

The Navy proposes implementing the recommended measure described above because: (1) it is likely to result in avoidance or reduction of exposure to high levels of energy to marine mammals and sea turtles; and (2) implementation has been analyzed as acceptable with regard to personnel safety, practicality of implementation, impact on effectiveness of the military readiness activity, and Navy policy.

5.3.2.1.1.2 High-Frequency and Non-Hull Mounted Mid-Frequency Active Sonar

Mitigation measures do not currently exist for all high-frequency and non-hull mounted mid-frequency active sonar activities (i.e., new sources or sources not previously analyzed). The Navy is proposing to (1) continue implementing the current mitigation measures for activities currently being executed, such as dipping sonar activities; (2) extend the implementation of its current mitigation to all other activities in this category; and (3) clarify the conditions needed to recommence an activity after a sighting. The recommended measures are provided below.

Mitigation will include visual observation from a vessel or aircraft (with the exception of platforms operating at high altitudes) immediately before and during active transmission within a mitigation zone of 200 yd. (183 m) from the active sonar source. For activities involving helicopter-deployed dipping sonar, visual observation will commence 10 minutes before the first deployment of active dipping sonar. If the source can be turned off during the activity, active transmission will cease if a marine mammal or

sea turtle (for MF8, MF9, MF10, and MF12 only) is sighted within the mitigation zone. Active transmission will recommence if any one of the following conditions is met: (1) the animal is observed exiting the mitigation zone, (2) the animal is thought to have exited the mitigation zone based on a determination of its course and speed and the relative motion between the animal and the source, (3) the mitigation zone has been clear from any additional sightings for a period of 10 minutes for an aircraft-deployed source, (4) the mitigation zone has been clear from any additional sightings for a period of 30 minutes for a vessel-deployed source, (5) the vessel or aircraft has repositioned itself more than 400 yd. (366 m) away from the location of the last sighting, or (6) the vessel concludes that dolphins are deliberately closing in to ride the vessel's bow wave (and there are no other marine mammal sightings within the mitigation zone).

Effectiveness and Operational Assessments

See the introduction of Section 5.3.2 (Mitigation Zone Procedural Measures) for a general discussion of mitigation zones, how they are implemented, and the potential impacts they are designed to reduce. As shown in Table 5.3-2, the predicted average range to onset of PTS for high-frequency and non-hull mounted mid-frequency active sonar sources is 20 yd. (18 m) for one ping. This range was determined by the high-frequency cetacean functional hearing group. The predicted average range to onset of TTS across all functional hearing groups is 230 yd. (210 m) for one ping. Implementation of the 200 yd. (183 m) mitigation zone will reduce the potential for exposure to higher levels of energy that would result in injury (PTS) and larger threshold shifts that would result in recovery (i.e., TTS) when individuals are sighted. Lookouts often visually observe either close aboard a vessel or from directly above the source by aircraft (i.e., helicopters). Exceptions include when sonobuoys are deployed and when sources are deployed from high altitude aircraft. When sonobuoys are used, the sonobuoy field may be dispersed over a large distance. As discussed in Section 5.3.1.2.4 (Effectiveness Assessment for Lookouts), the likelihood of sighting individual animals, particularly sea turtles and some species of small or cryptic marine mammals, decreases at long distances. This measure should be effective at reducing the risk to all marine mammals and sea turtles that are available to be observed within the mitigation zone. Observation for indicators of marine mammal and sea turtle presence will further help avoid impacts on marine mammals and sea turtles. Observations for sea turtles are required only during non-hull-mounted mid-frequency active sonar activities within bins MF8, MF9, MF10, and MF12 because high-frequency active sonar and other bins of mid-frequency sonar are not within the primary sea turtle hearing range.

The post-sighting wait periods are designed to give any animals that are sighted an opportunity to leave the area before the exercise recommences but will only be employed if one of the other conditions has not already been met. The 30-minute wait period for vessel-deployed sources more than covers the average dive times of most marine mammal species but may not be sufficient for some deep-diving species. However, the analysis in Section 3.4.4.1.3 (Predicted Impacts from Sonar and Other Active Acoustic Sources) shows that injury to deep-diving marine mammals (e.g., sperm whales and beaked whales) is not expected to occur, with the exception of *Kogia* species. Requiring additional delay beyond 30 minutes for vessel-deployed sources would modify the activity in a way that it would no longer meet its intended objective. Any additional delay would eliminate opportunities to detect submarines, objects, or other exercise targets that would be required during a real world combat situation and reduce the sonar operator's situational awareness of the environment where the training or testing is occurring, and would therefore have an unacceptable impact on the realism and effectiveness of the exercise.

The 10-minute wait period for aircraft-deployed sources covers a portion of the average marine mammal and sea turtle dive times but may not be sufficient to cover the average dive times of all species. The 10-minute wait period for aircraft-deployed sources is based on fuel restrictions for the types of aircraft involved in this activity (e.g., helicopters). Requiring additional delay beyond 10 minutes for these sources would modify the activity in a way that it would no longer meet its intended objective. Any additional delay would result in an unacceptable increased risk to personnel safety or would require aircraft to depart the activity location to refuel, which would eliminate opportunities to detect submarines, objects, or other exercise targets as would be required during a real world combat situation and reduce the sonar operator's situational awareness of the environment where the training or testing is occurring, and would therefore have an unacceptable impact on the realism and effectiveness of the exercise.

The Navy proposes implementing the recommended measure described above because (1) it is likely to result in avoidance or reduction of exposure to high levels of energy to marine mammals; and (2) implementation has been analyzed as acceptable with regard to personnel safety, practicality of implementation, impact on effectiveness of the military readiness activity, and Navy policy.

5.3.2.1.2 Explosives and Impulse Sound

5.3.2.1.2.1 Improved Extended Echo Ranging Sonobuoys

The Navy is proposing to (1) modify the mitigation measures currently implemented for this activity by reducing the marine mammal and sea turtle mitigation zone from 1,000 yd. (914 m) to 600 yd. (549 m), and (2) clarify the conditions needed to recommence an activity after a sighting for ease of implementation. The recommended measures are provided below.

Mitigation will include pre-exercise aerial observation and passive acoustic monitoring, which will begin 30 minutes before the first source/receiver pair detonation and continue throughout the duration of the exercise within a mitigation zone of 600 yd. (549 m) around an Improved Extended Echo Ranging sonobuoy. The pre-exercise aerial observation will include the time it takes to deploy the sonobuoy pattern (deployment is conducted by aircraft dropping sonobuoys in the water). Explosive detonations will cease if a marine mammal or sea turtle is sighted within the mitigation zone. Detonations will recommence if any one of the following conditions is met: (1) the animal is observed exiting the mitigation zone, (2) the animal is thought to have exited the mitigation zone based on a determination of its course and speed and the relative motion between the animal and the source, or (3) the mitigation zone has been clear from any additional sightings for a period of 30 minutes.

Passive acoustic monitoring would be conducted with Navy assets, such as sonobuoys, already participating in the activity. These assets would only detect vocalizing marine mammals within the frequency bands monitored by Navy personnel. Passive acoustic detections would not provide range or bearing to detected animals, and therefore cannot provide locations of these animals. Passive acoustic detections would be reported to Lookouts posted in aircraft and on vessels in order to increase vigilance of their visual observation.

Effectiveness and Operational Assessments

See the introduction of Section 5.3.2 (Mitigation Zone Procedural Measures) for a general discussion of mitigation zones, how they are implemented, and the potential impacts they are designed to reduce. As shown in Table 5.3-2, the predicted maximum range to onset of PTS for Improved Extended Echo Ranging sonobuoys is approximately 563 yd. (515 m). This range was determined by the high-frequency cetacean functional hearing group. The remaining functional hearing groups had a shorter range to

onset of PTS, so the mitigation zone will provide further protection for these species. The predicted average range to onset of TTS across all functional hearing groups is 434 yd. (397 m). Implementation of the 600 yd. (549 m) mitigation zone will reduce the potential for exposure to higher levels of energy that would result in injury and larger threshold shifts that would result in recovery (i.e., TTS) when individuals are sighted. The sonobuoy field may be dispersed over a large distance. As discussed in section 5.3.1.2.4 (Effectiveness Assessment for Lookouts), the likelihood of sighting individual animals, particularly sea turtles and some species of small or cryptic marine mammals, decreases at long distances. Observation for indicators of marine mammal and sea turtle presence will further help avoid impacts on marine mammals and sea turtles.

The decrease in mitigation zone size will result in no mitigation for exposure to lower levels of potential onset of TTS; however, it will allow for a more focused survey effort over a smaller survey distance, and will consequently increase the likelihood of avoidance of injury and larger threshold shifts that would result in recovery (i.e., TTS) to marine mammals and sea turtles.

The post-sighting wait period is designed to give any animals that are sighted an opportunity to leave the area before the exercise recommences but will only be employed if one of the other conditions has not already been met. A 30-minute wait period more than covers the average dive times of most marine mammal species but may not be sufficient for some deep-diving marine mammal species or for sea turtles. However, the analysis in Section 3.4.4.2 (Impacts from Explosives) shows that injury to deep-diving marine mammals (e.g., sperm whales and beaked whales) is not expected to occur. Requiring additional delay beyond 30 minutes for aircraft-deployed Improved Extended Echo Ranging sonobuoys would modify the activity in a way that it would no longer meet its intended objective. The 30-minute wait period represents the maximum wait period acceptable for the type of aircraft involved in this activity (e.g., maritime patrol aircraft) based on fuel restrictions. Any additional delay would result in an unacceptable increased risk to personnel safety, require aircraft to depart the activity location to refuel, eliminate opportunities to detect submarines as would be required in a real world combat situation, and reduce the aircrew's situational awareness of the environment where the activity is occurring, and would therefore have an unacceptable impact on the realism and effectiveness of the exercise.

The Navy proposes implementing the recommended measure described above because: (1) it is likely to result in avoidance or reduction of exposure to high levels of energy to marine mammals and sea turtles; and (2) implementation has been analyzed as acceptable with regard to personnel safety, practicality of implementation, impact on effectiveness of the military readiness activity, and Navy policy.

5.3.2.1.2.2 Explosive Sonobuoys Using 0.6–2.5 Pound Net Explosive Weight

Mitigation measures do not currently exist for this activity. The Navy is proposing to add the recommended measures provided below.

Mitigation will include pre-exercise aerial monitoring during deployment of the field of sonobuoy pairs (typically up to 20 minutes) and continuing throughout the duration of the exercise within a mitigation zone of 350 yd. (320 m) around an explosive sonobuoy. Explosive detonations will cease if a marine mammal or sea turtle is sighted within the mitigation zone. Detonations will recommence if any one of the following conditions is met: (1) the animal is observed exiting the mitigation zone, (2) the animal is thought to have exited the mitigation zone based on its course and speed and the relative motion between the animal and the source, or (3) the mitigation zone has been clear from any additional sightings for a period of 10 minutes.

Passive acoustic monitoring will also be conducted with Navy assets, such as sonobuoys, already participating in the activity. These assets would only detect vocalizing marine mammals within the frequency bands monitored by Navy personnel. Passive acoustic detections would not provide range or bearing to detected animals, and therefore cannot provide locations of these animals. Passive acoustic detections would be reported to Lookouts posted in aircraft in order to increase vigilance of their visual observation.

Effectiveness and Operational Assessments

See the introduction of Section 5.3.2 (Mitigation Zone Procedural Measures) for a general discussion of mitigation zones, how they are implemented, and the potential impacts they are designed to reduce. As shown in Table 5.3-2, the predicted maximum range to onset of PTS for explosive sonobuoys using 0.6–2.5 lb. net explosive weight is approximately 309 yd. (283 m). This range was determined by the high-frequency cetacean functional hearing group. The remaining functional hearing groups had a shorter predicted range to onset of PTS, so the mitigation zone will provide further protection for these species. The predicted average range to onset of TTS across all functional hearing groups is 290 yd. (265 m). Implementation of the 350 yd. (320 m) mitigation zone will reduce the potential for exposure to higher levels of energy that would result in injury and large threshold shifts that are recoverable (i.e., TTS) when individuals are sighted. The sonobuoy field may be dispersed over a large distance. As discussed in Section 5.3.1.2.5 (Effectiveness Assessment for Lookouts), the likelihood of sighting individual animals, particularly sea turtles and some species of small or cryptic marine mammals, decreases at long distances.

The post-sighting wait period is designed to give any animals that are sighted an opportunity to leave the area before the exercise recommences but will only be employed if one of the other conditions has not already been met. A 10-minute wait period covers a portion of the average marine mammal and sea turtle dive times but may not be sufficient to cover the average dive times of all species. The 10-minute wait period for aircraft-deployed sources is based on fuel restrictions for the types of aircraft involved in this activity (e.g., helicopters). Requiring additional delay beyond 10 minutes for these sources would modify the activity in a way that it would no longer meet its intended objective. Any additional delay would result in an unacceptable increased risk to personnel safety or would require aircraft to depart the activity location to refuel, which would eliminate opportunities to detect and track submarines or other exercise targets as would be required in a real world combat situation, reduce the sonar operator's situational awareness of the environment where the training or testing is occurring, and would therefore have an unacceptable impact on the realism and effectiveness of the exercise.

The Navy proposes implementing the recommended measure described above because (1) it is likely to result in avoidance or reduction of exposure to high levels of energy to marine mammals and sea turtles; and (2) implementation has been analyzed as acceptable with regard to personnel safety, practicality of implementation, impact on effectiveness of the military readiness activity, and Navy policy.

5.3.2.1.2.3 Anti-Swimmer Grenades

Mitigation measures do not currently exist for this activity. The Navy is proposing to add the recommended measures provided below.

Mitigation will include visual observation from a small boat immediately before and during the exercise within a mitigation zone of 200 yd. (183 m) around an anti-swimmer grenade. Explosive detonations will cease if a marine mammal or sea turtle is sighted within the mitigation zone. Detonations will recommence if any one of the following conditions is met: (1) the animal is observed exiting the

mitigation zone, (2) the animal is thought to have exited the mitigation zone based on its course and speed and the relative motion between the animal and the source, (3) the mitigation zone has been clear from any additional sightings for a period of 30 minutes, or (4) the activity has been repositioned more than 400 yd. (366 m) away from the location of the last sighting.

Effectiveness and Operational Assessments

See the introduction of Section 5.3.2 (Mitigation Zone Procedural Measures) for a general discussion of mitigation zones, how they are implemented, and the potential impacts they are designed to reduce. As shown in Table 5.3-2, the predicted maximum range to onset of PTS for anti-swimmer grenades is approximately 182 yd. (167 m). This range was determined by the high-frequency cetacean functional hearing group. The remaining functional hearing groups had a shorter predicted range to onset of PTS, so the mitigation zone will provide further protection for these species. The predicted average range to onset of TTS across all functional hearing groups is 190 yd. (174 m). Implementation of the 200 yd. (183 m) mitigation zone will reduce the potential for exposure to higher levels of energy that would result in injury and larger threshold shift that would result in recovery (i.e., TTS) when individuals are sighted. Since the Lookout is visually observing close aboard the boat, this measure should be effective at reducing the risk to all marine mammals and sea turtles that are available to be observed. Observation for indicators of marine mammal and sea turtle presence will further help avoid impacts to marine mammals and sea turtles.

The post-sighting wait period is designed to give any animals that are sighted an opportunity to leave the area before the exercise recommences but will only be employed if one of the other conditions has not already been met. A 30-minute wait period more than covers the average dive times of most marine mammal species but may not be sufficient for some deep-diving marine mammal species or for sea turtles. However, the analysis in Section 3.4.4.2 (Impacts from Explosives) shows that injury to deep diving marine mammals (e.g., sperm whales and beaked whales) is not expected to occur. Requiring additional delay beyond 30 minutes would modify the activity in a way that it would no longer meet its intended objective. Any additional delay would eliminate opportunities for maritime security forces to detect, respond, to, and defend against enemy scuba divers as would be required in a real world combat situation, and would therefore have an unacceptable impact on the realism and effectiveness of the exercise.

