



PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT SUMMARY REPORT

Gulf of Alaska Navy Training Activities Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/ Overseas Environmental Impact Statement

FINAL

April 2021

**Gulf of Alaska Navy Training Activities
Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Overseas Environmental Impact Statement
Public Involvement Summary Report**

This report summarizes public involvement and stakeholder outreach activities the U.S. Navy conducted, and issues heard from the public and agencies, during the *Gulf of Alaska (GOA) Navy Training Activities Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Overseas Environmental Impact Statement (EIS/OEIS)* public review and comment period, which ran from Dec. 11, 2020, to Feb. 16, 2021.

The purpose of public involvement and outreach was 1) to notify and inform stakeholders and the public about the Proposed Action and the release of the 2020 GOA Draft Supplemental EIS/OEIS, and 2) to provide the opportunity for the public and other stakeholders to comment on the 2020 GOA Draft Supplemental EIS/OEIS. Involvement and outreach efforts were conducted in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Navy guidance.

The Navy recognizes the importance of engagement with Alaska Native federally recognized tribes, stakeholders, and the public. Due to the widespread outbreak of respiratory illness from the novel coronavirus disease, designated as COVID-19, and federal, state, and local guidance on social distancing resulting in the temporary closure of government offices and public facilities, the Navy took additional steps to broaden efforts to notify and inform the public, as described in this report.

Summary of Activities

A. PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

The Navy prepared materials to notify the public of the release of the 2020 GOA Draft Supplemental EIS/OEIS and provide information about the Proposed Action, the virtual public meetings, and the opportunity for the public to submit comments. The following is a summary of those notices. Public notices can be found on the [Public Notices page](#).

Federal Register Notices

A Notice of Availability of the 2020 GOA Draft Supplemental EIS/OEIS and a Notice of Virtual Public Meetings were published in the *Federal Register* Dec. 11, 2020.

Newspaper Advertisements

Display advertisements were placed in five local Alaskan newspapers. The advertisements were published for one day, beginning Dec. 11, 2020. The advertisements published again at least 15 days prior to the first virtual public meeting and repeated in the newspapers for three consecutive days, including a Sunday, prior to the first virtual public meeting date. Publication dates were dependent on the newspaper's publication frequency (daily, semi-weekly, weekly). Table 1 shows the newspapers and corresponding publication dates for each advertisement.

**Table 1: Newspaper Publications for the 2020 GOA Draft Supplemental EIS/OEIS
Public Review and Comment Period**

Newspaper	Newspaper Coverage	Publication Frequency	Publication Dates
<i>Anchorage Daily News</i>	Anchorage	Daily except Saturday	Friday, Dec. 11, 2020 Monday, Jan. 4, 2021 Friday, Jan. 15, 2021 Sunday, Jan. 17, 2021 Monday, Jan. 18, 2021
<i>Cordova Times</i>	Cordova and Prince William Sound	Friday only	Friday, Dec. 11, 2020 Friday, Jan. 8, 2021 Friday, Jan. 15, 2021 Friday, Jan. 22, 2021 Friday, Jan. 29, 2021
<i>Juneau Empire</i>	Juneau and Southeastern Alaska	Tuesday-Friday and Sunday	Friday, Dec. 11, 2020 Sunday, Jan. 3, 2021 Thursday, Jan. 14, 2021 Friday, Jan. 15, 2021 Sunday, Jan. 17, 2021
<i>Kodiak Daily Mirror</i>	Kodiak	Monday-Friday	Friday, Dec. 11, 2020 Monday, Jan. 4, 2021 Thursday, Jan. 14, 2021 Friday, Jan. 15, 2021 Monday, Jan. 18, 2021
<i>Peninsula Clarion</i>	Kenai-Soldotna Area	Tuesday-Friday and Sunday	Friday, Dec. 11, 2020 Sunday, Jan. 3, 2021 Thursday, Jan. 14, 2021 Friday, Jan. 15, 2021 Sunday, Jan. 17, 2021

Postcard Mailer

Postcards were mailed first-class Dec. 10, 2020, to 524 individuals, community and business groups, tribal staff, and nongovernmental organizations.

