

## FOREWORD

The Draft Mariana Islands Training and Testing (MITT) Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Overseas Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS/OEIS) was released on February 1, 2019 for public review and comment through April 17, 2019. Changes in this Final SEIS/OEIS reflect responses to all substantive comments made on the Draft SEIS/OEIS during the public comment period as well as refinements to the Proposed Action made by the Navy. Public comments are summarized, and their corresponding responses are provided, in Appendix K (Public Comments and Responses) of the Final SEIS/OEIS.

While most sections in the Final SEIS/OEIS were changed in some manner between the draft and final versions, many of those changes were not substantive and entailed minor modifications to improve clarity. Substantive changes made to sections between the Draft SEIS/OEIS and Final SEIS/OEIS are summarized below.

- Chapter 2 (Description of Proposed Action and Alternatives):

Information on standard operating procedures for amphibious assaults and amphibious raids was added. Standard operating procedures for these activities are designed primarily for safety of personnel and equipment but will also benefit shallow coral reefs, hard bottom, and other substrates.

Added Table 2.3-1 which provides the differences between major training exercises and smaller integrated/coordinated anti-submarine exercises based on scale, duration, and sonar hours for the purposes of exercise reporting requirements.

- Section 3.0 (Introduction to Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences):

Additional information regarding the surface area of the seafloor that has the potential to be impacted by the use of military expended materials proposed under the SEIS/OEIS was added to *Table 3.0-18 (Impact Area of Proposed Military Expended Materials)*. The amount of military expended materials that would result from activities proposed in this SEIS/OEIS would decrease from the amount analyzed in the 2015 MITT Final EIS/OEIS. Therefore, the area of the seafloor potentially impacted by military expended materials residing on the seafloor is expected to be less. In addition, updated information was added to *Section 3.0.4.1.4.1 (Muzzle Blast from Naval Gunfire)*, including a new figure that depicts 5-inch deck gun variants on two classes of Navy surface ships, to enhance the discussion of weapon firing noise. Additional information was provided in *Section 3.0.4.1.2 (Vessel Noise)* to differentiate between Navy ships and non-Navy ships in terms of their radiated ship noise. Finally, *Section 3.0.4.4.7 (Personnel Disturbance)* presented a new stressor to account for the potential for physical impacts on the nearshore seafloor from personnel involved in training or testing activities.

- Section 3.2 (Sediments and Water Quality):

Additional information regarding water quality criteria and screening levels in waters surrounding Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) was provided, including water quality standards and classifications set by Guam and the CNMI. In addition, a summary of research conducted at other sites with expended munitions and other military expended materials was included.

- Section 3.4 (Marine Mammals):

Updates including the best available science and discussions of newly published journal articles were included in this section. In addition, an error was identified in the explosive range to effects tables and was corrected. There is no change to the explosives being proposed. Lastly, an expanded discussion of beaked whale strandings was added in *Section 3.4.2.1.1.6 (Stranding)* to include the history of their routine occurrence in the Mariana Islands based on concern expressed in public comments on the Draft SEIS/OEIS.

- Section 3.5 (Sea Turtles):

Updates including the best available science and discussions of newly published journal articles were included in this section. In addition, an error was identified in the explosive range to effects tables and was corrected. There is no change to the explosives being proposed. This section was also updated to include an analysis on potential impacts on sea turtles resulting from multiple stressors (*Section 3.5.3, Summary of Potential Impacts on Sea Turtles*).

- Section 3.6 (Birds):

An analysis of potential impacts on birds from multiple stressors (*Section 3.6.3, Summary of Potential Impacts on Marine Birds*) was included in this section.

- Section 3.8 (Marine Invertebrates):

Background information and analysis on hydrothermal vents, to the extent that data were available, was included in this section. In addition, a coral reef map (*Figure 3.8-1: Percent Coral Cover and Habitat Types Around Farallon de Medinilla*) was added. Updated information from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's coral condition report for CNMI and Guam was incorporated.

- Section 3.9 (Fishes):

Updates including the best available science and discussions of newly published journal articles were included in this section. In addition, an error was identified in the explosive range to effects tables and was corrected. There is no change to the explosives being proposed.

- Section 3.10 (Terrestrial Species and Habitats):

Clarifications on when periodic surveys of Farallon de Medinilla occur and on training activity type descriptions on the island were included in this section.

- Section 3.11 (Cultural Resources):

Cultural practices and beliefs shared by participants at the National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 consultation meetings were added to this section. Minor corrections and edits were made, where applicable.

- Section 3.12 (Socioeconomic Resources):

A more in-depth analysis of environmental justice issues, particularly issues associated with traditional fishing practices, was added to this section. Changes included information on the importance of coral reefs to fishers, citing National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration publications that report on surveys of fishers. The most recent available economic data on GDP growth for Guam and CNMI, visitation, and fisheries landings were added to the section. Data on the

number of Notices to Mariners issued by the U.S. Coast Guard on behalf of the Navy and announcing restrictions on access to waters around Farallon de Medinilla and beneath warning areas were updated. Lastly, information was provided on bioaccumulation risk to fisheries due to munitions constituents in the secondary impact discussion.

- Chapter 5 (Mitigation):

The Navy worked with the National Marine Fisheries Service during the Endangered Species Act consultation process to develop new procedural mitigation for manta rays and enhance existing procedural mitigation for marine mammals, sea turtles, and hammerhead sharks during explosive mine neutralization activities involving Navy divers. In addition, updates to mitigation area measures were also included as a result of consultations under the Marine Mammal Protection Act and Endangered Species Act, as detailed in Appendix I (Geographic Mitigation Assessment).

- Appendix I (Geographic Mitigation Assessment):

The boundaries of the proposed geographic mitigation areas were updated using bathymetry as the physical feature defining the areas. The list of mitigation areas considered but not carried forward was expanded to include other areas suggested by commenters and the rationale for not proposing those areas as geographic mitigation areas.

The Navy developed new mitigation for the Final SEIS/OEIS in consultation with NMFS to limit surface ship hull-mounted MF1 mid-frequency active sonar to a maximum combined total of 20 hours from December 1 to April 30 in the Marpi Reef Geographic Mitigation Area and Chalan Kanoa Reef Mitigation Area.

- Appendix K (Public Comment Responses):

This Appendix was added since the release of the Draft SEIS/OEIS and includes an explanation of the public comment process for the Draft SEIS/OEIS, a list of agencies and organizations that provided comments, and a table containing the comments received and the Navy's responses.

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