The Navy proposes implementing the recommended measure described above because: (1) it is likely to result in avoidance or reduction of exposure to high levels of energy to marine mammals and sea turtles; and (2) implementation has been analyzed as acceptable with regard to personnel safety, practicality of implementation, impact on effectiveness of the military readiness activity, and Navy policy.

5.3.2.1.2.4 Mine Countermeasure and Neutralization Activities Using Positive Control Firing Devices

As Background, mine countermeasure and neutralization activities can be divided into two main categories: (1) general activities that can be conducted from a variety of platforms and locations, and (2) activities involving the use of diver-placed charges that typically occur close to shore. When either of these activities are conducted using a positive control firing device, the detonation is controlled by the personnel conducting the activity and is not authorized until the area is clear at the time of detonation. Refer to Section 5.3.3.1.1.1 (Shallow Coral Reefs, Hardbottom Habitat, Artificial Reefs, and Shipwrecks) for information on mitigation designed to avoid or reduce potential impacts from military expended materials with shallow coral reef, live hardbottom, artificial reef, and shipwreck mitigation areas.

Mitigation measures do not currently exist for general mine countermeasures and neutralization activities. The Navy is proposing to use the mitigation zones outlined in Table 5.3-3 during general mine countermeasure activities using positive control firing devices. General mine countermeasure and neutralization activity mitigation will include visual surveillance from small boats or aircraft beginning 30 minutes before, during, and 30 minutes after the completion of the exercise within the mitigation zones around the detonation site. Explosive detonations will cease if a marine mammal, sea turtle, flock of seabirds, or individual foraging seabird is sighted within the mitigation zone. Detonations will recommence if any one of the following conditions is met: (1) the animal is observed exiting the mitigation zone, (2) the animal is thought to have exited the mitigation zone based on a determination of its course and speed and the relative motion between the animal and the source, or (3) the mitigation zone has been clear from any additional sightings for a period of 30 minutes.

For activities involving positive control diver-placed charges, the Navy is proposing to (1) modify the currently implemented mitigation measures for activities involving up to a 20 lb. net explosive weight detonation, and (2) clarify the conditions needed to recommence an activity after a sighting. For comparison, the currently implemented mitigation zone for general mine countermeasure and neutralization is 700 yd. (640 m) when using up to a 20 lb. net explosive weight charge. The recommended measures for activities involving positive control diver-placed activities are provided below.

The Navy is proposing to use the mitigation zones outlined in Table 5.3-3 during activities involving positive control diver-placed charges. Visual observation will be conducted by either two small boats, or one small boat in combination with one helicopter. Boats will position themselves near the mid-point of the mitigation zone radius (but always outside the detonation plume radius and human safety zone) and travel in a circular pattern around the detonation location. When using two boats, each boat will be positioned on opposite sides of the detonation location, separated by 180 degrees. If used, helicopters will travel in a circular pattern around the detonation location. Explosive detonations will cease if a marine mammal, sea turtle, flock of seabirds, or an individual foraging seabird is sighted in the water portion of the mitigation zone (i.e., not on shore). Lookouts will be trained to survey the mitigation zone for seabirds prior to and after the detonation event. During activities conducted in shallow water, a shore-based observer will use binoculars to survey the mitigation zone to detect any seabirds prior to and after each detonation. Detonations will recommence if any one of the following conditions is met: (1) the animal is observed exiting the mitigation zone, (2) the animal is thought to have exited the mitigation zone based on a determination of its course and speed and the relative motion between the animal and the source, or (3) the mitigation zone has been clear from any additional sightings for a period of 30 minutes (10 minutes for applicable helicopter activities).

Immediately following the detonation, visual monitoring (using binoculars) will be conducted to survey the mitigation zone for at least 30 minutes. The Navy will report all injured or dead seabirds sighted during the post-detonation observations to the appropriate Navy Region Environmental Director, Navy Pacific Fleet Environmental Office, and local base wildlife biologist.

For training exercises that include the use of multiple detonations, the second (or third, etc.) detonation will occur either immediately after the preceding detonation (i.e., within 10 seconds of the preceding detonation) or after 30 minutes have passed. This measure is intended to reduce the potential impacts to any piscivorous (fish-eating) birds, including least terns and pelicans, that forage in ocean waters or are attracted by stunned fish within the sphere of influence of the detonation.

Effectiveness and Operational Assessments

See the introduction of Section 5.3.2 (Mitigation Zone Procedural Measures) for a general discussion of mitigation zones, how they are implemented, and the potential impacts they are designed to reduce. The predicted range to effects shown in Table 5.3-3 for general mine countermeasure and neutralization activities using positive control firing devices were determined by the high-frequency cetacean functional hearing group. The remaining functional hearing groups had shorter ranges to onset of PTS, so the mitigation zones will provide further protection for these species. Implementation of the mitigation zones outlined in Table 5.3-3 will reduce the potential for exposure to higher levels of energy that would result in injury and larger threshold shifts that would result in recovery (i.e., TTS) when individuals are sighted.

As described in Section 5.3.1 (Lookout Procedural Measures), Lookouts positioned in aircraft or small boats may be responsible for tasks in addition to observing the air or surface of the water. For example, a Lookout for this activity may also be responsible for navigation or assistance with mine countermeasure and neutralization deployment. The decrease in mitigation zone size for activities using diver-placed charges will result in no mitigation for exposure to lower levels of potential onset of TTS; however, it will allow for a more focused survey effort over a smaller area, and will consequently increase the likelihood of avoidance of injury and larger threshold shifts that result in recovery (i.e., TTS) to marine mammals. Having a Lookout observe a mitigation zone that is too large could potentially increase the safety risk due to an increased level of distraction from normal job duties. Observation of an area beyond what the Navy is proposing to implement would not be likely to result in avoidance or reduction of injury to marine mammals or sea turtles because the effort spent observing those more distant areas would inevitably be minimal.

As described in Section 5.3.1.2.4 (Effectiveness Assessment for Lookouts), the ability of a Lookout to detect an animal can vary greatly based on what observing platform is being used. For large ranges, aerial observation is more effective. In addition, when observing from a small boat, sea turtle and cryptic marine mammal species can be very difficult to detect beyond a few meters. However, this measure should be effective at reducing potential impacts for individuals that are sighted.

Mine neutralization activities involving diver-placed charges occur primarily close to shore and in shallow water. The range to effects shown in Table 5.3-3 for mine neutralization activities involving diver-placed charges under positive control were determined by the sea turtle functional hearing group. The mid-frequency hearing group had shorter ranges to onset of PTS, so the mitigation zones will provide further protection for these species. However, mitigation would be implemented for any species observed within the mitigation zone.

Implementation of the mitigation zones outlined in Table 5.3-3 will reduce the potential for exposure to higher levels of energy that would result in injury and larger threshold shifts that would result in recovery (i.e., TTS) when individuals are sighted. The decrease in mitigation zone size for activities using diver-placed charges (up to 20 lb. net explosive weight charges) will result in no mitigation for exposure to lower levels of potential onset of TTS; however, it will allow for a more focused survey effort over a smaller area, and will consequently increase the likelihood of avoidance of injury and larger threshold shifts that would result in recovery (i.e., TTS) to marine mammals.

During activities using diver-placed charges, Lookouts are visually observing from small boats or helicopters. As discussed above, aerial observation (and observations from shore-based platforms with high vantage points) is more effective than observation from a small boat. Since small boats do not have

a very elevated observing platform, the distance over which animals can be observed is much shorter. Sea turtles and cryptic marine mammal species would be very difficult to detect further than a few meters away from the boat.

The post-sighting wait period is designed to give any animals that are sighted an opportunity to leave the area before the exercise recommences but will only be employed if one of the other conditions has not already been met. A 30-minute wait period more than covers the average dive times of most marine mammal species but may not be sufficient for some deep-diving marine mammal species or for sea turtles. However, the analysis in Section 3.4.4.2 (Impacts from Explosives) shows that injury to deep diving marine mammals (e.g., sperm whales and beaked whales) is not expected to occur. Requiring additional delay beyond 30 minutes (when helicopters are not involved in the activity) would modify the activity in a way that it would no longer meet its intended objective. Any additional delay would eliminate opportunities to detect, identify, evaluate, and neutralize mines as would be required in a real world combat situation, and would therefore have an unacceptable impact on the realism and effectiveness of the exercise.

The 10-minute wait period (when helicopters are involved in the activity) covers a portion of the average marine mammal and sea turtle dive times but may not be sufficient to cover the average dive times of all species. The 10-minute wait period is based on helicopter fuel restrictions. Requiring additional delay beyond 10 minutes for these sources would modify the activity in a way that it would no longer meet its intended objective. Any additional delay would result in an unacceptable increased risk to personnel safety or would require aircraft to depart the activity location to refuel, which would eliminate opportunities to detect, identify, evaluate, and neutralize mines, and would therefore have an unacceptable impact on the realism and effectiveness of the exercise.

The Navy proposes implementing the recommended measure described above because (1) it is likely to result in avoidance or reduction of injury to most marine mammal species or seabirds; and (2) implementation has been analyzed as acceptable with regard to personnel safety, practicality of implementation, impact on effectiveness of the military readiness activity, and Navy policy.

5.3.2.1.2.5 Mine Neutralization Diver-Placed Mines Using Time-Delay Firing Device

As background, when mine neutralization activities using diver-placed charges (up to a 29 lb. net explosive weight) are conducted with a time-delay firing device, the detonation is fused with a specified time-delay by the personnel conducting the activity and is not authorized until the area is clear at the time the fuse is initiated. During these activities, the detonation cannot be terminated once the fuse is initiated due to human safety concerns. Refer to Section 5.3.2.1.2.4 (Mine Countermeasure and Neutralization Activities Using Positive Control Firing Devices) for a general discussion of mitigation measures applicable to mine neutralization activities using diver-placed mines. This section will specify unique mitigation zones and observation methods for diver placed mine activities that use time-delay firing devices. Refer to Section 5.3.3.1.1.1 (Shallow Coral Reefs, Hardbottom Habitat, Artificial Reefs, and Shipwrecks) for information on mitigation designed to avoid or reduce potential impacts from military expended materials within shallow coral reef, live hardbottom, artificial reef, and shipwreck mitigation areas.

Mitigation measures do not currently exist for activities using diver-placed charges (up to a 20 lb. net explosive weight) with a time-delay firing device. The Navy is recommending the measures provided below.

The Navy is proposing to (1) modify the mitigation zones and observation requirements currently implemented for mine countermeasure and neutralization activities using diver-placed time-delay firing devices, and (2) clarify the conditions needed to recommence an activity after a sighting. For comparison, the current mitigation zones are based on size of charge and length of time-delay, ranging from a 1,000 yd. (914 m) mitigation zone for a 5 lb. net explosive weight charge using a 5-minute time-delay to a 1,500 yd. (1,372 m) mitigation zone for a 10 lb. net explosive weight charge using a 10-minute time-delay. The current requirement is six Lookouts in three boats (two in each boat) for larger than 1,400 yd. (1,280 m) and four Lookouts in two small boats to be used for observation in mitigation zones that are less than 1,400 yd. (1,280 m). The recommended measures for activities involving diver-placed time-delay firing devices are provided below.

The Navy recommends one mitigation zone for all net explosive weights and lengths of time-delay. Mine neutralization activities involving diver-placed charges will not include time-delay longer than 10 minutes. Mitigation will include visual surveillance from small boats or aircraft commencing 30 minutes before, during, and until 30 minutes after the completion of the exercise within a mitigation zone of 1,000 yd. (915 m) around the detonation site. During activities using time-delay firing devices involving up to a 20 lb. net explosive weight charge, visual observation will take place using two small boats. In addition, when aircraft are involved (e.g., during deployment of divers), the pilot or member of the aircrew will serve as an additional Lookout. The fuse initiation will cease if a marine mammal, sea turtle, or flock of seabirds or individual foraging seabird is sighted within the water portion of the mitigation zone (i.e., not on shore). Fuse initiation will recommence if any one of the following conditions is met: (1) the animal is observed exiting the mitigation zone, (2) the animal is thought to have exited the mitigation zone based on a determination of its course and speed and the relative motion between the animal and the source, or (3) the mitigation zone has been clear from any additional sightings for a period of 30 minutes.

Survey boats will position themselves near the mid-point of the mitigation zone radius (but always outside the detonation plume radius/human safety zone) and travel in a circular pattern around the detonation location. One Lookout from each boat will look inward toward the detonation site and the other Lookout will look outward away from the detonation site. Each boat will be positioned on opposite sides of the detonation location, separated by 180 degrees. If available for use, helicopters will travel in a circular pattern around the detonation location.

Effectiveness and Operational Assessments

See the introduction of Section 5.3.2 (Mitigation Zone Procedural Measures) for a general discussion of mitigation zones, how they are implemented, and the potential impacts they are designed to reduce. As shown in Table 5.3-3, the predicted maximum range to onset of PTS for mine neutralization diver-placed mines using time-delay firing devices is approximately 469 yd. (429 m). This range was determined by the high-frequency cetacean functional hearing group. The remaining functional hearing groups had a shorter predicted range to onset of PTS, so the mitigation zone will provide further protection for these species. The predicted average range to onset of TTS across all functional hearing groups is 647 yd. (592 m). The time-delay firing device mitigation zone was determined by including additional distance on top of the predicted maximum range to onset of PTS to account for a portion of the time that a marine mammal or sea turtle could enter the mitigation zone during the time-delay. Implementation of the 1,000 yd. (915 m) mitigation zone will reduce the potential for exposure to higher levels of energy that would result in injury and larger threshold shifts that would result in recovery (i.e., TTS) when individuals are sighted.

A 1,000 yd. (915 m) mitigation zone represents the maximum distance that the Lookouts on small boats can adequately observe given the number of personnel that will be involved. As discussed in Section 5.3.1.2.2.5 (Mine Neutralization Activities Using Diver-Placed Time-Delay Firing Devices), the use of more than two small boats for observation during this activity presents an unacceptable impact on readiness due to limited personnel resources. Since small boats do not have an elevated observing platform, the distance over which animals can be observed is much shorter. Sea turtles and cryptic marine mammal species would be very difficult to detect further than a few meters away from the boat. Sighting a sea turtle is only likely if a helicopter is participating in the activity. In addition, even with the extended mitigation zone to account for as much of the time-delay as possible, there is still a remote chance that animals may swim into the area after the charge is already set. Observation for indicators of marine mammal and sea turtle presence will further help avoid impacts to marine mammals and sea turtles.

The post-sighting wait period is designed to give any animals that are sighted an opportunity to leave the area before the exercise recommences but will only be employed if one of the other conditions has not already been met. A 30-minute wait period more than covers the average dive times of most marine mammal species but may not be sufficient for some deep-diving marine mammal species or for sea turtles. However, the analysis in Section 3.4.4.2 (Impacts from Explosives) shows that injury to deep-diving marine mammals (e.g., sperm whales and beaked whales) is not expected to occur. The 30-minute wait period covers a portion of the average marine mammal and sea turtle dive times but may not be sufficient to cover the average dive times of all species. Requiring additional delay beyond 30 minutes would modify the activity in a way that it would no longer meet its intended objective. Any additional delay would eliminate opportunities to detect, identify, evaluate, and neutralize mines as would be required in a real world combat situation, and would therefore have an unacceptable impact on the realism and effectiveness of the exercise.

The Navy proposes implementing the recommended measures described above because (1) they are likely to result in avoidance or reduction of injury to most marine mammal species; and (2) implementation has been analyzed as acceptable with regard to personnel safety, practicality of implementation, impact on effectiveness of the military readiness activity, and Navy policy.

5.3.2.1.2.6 Gunnery Exercises – Small- and Medium-Caliber Using a Surface Target

Mitigation measures do not currently exist for small- and medium-caliber gunnery using a surface target. Refer to Section 5.3.3.1.1.1 (Shallow Coral Reefs, Hardbottom Habitat, Artificial Reefs, and Shipwrecks) for information on mitigation designed to avoid or reduce potential impacts from military expended materials within shallow coral reef mitigation areas. The recommended measures are provided below.