Stakeholder and Tribal Notification Letters

Stakeholder letters, including a fact sheet booklet enclosure, were mailed first-class Dec. 14, 2020, to 181 federal, state, and local elected officials and government agencies.

Tribal letters, including enclosures of a fact sheet booklet and a CD-ROM of all volumes of the 2020 GOA Draft Supplemental EIS/OEIS, were mailed Dec. 16, 2020, via U.S. Priority Mail or FedEx to 24 tribal chairpersons, presidents, or chiefs of Alaska Native federally recognized tribes.

Stakeholder and Tribal Database/Mailing List

A stakeholder and tribal database/ mailing list was developed using stakeholders and Alaska Native federally recognized tribes identified during Phase II, including all commenters and meeting attendees, Phase III Scoping commenters, and potential stakeholders and Alaska Native federally recognized tribes from previous Navy projects in Alaska. The list was updated and validated to manage and document the distribution of project notifications.

Media Outreach and Social Media Notices

The Commander, Navy Region Northwest Public Affairs Office distributed a news release and public

service announcement (PSA) to local, regional, and national print and broadcast (radio and television) media Dec. 11, 2020. The news release and PSA were redistributed Jan. 14, 2021, and Feb. 2, 2021, prior to the virtual public meetings.

Commander, Navy Region Northwest Rear Admiral Stephen Barnett submitted a Letter to the Editor for publication in local print media Dec. 11, 2020.

A Facebook post was published Dec. 11, 2020, and Jan. 14, 2021, on the Commander, Navy Region Northwest and U.S. Pacific Fleet Facebook pages. The Facebook post was published again Feb. 2, 2021, on the Commander, Navy Region Northwest Facebook page.

Congressional Staffer Notification

The news release and an informational email were sent to Alaska delegation Congressional staffers Dec. 11, 2020.

Website Subscriber Email Notifications

Forty-eight website subscribers from the scoping phase were carried forward into the 2020 GOA Draft Supplemental EIS/OEIS public review and comment phase. Email notifications were sent to website subscribers on the following dates:

- Dec. 11, 2020: To announce the release of the 2020 GOA Draft Supplemental EIS/OEIS and virtual public meetings.
- Jan. 11, 2021: To announce that questions would now be accepted for discussion at the Jan. 19, 2021, virtual public meeting.
- Jan. 14, 2021: To remind subscribers that the question period would soon close for the Jan. 19, 2021, virtual public meeting.
- Jan. 26, 2021: To announce that questions would now be accepted for discussion at the Feb. 3, 2021, virtual public meeting.
- Feb. 1, 2021: To remind subscribers that the question period would soon close for the Feb. 3, 2021, virtual public meeting.
- Feb. 4, 2021: To obtain feedback from the public on the virtual public meetings.
- Feb. 11, 2021: To remind subscribers that the comment period would soon close.

There were 49 website subscribers as of April 7, 2021.

B. PUBLIC INFORMATION

Project Website

A project website was established to provide the public with project, virtual public meeting, and commenting information, and to accept comments electronically. The project website was updated for the 2020 GOA Draft Supplemental EIS/OEIS release and changes went live Dec. 11, 2020. The project website address is **www.GOAEIS.com**.

The website address was included in the *Federal Register* Notice of Virtual Public Meetings, newspaper advertisements, stakeholder letters, tribal letters, media releases, PSAs, email notifications, and postcard mailers.

The website presents project information on these main topics:

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- Proposed Action and alternatives
 - Training in the Gulf of Alaska and the EIS/OEIS Study Area
 - Importance of realistic training, including use of sonar and weapon systems
 - Documents, including:
 - 2020 GOA Draft Supplemental EIS/OEIS and technical reports
 - 2016 Final Supplemental EIS/OEIS, Record of Decision, technical reports, and references
 - 2011 Final EIS/OEIS, Record of Decision, technical reports, and references
 - NEPA, public involvement, and commenting information
 - Environmental stewardship efforts, including:
 - Navy Acoustic Effects Model
 - Protective Measures Assessment Protocol
 - Marine protective measures
 - Marine species research and monitoring
 - Afloat pollution prevention
 - Navy environmental videos
 - Related links and links to required information

The following supporting information and documentation was posted on the website:

- Public notices
- Fact sheet booklet
- Maps
- Frequently asked questions
- Video of Rear Admiral Barnett’s welcome statement for the virtual public meetings
- Virtual public meeting brief
- Zoom Webinar technical guidance
- Recording of live virtual public meeting and transcript of audio

The website was periodically updated with project announcements and other updates.