Mitigation will include visual observation from a vessel or aircraft immediately before and during the exercise within a mitigation zone of 200 yd. (183 m) around the intended impact location. Vessels will observe the mitigation zone from the firing position. When aircraft are firing, the aircrew will maintain visual watch of the mitigation zone during the activity. Firing will cease if a marine mammal or sea turtle is sighted within the mitigation zone. Firing will recommence if any one of the following conditions is met: (1) the animal is observed exiting the mitigation zone, (2) the animal is thought to have exited the mitigation zone based on a determination of its course and speed and the relative motion between the animal and the source, (3) the mitigation zone has been clear from any additional sightings for a period of 10 minutes for a firing aircraft, (4) the mitigation zone has been clear from any additional sightings for a period of 30 minutes for a firing vessel, and (5) the intended target location has been repositioned more than 400 yd. (366 m) away from the location of the last sighting.

Effectiveness and Operational Assessments

See the introduction of Section 5.3.2 (Mitigation Zone Procedural Measures) for a general discussion of mitigation zones, how they are implemented, and the potential impacts they are designed to reduce. As shown in Table 5.3-2, the predicted maximum range to onset of PTS for small-and medium-caliber gunnery is approximately 182 yd. (167 m). This range was determined by the high-frequency cetacean functional hearing group. The remaining functional hearing groups had a shorter predicted range to onset of PTS, so the mitigation zone will provide further protection for these species. The average range to onset of TTS across all functional hearing groups is 190 yd. (174 m). Implementation of the 200 yd. (183 m) mitigation zone will reduce the potential for exposure to higher levels of energy that would result in injury and larger threshold shifts that would result in recovery (i.e., TTS) when individuals are sighted.

Small- and medium-caliber gunnery exercises involve the participating vessel or aircraft firing munitions at a target location that may be up to 4,000 yd. (3.7 km) away, although typically much closer than this. Therefore, it is necessary for the Lookout to be able to visually observe the mitigation zone from varying distances. Large vessel or aircraft platforms would provide a more effective observation platform for Lookouts than small boats. However, as discussed in Section 5.3.1.2.4 (Effectiveness Assessment for Lookouts), it is highly unlikely that anything but a whale blow or large pod of dolphins will be seen at distances closer to 4,000 yd. (3.7 km). However, this measure is likely effective at reducing the risk of injury to marine mammals that may be observed from the typical target distances. This measure may be ineffective at reducing the risk of injury to sea turtles at large target distances; however, it does reduce the risk for those individuals that may be observed at closer distances. In addition, it is more likely that sea turtles will be observed when exercises involve aircraft versus vessels. Observation for indicators of marine mammal and sea turtle presence will further help avoid impacts to marine mammals and sea turtles.

The post-sighting wait period is designed to give any animals that are sighted an opportunity to leave the area before the exercise recommences but will only be employed if one of the other conditions has not already been met. The 30-minute wait period for a firing vessel more than covers the average dive times of most marine mammal species but may not be sufficient for some deep-diving marine mammal species or for sea turtles. However, the analysis in Section 3.4.4.2 (Impacts from Explosives) shows that injury to deep-diving marine mammals (e.g., sperm whales and beaked whales) is not expected to occur. Requiring additional delay beyond 30 minutes for a firing vessel would modify the activity in a way that it would no longer meet its intended objective. Any additional delay would reduce the gun crews' abilities to engage surface targets and practice defensive marksmanship as would be required in a real world combat situation and would therefore have an unacceptable impact on the realism and effectiveness of the exercise.

The 10-minute wait period for a firing aircraft covers a portion of the average marine mammal and sea turtle dive times but may not be sufficient to cover the average dive times of all species. The 10-minute wait period is based on fuel restrictions for the types of aircraft involved in this activity (e.g., helicopters). Requiring additional delay beyond 10 minutes for these sources would modify the activity in a way that it would no longer meet its intended objective. Any additional delay would result in an unacceptable increased risk to personnel safety or would require aircraft to depart the activity location to refuel, which would eliminate opportunities and reduce the gun crews' abilities to engage surface targets and practice defensive marksmanship as would be required in a real world combat situation, and would therefore have an unacceptable impact on the realism and effectiveness of the exercise.

The Navy proposes implementing the recommended measure described above because (1) it is likely to result in avoidance or reduction of exposure to high levels of energy to some marine mammal species; and (2) implementation has been analyzed as acceptable with regard to personnel safety, practicality of implementation, impact on effectiveness of the military readiness activity, and Navy policy.

5.3.2.1.2.7 Gunnery Exercises – Large-Caliber Using a Surface Target

The Navy is proposing to (1) continue using the currently implemented mitigation zone for this activity, (2) clarify the conditions needed to recommence an activity after a sighting, and (3) modify the seafloor habitat mitigation area. Refer to Section 5.3.3.1.1.1 (Shallow Coral Reefs, Hardbottom Habitat, Artificial Reefs, and Shipwrecks) for information on mitigation designed to avoid or reduce potential impacts from military expended materials within shallow coral reef mitigation areas. The recommended measures are provided below.

Mitigation will include visual observation from a ship immediately before and during the exercise within a mitigation zone of 600 yd. (549 m) around the intended impact location. Ships will observe the mitigation zone from the firing position. Firing will cease if a marine mammal or sea turtle is sighted within the mitigation zone. Firing will recommence if any one of the following conditions is met: (1) the animal is observed exiting the mitigation zone, (2) the animal is thought to have exited the mitigation zone based on a determination of its course and speed and the relative motion between the animal and the source, or (3) the mitigation zone has been clear from any additional sightings for a period of 30 minutes.

Effectiveness and Operational Assessments

See the introduction of Section 5.3.2 (Mitigation Zone Procedural Measures) for a general discussion of mitigation zones, how they are implemented, and the potential impacts they are designed to reduce. As shown in Table 5.3-2, the predicted maximum range to onset of PTS for large caliber gunnery is approximately 526 yd. (481 m). This range was determined by the high-frequency cetacean functional hearing group. The remaining functional hearing groups had a shorter predicted range to onset of PTS, so the mitigation zone will provide further protection for these species. The average predicted range to onset of TTS across all functional hearing groups is 453 yd. (414 m). Implementation of the 600 yd. (549 m) mitigation zone will reduce the potential for exposure to higher levels of energy that would result in injury and larger threshold shift that would result in recovery (i.e., TTS) when individuals are sighted. Per the Navy's current reporting requirements, any injured or dead marine mammals or sea turtles will be reported as appropriate.

Large-caliber gunnery exercises involve the participating ship firing munitions at a target location from ranges up to 6 nautical miles (nm) away. Therefore it is necessary for the Lookout to be able to visually observe the mitigation zone from this distance. Although the Lookout will observe for all marine mammals or sea turtles in the area, as discussed in Section 5.3.1.2.4 (Effectiveness Assessment for Lookouts), it is highly unlikely that anything but a whale blow or large pod of dolphins will be seen. Although this measure is likely ineffective at reducing the risk of injury to sea turtles and some species of marine mammals, it does reduce the risk for those individuals that may be observed. Observation for indicators of marine mammal and sea turtle presence will further help avoid impacts to marine mammals and sea turtles.

The post-sighting wait period is designed to give any animals that are sighted an opportunity to leave the area before the exercise recommences but will only be employed if one of the other conditions has not already been met. A 30-minute wait period more than covers the average dive times of most marine

mammal species but may not be sufficient for some deep-diving marine mammal species or for sea turtles. However, the analysis in Section 3.4.4.2 (Impacts from Explosives) shows that injury to deep-diving marine mammals (e.g., sperm whales and beaked whales) is not expected to occur. Requiring additional delay beyond 30 minutes would modify the activity in a way that it would no longer meet its intended objective. Any additional delay would reduce the gun crews' abilities to engage surface targets and practice defensive marksmanship as would be required in a real world combat situation, and would therefore have an unacceptable impact on the realism and effectiveness of the exercise.

The Navy proposes implementing the recommended measure described above because (1) it is likely to result in avoidance or reduction of exposure to high levels of energy to some marine mammal species; and (2) implementation has been analyzed as acceptable with regard to personnel safety, practicality of implementation, impact on effectiveness of the military readiness activity, and Navy policy.

5.3.2.1.2.8 Missile Exercises (Including Rockets) up to 250 Pound Net Explosive Weight Using a Surface Target

The Navy is proposing to (1) modify the mitigation measures currently implemented for this activity by reducing the mitigation zone from 1,800 yd. (1.6 km) to 900 yd. (823 m), (2) clarify the conditions needed to recommence an activity after a sighting, and (3) modify the platform of observation to eliminate the requirement to observe when ships are firing. Refer to Section 5.3.3.1.1.1 (Shallow Coral Reefs, Hardbottom Habitat, Artificial Reefs, and Shipwrecks) for information on mitigation designed to avoid or reduce potential impacts from military expended materials within shallow coral reef mitigation areas. The recommended measures are provided below.

When aircraft are firing, mitigation will include visual observation by the aircrew or supporting aircraft prior to commencement of the activity within a mitigation zone of 900 yd. (823 m) around the deployed target. Firing will cease if a marine mammal or sea turtle is sighted within the mitigation zone. Firing will recommence if any one of the following conditions is met: (1) the animal is observed exiting the mitigation zone, (2) the animal is thought to have exited the mitigation zone based on a determination of its course and speed and the relative motion between the animal and the source, or (3) the mitigation zone has been clear from any additional sightings for a period of 10 minutes or 30 minutes (depending on aircraft type).

Effectiveness and Operational Assessments

See the introduction of Section 5.3.2 (Mitigation Zone Procedural Measures) for a general discussion of mitigation zones, how they are implemented, and the potential impacts they are designed to reduce. As shown in Table 5.3-2, the predicted maximum range to onset of PTS for a missile exercise ([including rockets] up to 250 lb. net explosive weight [bin E9]) is approximately 699 yd. (639 m). This range was determined by the sea turtle functional hearing group. The marine mammal functional hearing groups had a shorter predicted range to onset of PTS, so the mitigation zone will provide further protection for these species. The predicted average range to onset of TTS across all functional hearing groups is 949 yd. (868 m). Implementation of the 900 yd. (823 m) mitigation zone will reduce the potential for exposure to higher levels of energy that would result in injury and larger threshold shifts that would result in recovery (i.e., TTS) when individuals are sighted. The decrease in mitigation zone size will result in no mitigation for exposure to lower levels of potential onset of TTS; however, it will allow for a more focused survey effort over a smaller survey distance, and will consequently increase the likelihood of avoidance of injury and larger threshold shifts that would result in recovery (i.e., TTS) to marine mammals and sea turtles.

Missile exercises involve the participating ship or aircraft firing munitions at a target location typically up to 15 nm away and infrequently include ranges up to 75 nm away. When an aircraft is firing, the aircraft can travel close to the intended impact area so that it can be visually observed. Because this type of observation is not possible for a ship, visual observation is not suitable for activities that involve a ship-fired missile. Even with aircraft firing, there is a chance that animals could enter the impact area after the visual observations have been completed and the activity has commenced. Therefore, this measure is not effective at reducing the risk of injury to animals once the firing has begun; however, it does reduce the risk for those individuals that may be observed prior to commencement of the activity when aircraft are firing. Observation for indicators of marine mammal and sea turtle presence will further help avoid impacts on marine mammals and sea turtles.

The post-sighting wait period is designed to give any animals that are sighted an opportunity to leave the area before the exercise recommences but will only be employed if one of the other conditions has not already been met. The 30-minute wait period more than covers the average dive times of most marine mammal species but may not be sufficient for some deep-diving marine mammal species or for sea turtles. The 30-minute wait period represents the maximum wait period acceptable for certain types of aircraft involved in this activity (e.g., maritime patrol aircraft) based on their specific fuel restrictions. Requiring additional delay beyond 30 minutes for these platforms would modify the activity in a way that it would no longer meet its intended objective. Any additional delay would result in an unacceptable increased risk to personnel safety or would require aircraft to depart the activity location to refuel, which would reduce the aircrews' abilities to approach surface targets and launch missiles as would be required in a real world combat situation, and would therefore have an unacceptable impact on the realism and effectiveness of the exercise.

The 10-minute wait period covers a portion of the average marine mammal and sea turtle dive times but may not be sufficient to cover the average dive times of all species. The 10-minute wait period is based on the specific fuel restrictions for the other types of aircraft involved in this activity (e.g., helicopters). Requiring additional delay beyond 10 minutes for these platforms would modify the activity in a way that it would no longer meet its intended objective. Any additional delay would result in an unacceptable increased risk to personnel safety or would require aircraft to depart the activity location to refuel, which would reduce the aircrews' abilities to approach surface targets and launch missiles as would be required in a real world combat situation, and would therefore have an unacceptable impact on the realism and effectiveness of the exercise.

The Navy proposes implementing the recommended measure described above because (1) it is likely to result in avoidance or reduction of exposure to high levels of energy to marine mammals and sea turtles; and (2) implementation has been analyzed as acceptable with regard to personnel safety, practicality of implementation, impact on effectiveness of the military readiness activity, and Navy policy.

5.3.2.1.2.9 Missile Exercises from 251 to 500 Pound Net Explosive Weight Using a Surface Target

The Navy is proposing to modify the mitigation measures currently implemented for this activity by increasing the mitigation zone from 1,800 yd. (1.6 km) to 2,000 yd. (1.8 km). Refer to Section 5.3.3.1.1.1.1 (Shallow Coral Reefs, Hardbottom Habitat, Artificial Reefs, and Shipwrecks) for information on mitigation designed to avoid or reduce potential impacts from military expended materials within shallow coral reef mitigation areas. The recommended measures are provided below.

When aircraft are firing, mitigation will include visual observation by the aircrew or supporting aircraft prior to commencement of the activity within a mitigation zone of 2,000 yd. (1.8 km) around the

intended impact location. Firing will cease if a marine mammal or sea turtle is sighted within the mitigation zone. Firing will recommence if any one of the following conditions is met: (1) the animal is observed exiting the mitigation zone, (2) the animal is thought to have exited the mitigation zone based on a determination of its course and speed and the relative motion between the animal and the source, or (3) the mitigation zone has been clear from any additional sightings for a period of 10 minutes or 30 minutes (depending on aircraft type).

Effectiveness and Operational Assessments

See the introduction of Section 5.3.2 (Mitigation Zone Procedural Measures) for a general discussion of mitigation zones, how they are implemented, and the potential impacts they are designed to reduce. As shown in Table 5.3-2, the predicted maximum range to onset of PTS for a missile exercise using 251–500 lb. net explosive weight (bin E10) is approximately 1,883 yd. (1.7 km). This range was determined by the sea turtle functional hearing group. The marine mammal functional hearing groups had a shorter predicted range to onset of PTS, so the mitigation zone will provide further protection for these species. The predicted average range to onset of TTS across all functional hearing groups is 1,832 yd. (1.7 km). Implementation of the 2,000 yd. (1.8 km) mitigation zone will reduce the potential for exposure to higher levels of energy that would result in injury and larger threshold shifts that would result in recovery (i.e., TTS) when individuals are sighted.

Missile exercises involve the participating ship or aircraft firing munitions at a target location typically up to 15 nm away and infrequently include ranges up to 75 nm away. When an aircraft is firing, the aircraft can travel close to the intended impact area so that it can be visually observed. Because that type of observation is not possible for a ship, visual observation is not suitable for activities that involve a ship-fired missile. Even with aircraft firing, there is a chance that animals could enter the impact area after the visual observations have been completed and the activity has commenced. Therefore, this measure is not effective at reducing the risk of injury to animals once the firing activity has begun; however, it does reduce the risk for those individuals that may be observed prior to commencement of the activity when aircraft are firing. Observation for indicators of marine mammal and sea turtle presence will further help avoid impacts on marine mammals and sea turtles.

The post-sighting wait period is designed to give any animals that are sighted an opportunity to leave the area before the exercise recommences but will only be employed if one of the other conditions has not already been met. The 30-minute wait period more than covers the average dive times of most marine mammal species but may not be sufficient for some deep-diving marine mammal species or for sea turtles. The 30-minute wait period represents the maximum wait period acceptable for certain types of aircraft involved in this activity (e.g., maritime patrol aircraft) based on their specific fuel restrictions. Requiring additional delay beyond 30 minutes for these platforms would modify the activity in a way that it would no longer meet its intended objective. Any additional delay would result in an unacceptable increased risk to personnel safety or would require aircraft to depart the activity location to refuel, which would reduce the aircrews' abilities to approach surface targets and launch missiles as would be required in a real world combat situation, and would therefore have an unacceptable impact on the realism and effectiveness of the exercise.

The 10-minute wait period covers a portion of the average marine mammal and sea turtle dive times but may not be sufficient to cover the average dive times of all species. The 10-minute wait period is based on the specific fuel restrictions for the other types of aircraft involved in this activity (e.g., helicopters). Requiring additional delay beyond 10 minutes for these platforms would modify the activity in a way that it would no longer meet its intended objective. Any additional delay would result in an

unacceptable increased risk to personnel safety or would require aircraft to depart the activity location to refuel, which would reduce the aircrews' abilities to approach surface targets and launch missiles as would be required in a real world combat situation, and would therefore have an unacceptable impact on the realism and effectiveness of the exercise.

The Navy proposes implementing the recommended measure described above because (1) it is likely to result in avoidance or reduction of exposure to high levels of energy to marine mammals and sea turtles; and (2) implementation has been analyzed as acceptable with regard to personnel safety, practicality of implementation, impact on effectiveness of the military readiness activity readiness, and Navy policy.

5.3.2.1.2.10 Bombing Exercises

The Navy is proposing to (1) modify the mitigation measures currently implemented for this activity by increasing the mitigation zone from 1,000 yd. (914 m) to 2,500 yd. (2.3 km), and (2) clarify the conditions needed to recommence an activity after a sighting. Refer to Section 5.3.3.1.1.1 (Shallow Coral Reefs, Hardbottom Habitat, Artificial Reefs, and Shipwrecks) for information on mitigation designed to avoid or reduce potential impacts from military expended materials within shallow coral reef mitigation areas. The recommended measures are provided below.

Mitigation will include visual observation from the aircraft immediately before the exercise and during target approach within a mitigation zone of 2,500 yd. (2.3 km) around the intended impact location. Bombing will cease if a marine mammal or sea turtle is sighted within the mitigation zone. Bombing will recommence if any one of the following conditions is met: (1) the animal is observed exiting the mitigation zone, (2) the animal is thought to have exited the mitigation zone based on a determination of its course and speed and the relative motion between the animal and the source, or (3) the mitigation zone has been clear from any additional sightings for a period of 10 minutes.

Effectiveness and Operational Assessments

See the introduction of Section 5.3.2 (Mitigation Zone Procedural Measures) for a general discussion of mitigation zones, how they are implemented, and the potential impacts they are designed to reduce. As shown in Table 5.3-2, the predicted maximum range to onset of PTS for bombing exercises is approximately 2,474 yd. (2.3 km). This range was determined by the sea turtle functional hearing group. The marine mammal functional hearing groups had a shorter predicted range to onset of PTS, so the mitigation zone will provide further protection for these species. For example, the predicted maximum range to onset of PTS to mid-frequency of cetaceans is less than 500 yd. (457 m). The average range to onset of TTS across all functional hearing groups is 2,513 yd. (2.3 km). Implementation of the 2,500 yd. (2.3 km) mitigation zone will reduce the potential for exposure to higher levels of energy that would result in injury and larger threshold shifts that would result in recovery (i.e., TTS) when individuals are sighted.

The predicted maximum range to onset mortality across all functional hearing groups is less than 250 yd. (229 m). Therefore, this measure will be effective at reducing potential mortality to all marine mammals and sea turtles when individuals are sighted. As discussed in Section 5.3.1.2.4 (Effectiveness Assessment for Lookouts), it is highly unlikely that anything but a whale blow or large pod of dolphins will be seen at distances closer to 2,500 yd. (2.3 km) near the perimeter of the mitigation zone. However, this measure is likely effective at reducing the risk of injury to marine mammals and sea turtles that may be observed from the smaller distances within the mitigation zone. Observation for indicators of marine mammal and sea turtle presence will further help avoid impacts to marine mammals and sea turtles.

As described in Section 5.3.1 (Lookout Procedural Measures), Lookouts positioned in aircraft may be responsible for tasks in addition to observing the air or surface of the water. For example, a Lookout for this activity may also be responsible for navigation of the aircraft. Having a Lookout observe a mitigation zone that is too large could potentially increase the safety risk due to an increased level of distraction from normal job duties. Similarly, Lookouts posted in aircraft during bombing activities will, by necessity, focus their attention on the water surface below and surrounding the location of bomb deployment. Due to the nature of this activity (e.g., aircraft maintaining a relatively steady altitude of approximately 1,500 ft. [457 m] and approaching the intended impact location), Lookouts will be able to observe a larger area during bombing activities than other proposed activities that involve the use of Lookouts positioned in aircraft (e.g., Improved Extended Echo Ranging sonobuoy activities). However, observation of an area beyond what the Navy is proposing to implement for bombing activities is not practicable and would not likely result in avoidance or reduction of injury to marine mammals or sea turtles because the effort spent observing those more distant areas would inevitably be minimal.

While the increase in mitigation zone size will not mitigate for exposures to lower levels of potential onset of TTS, it will allow for a more focused survey effort over a larger survey distance and will consequently increase the likelihood of avoidance of injury and larger threshold shifts that would result in recovery (i.e., TTS) to marine mammals and sea turtles.

The post-sighting wait period is designed to give any animals that are sighted an opportunity to leave the area before the exercise recommences but will only be employed if one of the other conditions has not already been met. The 10-minute wait period covers a portion of the average marine mammal and sea turtle dive times but may not be sufficient to cover the average dive times of all species. The 10-minute wait period is based on fuel restrictions (factoring in the typical activity locations) for the types of aircraft involved in this activity (e.g., F/A-18). Requiring additional delay beyond 10 minutes for these platforms would modify the activity in a way that it would no longer meet its intended objective. Any additional delay would result in an unacceptable increased risk to personnel safety or would require aircraft to depart the activity location to refuel, which would reduce the aircrews' abilities to approach surface targets and deliver bombs as would be required in a real world combat situation, and would therefore have an unacceptable impact on the realism and effectiveness of the exercise.

The Navy proposes implementing the recommended measure described above because (1) it is likely to result in avoidance or reduction of exposure to high levels of energy to marine mammals and sea turtles; and (2) implementation has been analyzed as acceptable with regard to personnel safety, practicality of implementation, impact on effectiveness of the military readiness activity, and Navy policy.

5.3.2.1.2.11 Torpedo (Explosive) Testing

Mitigation measures do not currently exist for torpedo (explosive) testing. The Navy is recommending the measures provided below.

Mitigation will include visual observation by aircraft (with the exception of platforms operating at high altitudes) immediately before, during, and after the exercise within a mitigation zone of 2,100 yd. (1.9 km) around the intended impact location. Firing will cease if a marine mammal, sea turtle, or aggregation of jellyfish is sighted within the mitigation zone. Firing will recommence if any one of the following conditions is met: (1) the animal is observed exiting the mitigation zone, (2) the animal is thought to have exited the mitigation zone based on a determination of its course and speed and the relative motion between the animal and the source, or (3) the mitigation zone has been clear from any additional sightings for a period of 10 minutes or 30 minutes (depending on aircraft type)

In addition to visual observation, passive acoustic monitoring would be conducted with Navy assets, such as passive ships sonar systems or sonobuoys, already participating in the activity. Passive acoustic observation would be accomplished through the use of remote acoustic sensors or expendable sonobuoys, or via passive acoustic sensors on submarines when they participate in the Proposed Action. These assets would only detect vocalizing marine mammals within the frequency bands monitored by Navy personnel. Passive acoustic detections would not provide range or bearing to detected animals, and therefore cannot provide locations of these animals. Passive acoustic detections would be reported to the Lookout posted in the aircraft in order to increase vigilance of the visual surveillance and to the person in control of the activity for their consideration in determining when the mitigation zone is determined free of visible marine mammals.

Effectiveness and Operational Assessments

See the introduction of Section 5.3.2 (Mitigation Zone Procedural Measures) for a general discussion of mitigation zones, how they are implemented, and the potential impacts they are designed to reduce. As shown in Table 5.3-2, the predicted maximum range to onset of PTS for explosive torpedoes is approximately 2,021 yd. (1.8 km). This range was determined by the sea turtle functional hearing group. The marine mammal functional hearing groups had a shorter predicted range to onset of PTS, so the mitigation zone will provide further protection for these species. The predicted average range to onset of TTS across all functional hearing groups is 1,632 yd. (1.5 km). Implementation of the 2,100 yd. (1.9 km) mitigation zone will reduce the potential for exposure to higher levels of energy that would result in injury and larger threshold shifts that would result in recovery (i.e., TTS) when individuals are sighted.

The predicted maximum range to onset mortality across all functional hearing groups is less than 600 yd. (549 m). Therefore, this measure will be effective at reducing potential mortality to all marine mammals and sea turtles when individuals are sighted. As discussed in Section 5.3.1.2.4 (Effectiveness Assessment for Lookouts), it is highly unlikely that anything but a whale blow or large pod of dolphins will be seen at distances closer to 2,100 yd. (1.9 km) near the perimeter of the mitigation zone. However, this measure is likely effective at reducing the risk of injury to marine mammals and sea turtles that may be observed from the smaller distances within the mitigation zone. Observation for indicators of marine mammal and sea turtle presence (e.g., jellyfish aggregations) will further help avoid impacts to marine mammals and sea turtles.

As described in Section 5.3.1 (Lookout Procedural Measures), Lookouts positioned in aircraft may be responsible for tasks in addition to observing the air or surface of the water. For example, a Lookout for this activity may also be responsible for navigation of the aircraft. Having a Lookout observe a mitigation zone that is too large could potentially increase the safety risk due to an increased level of distraction from normal job duties. Observation of an area beyond what the Navy is proposing to implement for torpedo (explosive) testing activities is not practicable and would not likely result in avoidance or reduction of injury to marine mammals or sea turtles because the effort spent observing those more distant areas would inevitably be minimal.

While the increase in mitigation zone size will not mitigate for exposures to lower levels of potential onset of TTS; it will allow for a more focused survey effort over a larger survey distance, and will consequently increase the likelihood of avoidance of injury and larger threshold shifts that would result in recovery (i.e., TTS) to marine mammals and sea turtles.

The post-sighting wait period is designed to give any animals that are sighted an opportunity to leave the area before the exercise recommences but will only be employed if one of the other conditions has not already been met. The 10-minute wait period covers a portion of the average marine mammal and sea turtle dive times but may not be sufficient to cover the average dive times of all species. The 10-minute wait period is based on fuel restrictions (factoring in the typical activity locations) for the types of aircraft involved in this activity (e.g., F/A-18). Requiring additional delay beyond 10 minutes for these platforms would modify the activity in a way that it would no longer meet its intended objective. Any additional delay would result in an unacceptable increased risk to personnel safety or would require aircraft to depart the activity location to refuel, which would reduce the aircrews' abilities to approach surface targets and deliver bombs as would be required in a real world combat situation, and would therefore have an unacceptable impact on the realism and effectiveness of the exercise.

The Navy proposes implementing the recommended measure described above because: (1) it is likely to result in avoidance or reduction of exposure to high levels of energy to marine mammals and sea turtles; and (2) implementation has been analyzed as acceptable with regard to personnel safety, practicality of implementation, impact on effectiveness of the military readiness activity, and Navy policy.

5.3.2.1.2.12 Sinking Exercises

The Navy is proposing to (1) modify the mitigation measures currently implemented for this activity by increasing the mitigation zone from 2.0 nm to 2.5 nm, (2) clarify the conditions needed to recommence an activity after a sighting, and (3) adopt the marine mammal and sea turtle mitigation zone size for aggregations of jellyfish for ease of implementation. The recommended measures are provided below.

Mitigation will include visual observation within a mitigation zone of 2.5 nm around the target ship hulk. Sinking exercises will include aerial observation beginning 90 minutes before the first firing, visual observations from vessels throughout the duration of the exercise, and both aerial and vessel observation immediately after any planned or unplanned breaks in weapons firing of longer than 2 hours. Prior to conducting the exercise, the Navy will review remotely sensed sea surface temperature and sea surface height maps to aid in deciding where to release the target ship hulk.

The Navy will also monitor using passive acoustics during the exercise. Passive acoustic monitoring would be conducted with Navy assets, such as passive ships sonar systems or sonobuoys, already participating in the activity. These assets would only detect vocalizing marine mammals within the frequency bands monitored by Navy personnel. Passive acoustic detections would not provide range or bearing to detected animals, and therefore cannot provide locations of these animals. Passive acoustic detections would be reported to Lookouts posted in aircraft and on vessels in order to increase vigilance of their visual surveillance. Lookouts will also increase observation vigilance before the use of torpedoes or unguided ordnance with a net explosive weight of 500 lb. or greater, or if the Beaufort sea state is a 4 or above.

The exercise will cease if a marine mammal, sea turtle, or aggregation of jellyfish is sighted within the mitigation zone. The exercise will recommence if any one of the following conditions is met: (1) the animal is observed exiting the mitigation zone, (2) the animal is thought to have exited the mitigation zone based on a determination of its course and speed and the relative motion between the animal and the source, or (3) the mitigation zone has been clear from any additional sightings for a period of 30 minutes. Upon sinking the vessel, the Navy will conduct post-exercise visual surveillance of the mitigation zone for 2 hours (or until sunset, whichever comes first).

Effectiveness and Operational Assessments

See the introduction of Section 5.3.2 (Mitigation Zone Procedural Measures) for a general discussion of mitigation zones, how they are implemented, and the potential impacts they are designed to reduce. During a sinking exercise, multiple weapons sources may be used (projectiles, missiles, bombs, torpedoes), the largest of which is the 2,000 lb. bomb. The recommended mitigation zone is approximately double the predicted maximum range to onset of PTS of the largest weapon source, and is designed to account for multiple detonations during the activity. As shown in Table 5.3-2, the predicted maximum range to onset of PTS for a bombing exercise is approximately 2,474 yd. (2.3 km). This range was determined by the sea turtle functional hearing group. The marine mammal functional hearing groups had a shorter predicted range to onset of PTS, so the mitigation zone will provide further protection for these species. For example, the predicted maximum range to onset of PTS to mid-frequency of cetaceans is less than 500 yd. (457 m). The predicted average range to onset of TTS across all functional hearing groups is 2,513 yd. (2.3 km). Implementation of the 2.5 nm mitigation zone will reduce the potential for exposure to higher levels of energy that would result in injury and larger threshold shifts that would result in recovery (i.e., TTS) when individuals are sighted.

The predicted maximum range to onset mortality across all functional hearing groups is less than 250 yd. (229 m). Therefore, this measure will be effective at reducing potential mortality to all marine mammals and sea turtles when individuals are sighted. As discussed in Section 5.3.1.2.4 (Effectiveness Assessment for Lookouts), it is highly unlikely that anything but a whale blow or large pod of dolphins will be seen at distances closer to 2,100 yd. (1.9 km) near the perimeter of the mitigation zone. However, this measure is likely effective at reducing the risk of injury to marine mammals and sea turtles that may be observed from the smaller distances within the mitigation zone.

As described in Section 5.3.1 (Lookout Procedural Measures), Lookouts positioned in aircraft or vessels may be responsible for tasks in addition to observing the air or surface of the water. For example, a Lookout for this activity may also be responsible for navigation of the aircraft. Having a Lookout observe a mitigation zone that is too large could potentially increase the safety risk due to an increased level of distraction from normal job duties. Observation of an area beyond what the Navy is proposing to implement for sinking exercises is not practicable and would not likely result in avoidance or reduction of injury to marine mammals or sea turtles because the effort spent observing those more distant areas would inevitably be minimal. The decrease in mitigation zone size will result in no mitigation for exposure to lower levels of potential onset of TTS; however, it will allow for a more focused survey effort over a smaller survey distance, and will consequently increase the likelihood of avoidance of injury and larger threshold shifts that would result in recovery (i.e., TTS) to marine mammals and sea turtles. The amount of time it takes for an aircraft to conduct line transects around a detonation point within the currently implemented 4.5 nm mitigation zone could result in animals entering the mitigation zone at one end while the aircraft completes the survey at the other end of the mitigation zone. Observation for indicators of marine mammal and sea turtle presence (e.g., jellyfish aggregations) will further help avoid impacts to marine mammals and sea turtles.