Email Address

A dedicated email address, projectmanager@goaeis.com, was set up to receive substantive questions for discussion with Navy representatives at the virtual public meetings or project-related questions received from stakeholders. Questions were accepted between Jan. 11 and 18 for the meeting on Jan. 19, 2021; questions were accepted between Jan. 26 and Feb. 2 for the meeting on Feb. 3, 2021.

Expanded Outreach

To inform stakeholders, Navy personnel briefed the Alaska federal Congressional delegation and participated in two Alaska environmental conferences prior to and during the public review and comment period. Expanded outreach will continue throughout the development of the Final Supplemental EIS/OEIS to ensure stakeholders are kept informed.

Virtual Public Meetings

Due to COVID-19 travel and public event restrictions, the Navy was unable to hold in-person meetings in Alaska and instead held [virtual public meetings](#) using the Zoom video conferencing platform. The Navy’s goal was to provide an opportunity for the public to learn more about the project and the environmental impact analysis, as well as have their questions answered, just as they would at a poster

station at an in-person public meeting. The Navy held two virtual public meetings on Jan. 19, 2021, and Feb. 3, 2021. Interested individuals could attend a virtual public meeting by computer, tablet, mobile device, or telephone. The virtual public meetings consisted of a short welcome video from Commander, Navy Region Northwest Rear Admiral Stephen Barnett, a slide presentation, and a question-and-answer session to discuss the Proposed Action and the draft environmental impact analysis. Each meeting was scheduled for one hour.

The public was encouraged to ask substantive questions about the Proposed Action or the environmental impact analysis during the virtual public meetings. Questions could also be submitted in advance during a specific timeframe (see above) by emailing projectmanager@goaeis.com or by completing an online form to be answered during the virtual public meetings. Questions submitted and discussed at the virtual public meetings were not part of the public record. An official public comment could be submitted by mail or on the project website through Feb. 16, 2021. The Navy promoted the proper commenting channels throughout all the notification materials, website content, subscriber email notifications, and during the virtual public meeting.

The presentation portion of the virtual public meeting was recorded, and the Navy posted the Jan. 19, 2021, recording of the live presentation on the project website for interested parties who were unable to attend. The project website contained information the Navy would have presented at in-person open house public meetings, as well as the presentation slides given at the virtual public meetings.

Information on the 2020 GOA Draft Supplemental EIS/OEIS virtual public meetings can be found on the [Virtual Public Meeting page](#).

Virtual Public Meeting Summary

Table 2 includes a summary of the virtual public meetings held on Jan. 19, 2021, and Feb. 3, 2021. In total, 56 members of the public, media, elected officials or staffers, nongovernmental organizations, contractors, and Navy employees attended the two virtual public meetings. The “questions answered” portion of the table provides a list of all questions asked via email or during the virtual public meetings.

Table 2: Summary of Virtual Public Meetings

Date/Time	Attendance
Tuesday, Jan. 19, 2021 3 to 4 p.m. Alaska Standard Time Meeting Duration: 106 minutes	Total Attendance: 38 General Public: 13 Navy Personnel or Known Navy Contractors: 25
Media Attendance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Margaret Bauman, The Cordova Times/Fishermen’s News Online. 	
Questions Answered (written exactly as emailed or typed into the Zoom application): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you describe one change you have made to your exercises based on a response to public concerns? • So you are requesting to do the war games every year rather than every other year? • Why can’t you train in more challenging weather such as in fall or winter to create more realistic scenarios? • Describe more about the sonar and it’s impacts on Fish and Marine Mammals. I’m very concerned about those impacts. Thank you • What is the "no action alternative" referring to again. • What will you be doing this year that you have not done in the past? 	