The post-sighting wait period is designed to give any animals that are sighted an opportunity to leave the area before the exercise recommences but will only be employed if one of the other conditions has not already been met. A 30-minute wait period more than covers the average dive times of most marine mammal species but may not be sufficient for some deep-diving marine mammal species or for sea turtles. However, the analysis in Section 3.4.4.2 (Impacts from Explosives) shows that injury to deep-diving marine mammals (e.g., sperm whales and beaked whales) is not expected to occur. Requiring additional delay beyond 30 minutes would modify the activity in a way that it would no longer meet its

intended objective. Any additional delay would reduce the ship and aircrews' abilities to coordinate attack tactics on a seaborne target as would be required in a real world combat situation, and would therefore have an unacceptable impact on the realism and effectiveness of the exercise. Although activities involving certain types of aircraft (e.g., helicopters) typically employ a 10-minute wait period due to fuel restrictions, the Navy is able to make an exception for this particular activity due to the large variation and rotation of assets that could participate in this type of exercise.

The Navy proposes implementing the recommended measure described above because (1) it is likely to result in avoidance or reduction of exposure to high levels of energy to marine mammals and sea turtles; and (2) implementation has been analyzed as acceptable with regard to personnel safety, practicality of implementation, impact on effectiveness of the military readiness activity, and Navy policy.

5.3.2.1.2.13 Weapons Firing Noise During Gunnery Exercises – Large-Caliber

The Navy is proposing to implement the following mitigation measure, which only applies to the firing side of the ship as provided below.

For all explosive and non-explosive large-caliber gunnery exercises conducted from a ship, mitigation will include visual observation immediately before and during the exercise within a mitigation zone of 70 yd. (64 m) within 30 degrees on either side of the gun target line on the firing side. Firing will cease if a marine mammal or sea turtle is sighted within the mitigation zone. Firing will recommence if any one of the following conditions is met: (1) the animal is observed exiting the mitigation zone, (2) the animal is thought to have exited the mitigation zone based on a determination of its course and speed and the relative motion between the animal and the source, (3) the mitigation zone has been clear from any additional sightings for a period of 30 minutes, or (4) the vessel has repositioned itself more than 140 yd. (128 m) away from the location of the last sighting.

Effectiveness Assessment

The mitigation zone is designed to reduce the potential for injury from weapons firing noise during large-caliber gunnery exercises conducted from a ship. The majority of the energy that an animal could be exposed to would occur on the firing side of the vessel and would follow in the direction of fire. It is not operationally feasible to have Lookouts stationed on all sides of the vessel to visually observe for marine mammals and sea turtles due to limited resources (e.g., manning restrictions). Since the Lookout is positioned aboard the firing ship and is visually observing nearby the ship (70 yd. [64 m]), this measure should be effective at reducing the risk to all marine mammals and sea turtles that are available to be observed. Observation for indicators of marine mammal and sea turtle will further help avoid impacts on marine mammals and sea turtles.

The post-sighting wait period is designed to give any animals that are sighted an opportunity to leave the area before the exercise recommences but will only be employed if one of the other conditions has not already been met. A 30-minute wait period more than covers the average dive times of most marine mammal species but may not be sufficient for sea turtles. However, the analysis in Section 3.4.4.2.5 (Impacts from Weapons Firing, Launch, and Impact Noise) shows that injury to marine mammals is not expected to occur. Requiring additional delay beyond 30 minutes would modify the activity in a way that it would no longer meet its intended objective. Any additional delay would reduce the gun crews' abilities to engage surface targets and practice defensive marksmanship as would be required in a real world combat situation, and would therefore have an unacceptable impact on the realism and effectiveness of the exercise.

The Navy proposes implementing the recommended measure described above because (1) it is likely to result in avoidance or reduction of exposure to high levels of energy to marine mammals and sea turtles; and (2) implementation has been analyzed as acceptable with regard to personnel safety, practicality of implementation, impact on effectiveness of the military readiness activity, and Navy policy.

5.3.2.2 Physical Disturbance and Strike

5.3.2.2.1 Vessels and In-Water Devices

5.3.2.2.1.1 Vessels

The Navy is proposing to clarify using the mitigation measures currently implemented. The recommended measures are provided below.

Vessels will avoid approaching marine mammals head on and will maneuver to maintain a mitigation zone of 500 yd. (457 m) around observed whales, and 200 yd. (183 m) around all other marine mammals (except bow-riding dolphins), providing it is safe to do so.

Effectiveness and Operational Assessments

Since the Lookout is visually observing within a reasonable distance of the vessel (within 500 yd. [457 m]), this measure should be effective at reducing the risk to marine mammals that are available to be observed. However, as discussed above in Section 5.3.1.2.4 (Effectiveness Assessment for Lookouts), large whales and pods of dolphins are more likely to be seen than other more cryptic species, such as beaked whales.

The Navy proposes implementing the recommended measure described above because: (1) it is likely to result in avoidance or reduction of injury to marine mammals; and (2) implementation has been analyzed as acceptable with regard to personnel safety, practicality of implementation, impact on effectiveness of the military readiness activity, and Navy policy.

5.3.2.2.1.2 Towed In-Water Devices

The Navy is proposing to implement the recommended measures provided below.

The Navy will ensure that towed in-water devices being towed from manned platforms avoid coming within a mitigation zone of 250 yd. (229 m) around any observed marine mammal, providing it is safe to do so.

Effectiveness and Operational Assessments

Since the Lookout is visually observing within a reasonable distance of the vessel (250 yd. [229 m]), this measure should be effective at reducing the risk to marine mammals that are available to be observed. However, as discussed above in Section 5.3.1.2.5 (Effectiveness Assessment for Lookouts), large whales and pods of dolphins are more likely to be seen than other more cryptic species such as beaked whales.

The Navy proposes implementing the recommended measure described above because: (1) it is likely to result in avoidance or reduction of injury to marine mammals; and (2) implementation has been analyzed as acceptable with regard to personnel safety, practicality of implementation, impact on effectiveness of the military readiness activity, and Navy policy.

5.3.2.2.2 Non-Explosive Practice Munitions

5.3.2.2.2.1 Gunnery Exercises – Small-, Medium-, and Large-Caliber Using a Surface Target

The Navy is proposing to (1) continue using the mitigation measures currently implemented for this activity, and (2) clarify the conditions needed to recommence an activity after a sighting. The recommended measures are provided below.

Mitigation will include visual observation from a vessel or aircraft immediately before and during the exercise within a mitigation zone of 200 yd. (183 m) around the intended impact location. Firing will cease if a marine mammal or sea turtle is sighted within the mitigation zone. Firing will recommence if any one of the following conditions is met: (1) the animal is observed exiting the mitigation zone, (2) the animal is thought to have exited the mitigation zone based on a determination of its course and speed and the relative motion between the animal and the source, (3) the mitigation zone has been clear from any additional sightings for a period of 10 minutes for a firing aircraft, (4) the mitigation zone has been clear from any additional sightings for a period of 30 minutes for a firing vessel, or (5) the intended target location has been repositioned more than 400 yd. (366 m) away from the location of the last sighting.

Effectiveness and Operational Assessments

The mitigation zone is designed to reduce the potential for direct strike from a non-explosive projectile. Large-caliber gunnery exercises involve the participating ship firing munitions at a target location from ranges up to 6 nm away. Small- and medium-caliber gunnery exercises involve the participating vessel or aircraft firing munitions at a target location from up to 2 nm away, although typically closer. Therefore it is necessary for the Lookout to be able to visually observe the mitigation zone from these distances. Although the Lookout will observe for all marine mammals or sea turtles in the area, as discussed in Section 5.3.1.2.4 (Effectiveness Assessment for Lookouts), it is highly unlikely that anything but a whale blow or large pod of dolphins will be seen at distances closer to 6 nm or 2 nm at the furthest target distances. Although this measure is likely ineffective at reducing the risk of injury to sea turtles and some species of marine mammals, it does reduce the risk for those individuals that may be observed. Observation for indicators of marine mammal and sea turtle presence will further help avoid impacts to marine mammals and sea turtles.

The post-sighting wait period is designed to give any animals that are sighted an opportunity to leave the area before the exercise recommences but will only be employed if one of the other conditions has not already been met. A 30-minute wait period when vessels are firing more than covers the average dive times of most marine mammal species but may not be for sea turtles. However, the analysis in Section 3.4.4.4.3 (Impacts from Military Expended Materials) shows that injury to marine mammals and sea turtles is not expected to occur. Requiring additional delay beyond 30 minutes for a firing vessel would modify the activity in a way that it would no longer meet its intended objective. Any additional delay would reduce the gun crews' abilities to engage surface targets and practice defensive marksmanship as would be required in a real world combat situation, and would therefore have an unacceptable impact on the realism and effectiveness of the exercise.

The 10-minute wait period for a firing aircraft covers a portion of the average marine mammal and sea turtle dive times but may not be sufficient to cover the average dive times of all species. The 10-minute wait period is based on fuel restrictions for the types of aircraft involved in this activity (e.g., helicopters). Requiring additional delay beyond 10 minutes for these sources would modify the activity in a way that it would no longer meet its intended objective. Any additional delay would result in an unacceptable increased risk to personnel safety or would require aircraft to depart the activity location

to refuel, which would eliminate opportunities and reduce the gun crews' abilities to engage surface targets and practice defensive marksmanship as would be required in a real world combat situation, and would therefore have an unacceptable impact on the realism and effectiveness of the exercise.

The Navy proposes implementing the recommended measure described above because: (1) it is likely to result in avoidance or reduction of injury to some species of marine mammals; and (2) implementation has been analyzed as acceptable with regard to personnel safety, practicality of implementation, impact on effectiveness of the military readiness activity, and Navy policy.

5.3.2.2.2 Bombing Exercises

The Navy is proposing to (1) continue using the mitigation measures currently implemented for this activity, and (2) clarify the conditions needed to recommence an activity after a sighting. The recommended measures are provided below.

Mitigation will include visual observation from the aircraft immediately before the exercise and during target approach within a mitigation zone of 1,000 yd. (914 m) around the intended impact location. Bombing will cease if a marine mammal or sea turtle is sighted within the mitigation zone. Bombing will recommence if any one of the following conditions is met: (1) the animal is observed exiting the mitigation zone, (2) the animal is thought to have exited the mitigation zone based on a determination of its course and speed and the relative motion between the animal and the source, or (3) the mitigation zone has been clear from any additional sightings for a period of 10 minutes.

Effectiveness and Operational Assessments

The mitigation zone is designed to reduce the potential for direct strike from a non-explosive bomb. The post-sighting wait period is designed to give any animals that are sighted an opportunity to leave the area before the exercise recommences but will only be employed if one of the other conditions has not already been met. The 10-minute wait period covers a portion of the average marine mammal and sea turtle dive times but may not be sufficient to cover the average dive times of all species. The 10-minute wait period is based on fuel restrictions for the types of aircraft involved in this activity (e.g., F/A-18). Requiring additional delay beyond 10 minutes for these platforms would modify the activity in a way that it would no longer meet its intended objective. Any additional delay would result in an unacceptable increased risk to personnel safety or would require aircraft to depart the activity location to refuel, which would reduce the aircrews' abilities to approach surface targets and deliver bombs as would be required in a real world combat situation, and would therefore have an unacceptable impact on the realism and effectiveness of the exercise. Observation for indicators of marine mammal and sea turtle presence will further help avoid impacts on marine mammals and sea turtles.

The Navy proposes implementing the recommended measure described above because: (1) it is likely to result in avoidance or reduction of injury to marine mammals or sea turtles; and (2) implementation has been analyzed as acceptable with regard to personnel safety, practicality of implementation, impact on effectiveness of the military readiness activity, and Navy policy.

5.3.3 MITIGATION AREAS

The Navy is proposing to implement several mitigation measures within pre-defined habitat areas in the Study Area. For the purposes of this document, the Navy will refer to these areas as "mitigation areas." As described throughout this section, these recommended mitigation areas may be based off endangered species critical habitats, endangered species reproductive areas, or bottom features. The size and location of certain habitat areas, such as the critical habitats, is subject to change over time;

however, the Navy's effectiveness and operational assessments, and resulting mitigation recommendations are entirely dependent on the mitigation area defined in this document. Therefore, it is important to note that the Navy is recommending implementing mitigation measures only within each area as described in this document. Applying these mitigations to additional or expanded areas could potentially result in an unacceptable impact on readiness.

Of note, the Marianas Trench Marine National Monument protects approximately 95,216 square miles of submerged lands and waters. Although the restrictions placed on the monument do not apply to military readiness activities, the Armed Forces shall ensure, by the adoption of appropriate measures not impairing operations or operational capabilities, that its vessels and aircraft act in a manner consistent, so far as is reasonable and practicable, with this proclamation (6 January 2009).

5.3.3.1 Seafloor Resources

5.3.3.1.1 Marine Habitats and Cultural Resources

5.3.3.1.1.1 Shallow Coral Reefs, Hardbottom Habitat, Artificial Reefs, and Shipwrecks

The Navy is proposing to: (1) modify some of the mitigation measures for seafloor habitats and shipwrecks, and (2) discontinue the currently implemented measures for medium- and large-caliber gunnery exercises and missile exercises using airborne targets.

The shipwreck data documented in the Marine Habitat chapter were refined to only accurate positions using the following criteria: (1) not an obstruction, sounding, unknown (non-wreck), dump site, mooring buoy, sewer outfall, piling, or rock; (2) high or medium accuracy location; (3) not disproved; (4) not an approximate position (applied to medium accuracy only); and (5) source information provided.

The Navy will not conduct precision anchoring within the anchor swing diameter, or explosive mine countermeasure and neutralization activities (except in existing anchorages and near-shore training areas around Guam and within Apra Harbor) within 350 yd. (320 m) of surveyed shallow coral reefs, live hardbottom, artificial reefs, and shipwrecks.

The Navy will not conduct explosive or non-explosive small-, medium-, and large-caliber gunnery exercises using a surface target, explosive missile exercises using a surface target, or explosive and non-explosive bombing exercises within 350 yd. (320 m) of surveyed shallow coral reefs.

Effectiveness and Operational Assessments

The Navy's currently implemented seafloor habitats and shipwreck mitigation zones are based off the range to effects for marine mammals or sea turtles, which are driven by hearing thresholds. The Navy's recommended measures are modified to focus on reducing potential physical impacts to seafloor habitats and shipwrecks from explosives and physical strike military expended materials. The recommended 350 yd. (320 m) mitigation zone is based off the estimated maximum seafloor impact zone for explosions discussed in Section 3.3 (Marine Habitats). The use of non-explosive military expended materials would result in a smaller footprint of potential impact; however, the Navy recommends applying the explosive mitigation zone to all explosive and non-explosive activities as listed above for ease of implementation. This standard mitigation zone will consequently result in an additional protection buffer during the non-explosive activities listed above.

It is not possible to definitively predict or to effectively monitor where the military expended materials from airborne gunnery and missile exercises using aerials targets would be likely to strike seafloor habitats and shipwrecks. The potential debris fall zone can only be predicted within tens of miles for

long range events, which can be in excess of 80 nm from the firing location during some missile exercises, and thousands of yards for shorter events, which can occur within several thousand yards of the firing location.

Live hardbottom, shallow water coral reefs, artificial reefs, and shipwrecks fulfill important ecosystem functions. Avoiding or minimizing physical disturbance and strike of these resources will likely reduce the impact on these resources. This measure is only effective with regard to surveyed resources since the Navy needs specific locations to restrict the specified activities. It is not possible for the Navy to avoid these seafloor features when their exact locations are unknown.

The Navy proposes implementing the recommended measures described above because (1) they are likely to result in avoidance or reduction of physical disturbance and strike to seafloor habitats and shipwrecks; and (2) implementation has been analyzed as acceptable with regard to personnel safety, practicality of implementation, impact on effectiveness of the military readiness activity, and Navy policy.

5.3.4 MITIGATION MEASURES CONSIDERED BUT ELIMINATED

A number of mitigation measures were suggested during the public comment periods of previous Navy environmental documents. As a result of the assessment process identified in Section 5.2 (Introduction to Mitigation), the Navy determined that some of the suggested measures would likely be ineffective at reducing environmental impacts, have an unacceptable operational impact based on the operational assessment, or be incompatible with Section 5.2.2 (Overview of Mitigation Approach). The measures that the Navy does not recommend for implementation are discussed in Section 5.3.4.1 (Previously Considered by Eliminated) and Section 5.3.4.2 (Previously Accepted but Now Eliminated). There is a distinction between effective and feasible observation procedures for data collection and measures employed to prevent impacts or otherwise serve as mitigation. The discussion below is in reference to those procedures meant to serve as mitigation measures.

5.3.4.1 Previously Considered but Eliminated

5.3.4.1.1 Reducing Amount of Training and Testing Activities

Reducing training and testing for the purpose of mitigation would result in an unacceptable impact on readiness for the following reasons:

The requirements to train are designed to provide the experience needed to ensure Sailors are properly prepared for operational success. Training requirements have been developed through many years of iteration and are designed to ensure Sailors achieve the levels of readiness needed to properly respond to the many contingencies that may occur during an actual mission. The Proposed Action does not include training beyond levels required for maintaining satisfactory levels of readiness due to the need to efficiently use limited resources (e.g., fuel, personnel, and time). Therefore, any reduction of training would not allow Sailors to achieve satisfactory levels of readiness needed to accomplish their mission.

The requirements to test systems prior to their implementation in military activities are identified in Department of Defense (DoD) Directive 5000.1. This directive states that test and evaluation support is to be integrated throughout the defense acquisition process. The Navy rigorously collected data during the developmental stages of this EIS/OEIS to accurately quantify test activities necessary to meet requirements of DoD Directive 5000.1. These testing requirements are designed to determine whether systems perform as expected and are operationally effective, suitable, survivable, and safe for their

intended use. Any reduction of testing activities would not allow the Navy to meet its purpose and need to achieve requirements set forth in DoD Directive 5000.1.

5.3.4.1.2 Replacing Training and Testing with Simulated Activities

Replacing training and testing activities with simulated activities for the purpose of mitigation would result in an unacceptable impact on readiness for the reasons below.

As described in Section 2.5.1.3 (Simulated Training and Testing), the Navy currently uses computer simulation for training and testing whenever possible. Computer simulation can provide familiarity and complement live training; however, it cannot provide the fidelity and level of training necessary to prepare naval forces for deployment.

The Navy is required by law to operationally test major platforms, systems, and components of these platforms and systems in realistic combat conditions before full-scale production can occur. Substituting simulation for live training and testing fails to meet the purpose of and need for the Proposed Action and therefore was eliminated from consideration as a mitigation measure.

5.3.4.1.3 Reducing Sonar Source Levels and Total Number of Hours

Active sonar is only used when required by the mission since it has the potential to alert opposing forces to the sonar platform's presence. Passive sonar and all other sensors are used in concert with active sonar to the maximum extent practicable when available and when required by the mission. Reducing active sonar source levels and the total number of active sonar hours used during training and testing activities for the purpose of mitigation would adversely impact the effectiveness of military readiness activities and increase safety risks to personnel for the reasons below.

Sonar operators need to train as they would operate during real combat situations. Operators of sonar equipment are always cognizant of the environmental variables affecting sound propagation. In this regard, sonar equipment power levels are always set consistent with mission requirements. Reducing sonar source levels for the purpose of mitigation precludes sonar operators from learning to operate the sonar systems with their entire range of capabilities throughout the extremely diverse range of environmental conditions they may encounter. Failure to train with the entire range of capabilities will reduce the effectiveness of the sonar operators should their skills be required during real world events. Not only would they not develop the skills necessary to identify and track submarines at the maximum distances of their systems capabilities, they would not learn how to use their systems' capabilities during the entire range of environmental conditions they may encounter. Likewise, they would not develop the knowledge of how to fully integrate multiple anti-submarine warfare capabilities, including other ships and aircraft into an integrated anti-submarine warfare team.

Failure to train with the entire range of capabilities also compromises training by reducing the ability for a sonar operator to detect, track, and hold an enemy target, mine, or other object, and by reducing the realism of other training scenarios (e.g., navigation training). Particularly during a strike group exercise, sonar operators need to learn to handle real world combat situations (e.g., the ability to manage sonar operations during periods of mutual interference, which can occur when more than one sonar system is operating simultaneously). Training with reduced sonar source levels would ultimately condition Sailors to expect conditions that they would not experience in a real world combat situation, thereby resulting in an unacceptable increased risk to personnel safety and the strike group's ability to achieve mission success. The Navy must test its systems in the same way they would be used for military readiness activities. Reducing sonar source levels during testing would impact the ability to determine whether

systems are operationally effective, suitable, survivable, and safe. Ultimately, reducing sonar source levels would reduce training and testing realism. Reducing the total number of sonar hours used during training and testing would prevent the Navy from meeting its military readiness qualification standards.

5.3.4.1.4 Implementing Active Sonar Ramp-Up Procedures During Training

Implementing active sonar ramp-up procedures (slowly increasing the sound in the water to necessary levels) in an attempt to clear the range prior to conducting activities for the purpose of mitigation during training activities would result in an unacceptable impact on readiness for the reasons below.

Ramp-up procedures would alert opponents to the participants' presence. This would consequently negatively affect the realism of training because the target submarine could detect the searching unit before the searching unit could detect the target submarine, enabling the target submarine to take evasive measures. This is not representative of a real-world situation and thereby would impact training realism and effectiveness. Training with reduced realism would alter Sailors' abilities to effectively operate in a real world combat situation, thereby resulting in an unacceptable increased risk to personnel safety and the sonar operator's ability to achieve mission success.

Although ramp-up procedures have been used for some testing activities, effectiveness at avoiding or reducing impacts on marine mammals has not been demonstrated. Until evidence suggests that ramp-up procedures are effective means of avoiding or reducing potential impacts on marine mammals, the Navy is proposing to eliminate the implementation of this measure for testing activities as part of the Proposed Action.

5.3.4.1.5 Reducing Vessel Speed

As described in Section 5.1.1 (Vessel Safety), as a standard operating procedure, Navy personnel are required to use extreme caution and operate at a slow, safe speed consistent with mission and safety. These standard operating procedures are designed to allow a vessel to take proper and effective action to avoid a collision with any sighted object or disturbance (which may include a marine mammal), and to stop within a distance appropriate to the prevailing circumstances and conditions. Implementing widespread reductions in vessel speed throughout the Study Area for the purpose of mitigation would be impractical with regard to military readiness activities, and result in an unacceptable impact on readiness for the reasons below.

Vessel operators need to be able to react to changing tactical situations and evaluate system capabilities in training and testing as they would in actual combat. Widespread speed restrictions would not allow the Navy to properly test vessel capabilities, for example, during full power propulsion testing during sea trials. Training with reduced realism would alter Sailors' abilities to effectively operate in a real world combat situation, thereby resulting in an unacceptable increased risk to personnel safety and the vessel operator's ability to achieve mission success.

5.3.4.1.6 Limiting Access to Training and Testing Locations

Limiting training and testing activities to specific locations for the purpose of mitigation would be impractical with regard to implementation, would adversely impact the effectiveness of military readiness activities, and would increase safety risks to personnel for the reasons below.

As described in Section 2.5.1.1 (Alternative Training and Testing Activity Locations), the ability to use the diverse and multidimensional capabilities of each range complex and testing range results in the Navy's ability to develop and maintain high levels of readiness. Major exercises using integrated warfare

components require large areas of the littorals, open ocean, and certain nearshore areas for realistic and safe training. Limiting training and testing (including the use of sonar and other active acoustic sources or explosives) to specific locations (e.g., abyssal waters and surveyed offshore waters) and avoiding areas (e.g., embayments or large areas of the littorals and open ocean) would be impractical to implement with regard to the need to conduct activities in proximity to certain facilities and range complexes. These restrictions would also adversely impact the safety of the training and testing activities by requiring activities to take place in more remote areas where safety support may be limited.

Training and testing activities require continuous access to large areas consisting potentially of thousands of square miles of ocean and air space to provide naval personnel the ability to train with and develop competence and confidence in their capabilities and their entire suite of weapons and sensors. Exercises may change mid-stream based on evaluators' assessments of performance and other conditions including weather or mechanical issues. These may preclude use of a permission scheme for access to water space. Threats to national security are constantly evolving and the Navy requires the ability to adapt training to meet these emerging threats as well as develop and test systems to effectively operate in these environments. Restricting access to limited locations would impact the ability of Navy training and testing to evolve as the threat evolves. Operational units already incorporate requirements for safety of personnel including air space and shipping routes. Safety restrictions may include limits on distance from military air fields during carrier flight operations and air traffic corridors for safety of military and civilian aviation. These types of limitations shape how exercise planners develop and implement training scenarios including those involving defense of aircraft carriers from submarines.

Therefore, limiting access to training and testing locations would reduce realism of training by restricting access to important real world combat situations, such as bathymetric features and varying oceanographic features. As described in Section 5.3.4.1.7 (Avoiding Locations Based on Bathymetry and Environmental Conditions), Sailors must be trained to handle bottom bounce, sound passing through changing currents, eddies, or across changes in ocean temperature, pressure, or salinity. Training in a few specific locations would alter Sailors' abilities to effectively operate in varying real world combat situations, thereby resulting in an unacceptable increased risk to personnel safety and the ability to achieve mission success.

5.3.4.1.7 Avoiding Locations Based on Bathymetry and Environmental Conditions

Avoiding locations for training and testing activities based on bathymetry and environmental conditions for the purpose of mitigation would increase safety risks to personnel and result in an unacceptable impact on readiness for the reasons below.

Areas where training and testing activities are scheduled to occur are carefully chosen to provide safety and allow realism of events. As described in Section 2.5.1.1 (Alternative Training and Testing Activity Locations), the varying environmental conditions of the Study Area (e.g., bathymetry and topography) maximize the training realism and testing effectiveness. Limiting training and testing (including the use of sonar and other active acoustic sources or explosives) to avoid steep or complex bathymetric features (e.g., submarine canyons and large seamounts) and oceanographic features (e.g., surface fronts and variations in sea surface temperatures) would reduce the realism of the military readiness activity. Systems must be tested in a variety of bathymetric and environmental conditions to ensure functionality and accuracy in a variety of environments. Sonar operators need to train as they would operate during real world combat situations. Because real world combat situations include diverse bathymetric and environmental conditions, Sailors must be trained to handle bottom bounce, sound passing through

changing currents, eddies, or across changes in ocean temperature, pressure, or salinity. Training with reduced realism would alter Sailors' abilities to effectively operate in a real world combat situation, thereby resulting in an unacceptable increased risk to personnel safety and the sonar operator's ability to achieve mission success.

5.3.4.1.8 Avoiding or Reducing Active Sonar at Night and During Periods of Low Visibility

Avoiding or reducing active sonar at night and during periods of low visibility for the purpose of mitigation would result in an unacceptable impact on readiness for the reasons below.

The Navy must train in the same manner as it will fight. Anti-submarine warfare can require a significant amount of time to develop the "tactical picture," or an understanding of the battle space (e.g., area searched or unsearched, identifying false contacts, and understanding the water conditions). Reducing or securing power in low-visibility conditions would affect a commander's ability to develop this tactical picture and would not provide the needed training realism. Training differently from what would be needed in an actual combat scenario would decrease training effectiveness, reduce the crew's abilities, and introduce an increased safety risk to personnel.

Mid-frequency active sonar training is required year-round in all environments, including night and low-visibility conditions. Training occurs over many hours or days, which requires large teams of personnel working together in shifts around the clock to work through a scenario. Training at night is vital because environmental differences between day and night affect the detection capabilities of sonar. Temperature layers that move up and down in the water column and ambient noise levels can vary significantly between night and day, which affects sound propagation and could affect how sonar systems are operated. Consequently, personnel must train during all hours of the day to ensure they identify and respond to changing environmental conditions, and not doing so would unacceptably decrease training effectiveness and reduce the crews' abilities. Therefore, the Navy cannot operate only in daylight hours or wait for the weather to clear before training.

The Navy must test its systems in the same way they would be used for military readiness activities. Reducing or securing power in adverse weather conditions or at night would impact the ability to determine whether systems are operationally effective, suitable, survivable, and safe. Additionally, some systems have a nighttime testing requirement. Therefore, Navy personnel cannot operate only in daylight hours or wait for the weather to clear before or during all test events.

5.3.4.1.9 Avoiding or Reducing Active Sonar during Strong Surface Ducts

Avoiding or reducing active sonar during strong surface ducts for the purpose of mitigation would increase safety risks to personnel, be impractical with regard to implementation of military readiness activities, and result in an unacceptable impact on readiness for the reasons below.

The Navy must train in the same manner as it will fight. Anti-submarine warfare can require a significant amount of time to develop the "tactical picture," or an understanding of the battle space such as area searched or unsearched, identifying false contacts, understanding the water conditions, etc. Surface ducting is a condition when water conditions (e.g., temperature layers, lack of wave action) result in little sound energy penetrating beyond a narrow layer near the surface of the water. Submarines have long been known to exploit the phenomena associated with surface ducting. Therefore, training in surface ducting conditions is a critical component to military readiness because sonar operators need to learn how sonar transmissions are altered due to surface ducting, how submarines may take advantage of them, and how to operate sonar effectively in this environment. Avoiding or reducing active sonar

during surface ducting conditions would affect a commander's ability to develop this tactical picture and would not provide the needed training realism. Diminished realism would reduce a sonar operator's ability to effectively operate in a real world combat situation, thereby resulting in an unacceptable increased risk to personnel safety and the ability to achieve mission success.

Furthermore, avoiding surface ducting would be impractical to implement because ocean conditions contributing to surface ducting change frequently, and surface ducts can be of varying duration. Surface ducting can also lack uniformity and may or may not extend over a large geographic area, making it difficult to determine where to reduce power and for what periods.

5.3.4.1.10 Avoiding Locations Based on Distances from Isobaths or Shorelines

Avoiding locations for training and testing activities within the Study Area based on wide-scale distances from isobaths or the shoreline for the purpose of mitigation would be impractical with regard to implementation of military readiness activities, result in unacceptable impact on readiness, and would not be an effective means of mitigation, and would increase safety risks to personnel for the reasons below.

A measure requiring avoidance of mid-frequency active sonar within 13 nm of the 656 ft. (200 m) isobaths was part of the Rim of the Pacific Exercise 2006 authorization by NMFS. This measure, as well as similar measures of like distances, lacks any scientific basis when applied to the context of the MITT Study Area (e.g., bathymetry, sound propagation, and width of channels). There is no scientific analysis indicating this measure is protective and no known basis for these specific metrics. The Rim of the Pacific 2006 exercise mitigation measure precluded active anti-submarine training in the littoral region, which significantly impacted realism and training effectiveness (e.g., protecting ships from submarine threats during amphibious landings). This mitigation procedure had no observable effect on the protection of marine mammals during Rim of the Pacific 2006 exercises, and its value is unclear; however, its adverse effect on realistic training, as with all arbitrary distance from land restrictions, is significant.

Training in shallower water is an essential component to maintaining military readiness. Sound propagates differently in shallower water and operators must learn to train in this environment. Additionally, submarines have become quieter through the use of improved technology and have learned to hide in the higher ambient noise levels of the shallow waters of coastal environments. In real world events, it is highly likely Sailors would be working in, and therefore must train in, these types of areas.

Areas where training and testing activities are scheduled to occur are carefully chosen to provide safety and allow realism of events. The proximity to facilities, range complexes, and testing ranges is essential to the training and testing realism and effectiveness required to train and certify naval forces ready for combat operations. Limiting access to nearshore areas would restrict access to certain training and testing locations and would increase transit time for these activities, which would result in an increased risk to personnel safety, particularly for platforms with fuel restrictions (e.g., aircraft) or for certain activities such as mine countermeasures and neutralization activities using diver-placed mines.