- Did you evaluate the contribution the war games played on the huge Murre die off several years ago. The birds were not killed by your training, they just were not able to find food and could not orient after it.
- Please discuss impacts (Biologist) exercises have on sea birds.
- What new aircraft types and platforms will you be using?
- "Will you be bringing up an aircraft carrier with a carrier strike group and can you explain what that is please?"
- Will there be submarines?"
- What maximal decimals are you allowed to use with sonar / weaponry? Are you blowing things up? Are there explosions?
- Will you be sinking any ships?
- Are you using helicopters with dipping sonar this year and can you explain how that works for us?
- How may hours of sonar? What specific kind of sonar? How will it be deployed?
- What new information do you have on impacts of sonar on fish, whales, plankton, marine birds and other marine mammals?
- How can marine mammals get out of your way if you are using bombs, and projectiles? How many marine mammal "takes" are you allowed for the area?
- What new marine mammal density studies have you done since the last Northern Edge training exercises?
- What specific mitigation measures will you use to reduce potential impacts on marine species and the environment?
- Are the observers using sonar to detect marine mammals underwater in the area or simply looking on the surface for signs
- What is your allowable "take" or anticipated death rate of specific marine mammals established by NMFS and NOAA? How was that exactly determined?
- How many more bombs and munitions will be expended this year over the last training exercises?
- Will you be coordinating your training activities with rocket launch schedules at the Kodiak Spaceport? What communications have you had with the Alaska Aerospace Corporation?

Notable Attendees:

- Greg Kaplan, Congressional Staffer from Senator Lisa Murkowski's office.
- Robert "Gordy" Vernon, Homer Library Advisory Board Member.
- Christy Terry, Mayor of Seward, AK; Seward Port Manager, Alaska Railroad.
- Stacy Studebaker, Kodiak Audubon Society.

Date/Time	Attendance
Wednesday, Feb. 3, 2021 5 to 6 p.m. Alaska Standard Time Meeting Duration: 61 minutes	Total Attendance: 18 General Public: 5 Navy Personnel or Known Navy Contractors: 13
Media Attendance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sage Smiley, KSTK (Stikine River Radio). 	
Questions Answered (written exactly as emailed or typed into the Zoom application): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On your NEPA process slide, you have the Record of Decision (ROD) being issued in the Spring of 2022. Should it be Spring of 2023? Thanks 	

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does the Navy conduct studies considering alternative staging areas for Northern Edge operations other than the Gulf of Alaska?• Is there an opportunity for navy ships to make short stops in communities such as Ketchikan? The reasoning is Alaska - specifically southeast - would like to be a supply port for future navy deployment in to the Arctic. Seeing an interest from the navy would be encouraging. We also have an airport for refueling and support.• Eyak Preservation Council (EPC) FOIA'd the Department of the Navy. The majority of the requested information was withheld. ALL of the information regarding sonar and sound in the 2019 exercises was classified. Is the military aware of how much sealife is impacted by these military actions in May? |
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Notable Attendees:

- Greg Kaplan, Congressional Staffer from Senator Lisa Murkowski's office.

Fact Sheet Booklet

A 16-page [fact sheet booklet](#) was developed to provide project information to the public and included the following topics:

- Introduction to the Navy's 2020 GOA Draft Supplemental EIS/OEIS
- Military Training in Alaska and the Gulf of Alaska
- Importance of Realistic Training
- Northern Edge Joint Training Exercises
- Gulf of Alaska Temporary Maritime Activities Area
- Future Training Requirements
- Key Updates Made in the 2020 GOA Draft Supplemental EIS/OEIS
- Importance of Training with Active Sonar and Weapon Systems
- Summary of the 2020 GOA Draft Supplemental EIS/OEIS Findings
- Marine Mammal Estimated Takes
- Marine Resource Protection
- Community Engagement

The fact sheet booklet was distributed via mail to stakeholders and Alaska Native tribes and posted on the project website.

Frequently Asked Questions

Frequently asked questions were developed to provide the public with additional project information and can be found on the [FAQs page](#).

Comment Form

A comment form was available for download on the project website for the public to print and mail their comment. The public was also able to submit comments electronically via the project website.

Information Repositories

Information repositories were established during the scoping period in February 2020. Many information repositories were not open for public access due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Informational materials and a hardcopy and CD-ROM of the 2020 GOA Draft Supplemental EIS/OEIS were mailed to each open information repository. Information repositories included:

- Cordova Public Library
- Kodiak Public Library
- Seward Community Library

All public notices provided the contact information for the Navy Region Northwest Public Affairs Specialist if the public needed assistance accessing the document.