The ability to use the diverse and multi-dimensional capabilities of each range complex and testing range results in the Navy's ability to develop and maintain high levels of readiness. Otherwise limiting training and testing (including the use of sonar and other active acoustic sources or explosives) to avoid arbitrary distances from isobaths or the shoreline would adversely impact the effectiveness of the

training and testing. This includes avoiding conducting activities within 12 nm from shore, 25 nm from shore, between shore and the 20 m isobath, and 13 nm out from the 656 ft. (200 m) isobath. Operating in shallow water is essential in order to provide realistic training on real world combat conditions with regard to shallow water sound propagation.

5.3.4.1.11 Avoiding Marine Species Habitats

Navy has recommended measures within several mitigation areas (Section 5.3.3, Mitigation Areas) that have been well-documented as important habitats for particular species and in which implementation of mitigation would not result in unacceptable impacts on readiness. These mitigation areas have been carefully selected on a case-by-case basis through consultation with NMFS and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Otherwise avoiding all marine species habitats (e.g., foraging locations, reproductive locations, migration corridors, and locations of modeled takes) for the purpose of mitigation would be impractical with regard to implementation of military readiness activities, would result in unacceptable impact on readiness, and would increase safety risks to personnel for the reasons below.

As described in Section 5.3.4.1.6 (Limiting Access to Training and Testing Locations) and Section 5.3.4.1.7 (Avoiding Locations Based on Bathymetry and Environmental Conditions), areas where training and testing activities are scheduled to occur are carefully chosen to provide safety and allow realism of events, and the varying environmental conditions of these areas maximize the training realism and testing effectiveness. Activity locations inevitably overlap a wide array of marine species habitats, including foraging habitats, reproductive areas, and migration corridors. Otherwise limiting activities to avoid these habitats would adversely impact the effectiveness of the training or testing activity, and would therefore result in an unacceptable increased risk to personnel safety and the ability to achieve mission success.

Proposed mitigation includes protective measures within several areas (Section 5.3.3, Mitigation Areas) that have been well documented as important habitats for particular species. The measures outlined in Section 5.3.1 (Lookout Procedural Measures) and Section 5.3.2 (Mitigation Zone Procedural Measures) have been developed to reduce potential impacts on marine species regardless of activity location.

As described in the *Determination of Acoustic Effects on Marine Mammals and Sea Turtles for the Mariana Islands Training and Testing Environmental Impact Statement/Overseas Environmental Impact Statement* technical report (Marine Species Modeling Team 2013), modeling locations were developed based on historical data and anticipated future needs. The model does not provide information detailed enough to analyze or compare locations based on potential take levels for each activity; therefore, applying the modeling results to inform development of mitigation areas would not be appropriate.

5.3.4.1.12 Increasing Visual and Passive Acoustic Observations

Increasing visual and passive acoustic observations for the purpose of mitigation would be impractical with regard to implementation of military readiness activities and result in unacceptable impact on readiness for the reasons below.

The Navy recommended mitigation measures already represent the maximum level of effort (e.g., numbers of Lookouts and passive sonobuoys) that the Navy can commit to observing mitigation zones given the number of personnel that will be involved and the number and type of assets and resources available. The number of Lookouts that the Navy recommends for each measure often represents the maximum capacity based on limited resources (e.g., space and manning restrictions). Furthermore, training and testing activities are carefully planned with regard to personnel duties. Requiring additional

Lookouts would either require adding personnel, for which there would be no additional space, or reassigning duties, which would divert Navy personnel from essential tasks required to meet mission objectives.

The Navy will conduct passive acoustic monitoring during several activities with Navy assets, such as sonobuoys, already participating in the activity (e.g., sinking exercises, torpedo [explosive] testing, and improved extended echo ranging sonobuoys). Refer to Section 5.3.2 (Mitigation Zone Procedural Measures) for additional information on the use of passive acoustics during training and testing activities. The Navy does not have the resources to construct and maintain additional passive acoustic monitoring systems for each training and testing activity.

5.3.4.1.13 Increasing the Size of Observed Mitigation Zones

Increasing the size of observed mitigation zones for the purpose of mitigation would be impractical with regard to implementation of military readiness activities and result in unacceptable impact on readiness for the reasons below.

The Navy developed activity-specific mitigation zones based on the Navy's acoustic propagation model. In this MITT analysis, the Navy developed each recommended mitigation zone to avoid or reduce the potential for onset of the lowest level of injury, PTS, out to the predicted maximum range. Mitigating to the predicted maximum range to PTS consequently also mitigates to the predicted maximum range to onset mortality (1 percent mortality), onset slight lung injury, and onset slight gastrointestinal tract injury, since the maximum range to effects for these criteria are shorter than for PTS. Furthermore, in most cases, the predicted maximum range to PTS also covers the predicted average range to TTS. In some instances, the Navy recommends mitigation zones that are larger or smaller than the predicted maximum range to PTS based on the associated effectiveness and operational assessments presented in Section 5.3.2 (Mitigation Zone Procedural Measures).

The Navy recommended mitigation zones represent the maximum area the Navy can effectively observe based on the platform of observation, number of personnel that will be involved, and the number and type of assets and resources available. As mitigation zone sizes increase, the potential for reducing impacts decreases. For instance, if a mitigation zone increases from 1,000 to 4,000 yd. (914 to 3,658 m), the area that must be observed increases 16-fold. The Navy recommended mitigation measures balance the need to reduce potential impacts with the ability to provide effective observations throughout a given mitigation zone. Implementation of mitigation zones is most effective when the zone is appropriately sized to be realistically observed. The Navy does not have the resources to maintain additional Lookouts or observer platforms that would be needed to effectively observe mitigation zones of increased size. Further, as explained above, the number of Lookouts that the Navy recommends for each measure often represents the maximum capacity based on limited resources (e.g., space and manning restrictions). For example, platforms such as the Littoral Combat Ship are minimally manned and are therefore physically unable to accommodate more than one Lookout. Training and testing activities are carefully planned with regard to personnel duties. Requiring observation of mitigation zones of increased size would either require adding personnel, for which there would be no additional space or resources, or reassigning duties, which would divert Navy personnel from essential tasks required to meet mission objectives. For most activities, Lookouts are required to observe for indicators of potential marine mammal and sea turtle presence within the mitigation zone to further help reduce the potential for injury to occur.

5.3.4.1.14 Conducting Visual Observations Using Third-Party Observers

With limited exceptions, use of third-party observers (e.g., trained marine species observers) in air or on surface platforms in addition to existing Navy Lookouts for the purposes of mitigation would be impractical with regard to implementation of military readiness activities and result in unacceptable impact on readiness for the reasons below.

Navy personnel are extensively trained in spotting items on or near the water surface. Use of Navy Lookouts ensures immediate implementation of mitigation if marine species are sighted. A critical skill set of effective Navy training is communication. Navy Lookouts are trained to act swiftly and decisively to ensure that appropriate actions are taken. Additionally, multiple training and testing events can occur simultaneously and in various regions throughout the Study Area, and can last for days or weeks at a time. The Navy does not have the resources to maintain third-party observers to accomplish the task for every event.

The use of third-party observers would compromise security for some activities involving active sonar due to the requirement to provide advance notification of specific times and locations of Navy platforms. Reliance on the availability of third-party personnel would impact training and testing flexibility. The presence of other aircraft in the vicinity of naval activities would raise safety concerns for both the commercial observers and naval aircraft. Furthermore, vessels have limited passenger capacity. Training and testing event planning includes careful consideration of this limited capacity in the placement of personnel on ships involved in the event. Inclusion of non-Navy observers onboard these vessels would require that in some cases there would be no additional space for essential Navy personnel required to meet the exercise objectives.

The areas where training events will most likely occur in the Study Area cover approximately 1 million square nautical miles. Contiguous anti-submarine warfare events may cover many hundreds or even thousands of square miles. The number of civilian vessels or aircraft required to monitor the area of these events would be considerable. It is, thus, not feasible to survey or monitor the large exercise areas in the time required. In addition, marine mammals may move into or out of an area, if surveyed before an event, or an animal could move into an area after an event took place. Given that there are no adequate controls to account for these or other possibilities, there is little utility to performing extensive before or after event surveys of large exercise areas as a mitigation measure.

Surveying during an event raises safety issues with multiple, slow civilian aircraft operating in the same airspace as military aircraft engaged in combat training activities. In addition, many of the training and testing events take place far from land, limiting both the time available for civilian aircraft to be in the event area and presenting a concern should aircraft mechanical problems arise. Scheduling civilian vessels or aircraft to coincide with training events would impact training effectiveness, since exercise event timetables cannot be precisely fixed and are instead based on the free-flow development of tactical situations. Waiting for civilian aircraft or vessels to complete surveys, refuel, or be on station would slow the progress of the exercise and impact the effectiveness of the military readiness activity.

5.3.4.1.15 Adopt Mitigation Measures of Foreign Nation Navies

Adopting mitigation measures of foreign navies generally for the purpose of mitigation, such as expanding the mitigation zones to match those used by a particular foreign navy, would be impractical with regard to implementation of military readiness activities and result in unacceptable impact on readiness for the reasons below.

Mitigation measures are carefully customized for and agreed upon by each individual navy based on potential impacts of the activities on marine species and the impacts of the mitigation measures on military readiness. Therefore, the mitigation measures developed for one navy would not necessarily be effective at reducing potential impacts on marine species by all navies. Similarly, mitigation measures that do not cause an unacceptable impact on one navy may cause an unacceptable impact on another. For example, most other navies do not possess an integrated strike group and do not have integrated training requirements. The Navy's training is built around the integrated warfare concept and is based on the Navy's capabilities, the threats faced, the operating environment, and the overall mission. Implementing other navies' mitigation would be incompatible with U.S. Navy requirements. The U.S. Navy's recommended mitigation measures have been carefully designed to reduce potential impacts on marine species while not causing an unacceptable impact on readiness.

5.3.4.1.16 Increasing Reporting Requirements

The Navy has extensive reporting requirements, including exercise and monitoring reporting designed to verify implementation of mitigation, comply with current permits, and improve future environmental assessments (Section 5.5.2, Reporting). Increasing the requirement to report marine species sightings to augment scientific data collection and to further verify the implementation of mitigation measures is unnecessary and would increase safety risks to personnel, be impractical with regard to implementation of military readiness activities, and result in unacceptable impact on readiness for the reasons below.

Vessels, aircraft, and personnel engaged in training and testing events are intensively employed throughout the duration of training and testing activities. Any additional workload assigned that is unrelated to their primary duty would adversely impact personnel safety and the effectiveness of the military readiness activity they are undertaking. Lookouts are not trained to make accurate species-specific identification and would not be able to provide the detailed information that the scientific community would use. Alternatively, the Navy has an integrated comprehensive monitoring program (Section 5.5, Monitoring and Reporting) that does provide information that is available and useful to the scientific community in annual monitoring reports.

5.3.4.2 Previously Accepted but Now Eliminated

5.3.4.2.1 Implementing Active Sonar Ramp-Up Procedures During Testing

Some testing activities have implemented active sonar ramp-up procedures (slowly increasing the sound in the water to necessary levels) in an attempt to clear the range prior to conduct of activities for the purpose of mitigation. Although ramp-up procedures have been used for some testing activities, the effectiveness at avoiding or reducing impacts on marine mammals has not been demonstrated. Until evidence suggests that ramp-procedures are an effective means of avoiding or reducing potential impacts on marine mammals, and for reasons discussed in section 5.3.4.1.4 (Implementing Active Sonar Ramp-Up Procedures During Training), the Navy is proposing to eliminate the implementation of this measure for testing activities as part of the Proposed Action.

5.3.4.2.2 Implementing a Mitigation Zone for Missile Exercises with Airborne Targets

Per current mitigation, a mitigation zone of 1,000 yd. (914 m) is observed around the expected expended material field. The Navy is proposing to eliminate the need for a Lookout to maintain a mitigation zone for missile exercises involving airborne targets. Most airborne targets are recoverable aerial drones, and missile impact with the target does not typically occur. Most anti-air missiles used in training are telemetry configured (i.e., they do not have an actual warhead). Impact of a target is unlikely because missiles are designed to detonate (simulated detonation for telemetry missiles) in the

vicinity of the target and not as a result of a direct strike on the target. Given the speed of the missile and the target, the high altitudes involved, and the long ranges of missile travel possible, it is not possible to definitively predict or to effectively observe where the missile fragments will fall. The potential expended material fall zone can only be predicted within tens of miles for long range events, which can be in excess of 80 nm from the firing location, and thousands of yards for shorter events, which can occur within several thousand yards from the firing location. Establishment of a mitigation zone for activities involving airborne targets would be ineffective at reducing potential impacts.

Furthermore the potential risk to any marine mammal or sea turtle from a missile exercise with an airborne target is a direct strike from falling expended material. Based on the extremely low potential for a target strike and associated expended material field to co-occur in space and time with a marine species at or near the surface of the water, the potential for a direct strike is negligible.

5.3.4.2.3 Implementing a Mitigation Zone for Medium- and Large-Caliber Gunnery Exercises with Airborne Targets

Per current mitigation, a mitigation zone is observed in the vicinity of the expected military expended materials field. The Navy is proposing to eliminate the need for a Lookout to observe the vicinity of the expected military expended materials for medium- and large-caliber gunnery exercises involving airborne targets. The potential military expended materials fall zone can only be predicted within thousands of yards, which can be up to 7 nm from the firing location. Establishment of a mitigation zone for activities involving airborne targets would be ineffective at reducing potential impacts.

Furthermore, the potential risk to any marine mammal or sea turtle from a gunnery exercise with an airborne target is a direct strike from falling military expended materials. Based on the extremely low potential for military expended materials to co-occur in space and time with a marine species at or near the surface of the water, the potential for a direct strike is negligible.

5.3.4.2.4 Implementing Measures for Laser Test Operations

Visual surveys would be conducted for all testing activities involving laser line scan, light imaging detection, and ranging lasers. Per Navy standard operating procedures, only trained personnel operate lasers and visual observation of the area is conducted to ensure human safety. The Navy is proposing to discontinue this procedure as a mitigation measure because: (1) it is currently a standard operating procedure conducted for human safety, and (2) the environmental consequences analysis suggests that impacts on resources from laser activities are not expected.

5.4 MITIGATION SUMMARY

Table 5.4-1 provides a summary of the Navy's recommended mitigation measures. For reference, currently implemented mitigation measures for each activity category are also summarized in the table. The process for developing each of these measures is detailed in Section 5.2.3 (Assessment Method) and involved: (1) an effectiveness assessment to determine if implementation of the measure will likely result in avoidance or reduction of an impact on a resource; and (2) an operational assessment to determine if implementation of the measures will have acceptable operational impacts on the Proposed Action with regard to personnel safety, practicability of implementation, readiness, and Navy policy. Measures are intended to meet applicable regulatory compliance requirements for NEPA, Executive Order 12114, and Council on Environmental Quality guidance. The Navy recommended mitigation measures were also developed consistent with resource-specific environmental requirements, as follows:

- Measures specifying marine mammals and indicators of marine mammal presence (large schools of fish or flocks of seabirds) as the protection focus are intended to meet MMPA requirements.
- Measures specifying marine mammals, sea turtles, flocks of seabirds, large schools of fish, jellyfish aggregations, or shallow coral reefs as the protection focus are intended to meet ESA requirements.
- Measures specifying shallow coral reefs, live hardbottom, artificial reefs, or shipwrecks as the protection focus are intended to meet Essential Fish Habitat requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.
- Measures specifying shipwrecks is an additional protection focus intended to meet Abandoned Shipwreck Act and National Historic Preservation Act requirements.

The measures presented in Table 5.4-1 are discussed in greater detail in Section 5.3.1 (Lookout Procedural Measures), Section 5.3.2 (Mitigation Zone Procedural Measures), and Section 5.3.3 (Mitigation Areas). As discussed in Section 5.2.2.2 (Protective Measures Assessment Protocol), the final suite of mitigations resulting from the ongoing planning for this EIS/OEIS, as well as the regulatory consultation and permitting processes, will be integrated into the Protective Measures Assessment Protocol for implementation purposes. Section 5.5 (Monitoring and Reporting) describes the monitoring and reporting efforts the Navy will undertake to investigate the effectiveness of implemented mitigation measures and to better understand the impacts of the Proposed Action on marine resources.

Table 5.4-1: Summary of Recommended Mitigation Measures

Activity Category or Mitigation Area	Recommended Lookout Procedural Measure	Recommended Mitigation Zone and Protection Focus	Current Measure and Protection Focus
Specialized Training	Lookouts will complete the Introduction to the U.S. Navy Afloat Environmental Compliance Training Series and the U.S. Navy Marine Species Awareness Training.	The mitigation zones observed by Lookouts are specified for each Mitigation Zone Procedural Measure below.	Applicable personnel will complete the U.S. Navy Marine Species Awareness Training prior to standing watch or serving as a Lookout.
Low-Frequency and Hull-Mounted Mid-Frequency Active Sonar during Anti-Submarine Warfare and Mine Warfare	2 Lookouts (general) 1 Lookout (minimally manned, moored, or anchored)	Sources that can be powered down: 1,000 yd. (914 m) and 500 yd. (457 m) power downs and 200 yd. (183 m) shutdown for marine mammals (hull-mounted mid-frequency and low-frequency) and sea turtles (low-frequency only). Sources that cannot be powered down: 200 yd. (183 m) shutdown for marine mammals and sea turtles.	Hull-mounted mid-frequency: 1,000 yd. (914 m) and 500 yd. (457 m) power downs and 200 yd. (183 m) shutdown for marine mammals and sea turtles Low-frequency: None
High-Frequency and Non-Hull Mounted Mid-Frequency Active Sonar	1 Lookout	200 yd. (183 m) for marine mammals (high-frequency and mid-frequency), sea turtles (bins MF8, MF9, MF10, and MF12 only)	Non-hull mounted mid-frequency: 200 yd. (183 m) for marine mammals High-frequency: None
Improved Extended Echo Ranging Sonobuoys	1 Lookout	600 yd. (549 m) for marine mammals and sea turtles Passive acoustic monitoring conducted with Navy assets participating in the activity.	1,000 yd. (914 m) for marine mammals and sea turtles Passive acoustic monitoring conducted with Navy assets participating in the activity.
Explosive Sonobuoys using 0.6–2.5 lb. NEW	1 Lookout	350 yd. (320 m) for marine mammals and sea turtles Passive acoustic monitoring conducted with Navy assets participating in the activity.	None
Anti-Swimmer Grenades	1 Lookout	200 yd. (183 m) for marine mammals and sea turtles	None.

Notes: NEW = net explosive weight, yd. = yard, m = meters

Table 5.4-1: Summary of Recommended Mitigation Measures (continued)

Activity Category or Mitigation Area	Recommended Lookout Procedural Measure	Recommended Mitigation Zone and Protection Focus	Current Measure and Protection Focus
Mine Countermeasures and Mine Neutralization using Positive Control Firing Devices	General: 1 or 2 Lookouts (NEW dependent) Diver-placed: 2 Lookouts Lookouts will survey the mitigation zone for seabirds prior to and after the detonation event.	NEW dependent for marine mammals and sea turtles	None
Mine Neutralization Activities Using Diver-Placed Time-Delay Firing Devices	4 Lookouts Lookouts will survey the mitigation zone for seabirds prior to and after the detonation event.	Up to 10-minute time-delay using up to 29 lb. NEW: 1,000 yd. (915 m) for marine mammals and sea turtles.	10-minute time-delay on up to 10 lb. NEW: 1,500 yd. (1,372 m) for marine mammals and sea turtles
Explosive and Non-Explosive Gunnery Exercises – Small- and Medium-Caliber Using a Surface Target	1 Lookout	200 yd. (183 m) for marine mammals and sea turtles	None

Notes: ft. = feet, km = kilometers, lb. = pounds, m = meters, mi.=miles, NEW = net explosive weight, nm = nautical miles, yd. = yards

Table 5.4-1: Summary of Recommended Mitigation Measures (continued)

Activity Category or Mitigation Area	Recommended Lookout Procedural Measure	Recommended Mitigation Zone and Protection Focus	Current Measure and Protection Focus
Explosive and Non-Explosive Gunnery Exercises – Large-Caliber Using a Surface Target	1 Lookout	Explosive: 600 yd. (549 m) for marine mammals and sea turtles Non-Explosive: 200 yd. (183 m) for marine mammals and sea turtles Both: 70 yd. (64 m) within 30 degrees on either side of the gun target line on the firing side for marine mammals and sea turtles Both: 350 yd. (320 m) for surveyed shallow coral reefs	Explosive: 600 yd. (549 m) for marine mammals, sea turtles and surveyed shallow coral reefs Non-Explosive: 200 yd. (183 m) for marine mammals and sea turtles. Both: 70 yd. (64 m) around entire ship for marine mammals and sea turtles.
Non-Explosive Missile Exercises and Explosive Missile Exercises (Including Rockets) up to 250 lb. NEW using a Surface Target	1 Lookout	900 yd. (823 m) for marine mammals and sea turtles 350 yd. (320 m) for surveyed shallow coral reefs	1,800 yd. (1.7 km) for marine mammals, sea turtles
Explosive Missile Exercises (Including Rockets) from 251 to 500 lb. NEW using a Surface Target	1 Lookout	2,000 yd. (1.8 km) for marine mammals and sea turtles 350 yd. (320 m) for surveyed shallow coral reefs	None
Bombing Exercises, Explosive and Non-Explosive	1 Lookout	Explosive: 2,500 yd. (2.3 km) for marine mammals and sea turtles Non-Explosive: 1,000 yd. (914 m) for marine mammals and sea turtles Both: 350 yd. (320 m) for surveyed shallow coral reefs	Explosive: 1,000 yd. (914 m) for marine mammals, sea turtles Non-Explosive: 1,000 yd. (914 m) for marine mammals, sea turtles

Notes: ft. = feet, km = kilometers, lb. = pounds, m = meters, NEW = net explosive weight, yd. = yards

Table 5.4-1: Summary of Recommended Mitigation Measures (continued)

Activity Category or Mitigation Area	Recommended Lookout Procedural Measure	Recommended Mitigation Zone and Protection Focus	Current Measure and Protection Focus
Torpedo (Explosive) Testing	1 Lookout	2,100 yd. (1.9 km) for marine mammals and sea turtles and jellyfish aggregations Passive acoustic monitoring conducted with Navy assets participating in the activity.	None
Sinking Exercises	2 Lookouts	2.5 nm for marine mammals and sea turtles and jellyfish aggregations. Passive acoustic monitoring conducted with Navy assets participating in the activity.	2.0 nm for marine mammals, sea turtles, and jellyfish aggregations
Vessel Movements	1 Lookout	500 yd. (457 m) for whales 200 yd. (183 m) for all other marine mammals (except bow riding dolphins)	500 yd. (457 m) for whales 200 yd. (183 m) for all other marine mammals (except bow riding dolphins)
Towed In-Water Device Use	1 Lookout	250 yd. (229 m) for marine mammals	250 yd. (229 m) for marine mammals
Precision Anchoring	No Lookouts in addition to standard personnel standing watch	Avoidance of precision anchoring within the anchor swing diameter of shallow coral reefs, live hardbottom, artificial reefs, and shipwrecks	None
Shallow Coral Reefs, Hardbottom Habitat, Artificial Reefs, and Shipwrecks	No Lookouts in addition to standard personnel standing watch	The Navy will not conduct precision anchoring within the anchor swing diameter, or explosive mine countermeasure and neutralization activities (except in existing anchorages and near-shore training areas around Guam and within Apra Harbor) within 350 yd. (320 m) of surveyed shallow coral reefs, live hardbottom, artificial reefs, and shipwrecks. No explosive or non-explosive small-, medium-, and large-caliber gunnery exercises using a surface target, explosive or non-explosive missile exercises using a surface target, explosive and non-explosive bombing exercises, or at-sea explosive testing within 350 yd. (320 m) of surveyed shallow coral reefs	Varying mitigation zone distances based on marine mammal ranges to effects

Notes: km = kilometers, lb. =pounds, m = meter, nm = nautical miles, yd. = yards

5.5 MONITORING AND REPORTING

5.5.1 APPROACH TO MONITORING

The Navy is committed to demonstrating environmental stewardship while executing its National Defense Mission and complying with the suite of Federal environmental laws and regulations. As a complement to the Navy's commitment to avoiding and reducing impacts of the Proposed Action through mitigation, the Navy will undertake monitoring efforts to track compliance with take authorizations, help evaluate the effectiveness of implemented mitigation measures, and gain a better understanding of the effects of the Proposed Action on marine resources. Taken together, mitigation and monitoring comprise the Navy's integrated approach for reducing environmental impacts from the Proposed Action. The Navy's overall monitoring approach will seek to leverage and build on existing research efforts whenever possible.

Consistent with the cooperating agency agreement with NMFS, mitigation and monitoring measures presented in this EIS/OEIS focus on the requirements for protection and management of marine resources. A well-designed monitoring program can provide important feedback for validating assumptions made in analyses and allow for adaptive management of marine resources. Since monitoring will be required for compliance with the final rule issued for the Proposed Action under the MMPA, details of the monitoring program will be developed in coordination with NMFS through the regulatory process. Discussions with resource agencies during the consultation and permitting processes may result in changes to the mitigation as described in this document. Such changes will be reflected in the Final EIS/OEIS, Record of Decision, and consultation documents such as the ESA Biological Opinion.

5.5.1.1 Integrated Comprehensive Monitoring Program

The Integrated Comprehensive Monitoring Program is intended to coordinate monitoring efforts across all regions where the Navy trains and tests and to allocate the most appropriate level and type of effort for each range complex (U.S. Department of the Navy 2010). The current Navy monitoring program is composed of a collection of "range-specific" monitoring plans, each of which was developed individually as part of MMPA and ESA compliance processes as environmental documentation was completed. These individual plans establish specific monitoring requirements for each range complex or testing range and are collectively intended to address the Integrated Comprehensive Monitoring Plan top-level goals.

A 2010 Navy-sponsored monitoring meeting in Arlington, Virginia, initiated a process to critically evaluate the current Navy monitoring plans and begin development of revisions and updates to both existing region-specific plans as well as the Integrated Comprehensive Monitoring Plan. Discussions at that meeting as well as the following Navy and NMFS annual adaptive management meeting established a way ahead for continued refinement of the Navy's monitoring program. This process included establishing a Scientific Advisory Group of leading marine mammal scientists with the initial task of developing recommendations that would serve as the basis for a Strategic Plan for Navy monitoring. The Strategic Plan is intended to be a primary component of the Integrated Comprehensive Monitoring Program, and provide a "vision" for Navy monitoring across geographic regions, and serve as guidance for determining how to most efficiently and effectively invest the marine species monitoring resources to address Integrated Comprehensive Monitoring Plan top-level goals and satisfy MMPA Letter of Authorization regulatory requirements.

The objective of the Strategic Plan is to continue the evolution of Navy marine species monitoring towards a single integrated program, incorporating Scientific Advisory Group recommendations, and establishing a more transparent framework for soliciting, evaluating, and implementing monitoring work

across the range complexes and testing ranges. The Strategic Plan must consider a range of factors in addition to the scientific recommendations including logistic, operational, and funding considerations and will be revised regularly as part of the annual adaptive management process.

The Integrated Comprehensive Monitoring Plan establishes top-level goals that have been developed in coordination with NMFS (U.S. Department of the Navy 2010). The following top-level goals will become more specific with regard to identifying potential projects and monitoring field work through the Strategic Plan process as projects are evaluated and initiated in the MITT Study Area.

- An increase in the understanding of the likely occurrence of marine mammals or ESA-listed marine species in the vicinity of the action (i.e., presence, abundance, distribution, and density of species);
- An increase in the understanding of the nature, scope, or context of the likely exposure of marine mammals and ESA-listed species to any of the potential stressor(s) associated with the action (e.g., tonal and impulse sound), through better understanding of one or more of the following: (1) the action and the environment in which it occurs (e.g., sound source characterization, propagation, and ambient noise levels), (2) the affected species (e.g., life history or dive patterns), (3) the likely co-occurrence of marine mammals and ESA-listed marine species with the action (in whole or part) associated with specific adverse impacts, or (4) the likely biological or behavioral context of exposure to the stressor for the marine mammal and ESA-listed marine species (e.g., age class of exposed animals or known pupping, calving or feeding areas);
- An increase in the understanding of how individual marine mammals or ESA-listed marine species respond (behaviorally or physiologically) to the specific stressors associated with the action (in specific contexts, where possible, e.g., at what distance or received level);
- An increase in the understanding of how anticipated individual responses, to individual stressors or anticipated combinations of stressors, may impact either: (1) the long-term fitness and survival of an individual; or (2) the population, species, or stock (e.g., through impacts on annual rates of recruitment or survival);
- An increase in the understanding of the effectiveness of mitigation and monitoring measures;
- A better understanding and record of the manner in which the authorized entity complies with the Incidental Take Authorization and Incidental Take Statement;
- An increase in the probability of detecting marine mammals (through improved technology or methods), both specifically within the mitigation zone (thus allowing for more effective implementation of the mitigation) and in general, to better achieve the above goals; and
- A reduction in the adverse impact of activities to the least practicable level, as defined in the MMPA.

5.5.1.2 Scientific Advisory Group Recommendations

Navy established the Scientific Advisory Group in 2011 with the initial task of evaluating current Navy monitoring approaches under the Integrated Comprehensive Monitoring Plan and existing MMPA Letters of Authorization and developing objective scientific recommendations that would form the basis for the Strategic Plan. While recommendations were fairly broad and not prescriptive from a range complex perspective, the Scientific Advisory Group did provide specific programmatic recommendations that serve as guiding principles for the continued evolution of the Navy Marine Species Monitoring Program and provide a direction for the Strategic Plan to move this development. Key recommendations include:

- Working within a conceptual framework of knowledge, from basic information on the occurrence of species within each range complex, to more specific matters of exposure, response, and consequences.
- Facilitating collaboration among researchers in each region, with the intent to develop a coherent and synergistic regional monitoring and research effort.
- Striving to move away from a “box-checking” mentality. Monitoring studies should be designed and conducted according to scientific objectives, rather than on merely cataloging effort expended.
- Approach the monitoring program holistically and select projects that offer the best opportunity to advance understanding of the issues, as opposed to establishing range-specific requirements.

5.5.2 REPORTING

The Navy is committed to documenting and reporting relevant aspects of training and testing activities in to verify implementation of mitigation, comply with current permits, and improve future environmental assessments. Navy reporting initiatives are described below.

5.5.2.1 Exercise and Monitoring Reporting

The Navy will submit annual exercise and monitoring reports to the Office of Protected Resources at NMFS. The exercise reports will describe the level of training and testing conducted during the reporting period, and the monitoring reports will describe both the nature of the monitoring that has been conducted and the actual results of the monitoring. All of the details regarding the content of the annual reports will be coordinated with NMFS through the permitting process. All reports submitted to date can be found on the NMFS Office of Protected Resources webpage.

5.5.2.2 Stranding Response Plan

In coordination with NMFS, the Navy will have a stranding response plan. All of the details regarding the content of the stranding response plan will be coordinated with NMFS through the permitting process.

5.5.2.3 Bird Strike Reporting

The Navy will report all damaging and non-damaging bird strikes to the Naval Safety Center.

5.5.2.4 Marine Mammal Incident Reporting

If any injury or death of a marine mammal is observed during training or testing activities, the Navy will immediately halt the activity and report the incident, including dead or injured animals, to NMFS or the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, as appropriate.

5.6 TERRESTRIAL RESOURCES

Conservation measures described in the 2010 MIRC Biological Opinion are implemented to minimize, avoid, or offset impacts associated with training activities. The current MIRC BO will expire on 1 August 2015. Mitigation and conservation measures on land are being coordinated through the Section 7 Endangered Species Act consultation process between the Navy and the USFWS. These measures will be included in the FEIS with the publication of the USFWS Biological Opinion.

5.7 CULTURAL RESOURCES

Based on consultations with the Guam State Historic Preservation Officer, CNMI Historic Preservation Officer, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and the National Park Service, a Programmatic

Agreement was negotiated in 2009 for all military training activities proposed under the MIRC EIS/OEIS Preferred Alternative and included additional mitigation measures and procedures. Mitigation measures and procedures included in the 2009 Programmatic Agreement will be implemented to avoid and minimize impacts on cultural resources from training activities.

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