Stakeholder and Virtual Public Meeting Briefs

A stakeholder briefing presentation was prepared for Navy personnel to brief stakeholders and Alaska Native tribes during the 2020 GOA Draft Supplemental EIS/OEIS public review and comment period. A brief for use during the virtual public meetings presentation portion was developed and available for download from the project website. The virtual public meeting brief can be found on the [Virtual Public Meeting page](#).

C. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

This section is intended to illustrate the main issues heard from the public during the public review and comment period; it is not meant to capture all aspects of the comments or to serve as a legal record.

The public review and comment period ran from Dec. 10, 2020, to Feb. 16, 2021. Fourteen comments were received during the public comment period. Comments were submitted via the project website's electronic comment form (13) and postal mail (1).

Each comment was reviewed and categorized into specific resource areas or topics. One comment may include comments on multiple resource areas or topics. All comments were compiled, logged, and distributed to the Supplemental EIS/OEIS project team and appropriate subject matter experts. The Supplemental EIS/OEIS project team discussed the impact, significance, and relevance of the comments to the preparation of the Final Supplemental EIS/OEIS. All comments submitted during the comment period will become part of the public record and will be addressed in the Final Supplemental EIS/OEIS.

Table 3 includes a summary of public comments to provide a brief overview of the general issues or concerns expressed during the public review and comment period.

Table 3: Summary of Public Comments

Resource Area/Topic	Issue/Concern
Proposed Action and Alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Concern the Navy did not consider a reasonable range of alternatives by only considering the Preferred Alternative and No Action Alternative.• Request the Navy study alternative training locations that are further offshore, such as 300 miles south of the continental shelf break, and away from high concentrations of fish and whales.• Request the Navy consider rotating the locations of the training exercises to minimize impacts on one area.

Resource Area/Topic	Issue/Concern
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request a return to pre-2010 training levels. • Request the Navy conduct training activities without antisubmarine warfare, torpedoes, active mid-frequency sonar, and explosives, and to reduce the amount of allowable munitions.
Northern Edge Training Exercises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern about the timing of the training exercises and suggesting exercises be scheduled in fall and winter seasons, or even in the late summer (August), to avoid impacts on marine mammals, the salmon fishery, Alaska Native tribes, and fishermen. • Request for Northern Edge exercises to occur in only certain parts of the Temporary Maritime Activities Area (TMAA) to minimize impacts on species and to avoid migration routes of key species. • Request to move Northern Edge exercises further offshore and into deeper waters off the continental shelf. • Support for the Navy and its training activities conducted in Alaska. • Request for the Navy to consider the Precautionary Principle, and not conduct sonar activities during Northern Edge Training exercises due to the potential impacts on marine mammals and the little-known impacts on fish. • Request the Navy conduct Northern Edge exercises without the use of chaff, plastics, and toxic materials to minimize what is found on the seafloor or suspended in the water column.
Marine Mammal and Sea Turtle Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern the environmental impact analysis fails to adequately assess the impacts training activities would have on marine life and habitat, requiring a revised Draft Supplemental EIS/OEIS. • Concern about marine mammal strandings in connection with Navy training activities, including the use of mid-frequency active sonar and the potential impact on beaked whales. • Concern sonar training can alter foraging and feeding behaviors in beaked whales, blue whales, and endangered sperm whales. • Concern the Navy underestimates takes because it improperly discounts the adverse impacts of behavioral responses to sonar and explosives on various species, e.g., blue whales. • Concern about the accuracy of density numbers used for marine mammals and modeled impacts, specifically for gray and beaked whales; Dall's, white-sided, and harbor porpoises; pinnipeds; dolphins; and sea otters, and how using only mean densities could result in an underestimation of takes. • Request for the Navy to incorporate a conservative approach to its density estimations. • Questions about whether uncertainty is incorporated into density and group size estimates for the marine mammal impact modeling, and a request to better address group sizes for marine mammal take estimates. • Claims that the Navy underestimated potential harm to the distinct population segments of humpback whales, and that the stock definitions for humpback whales in the 2020 GOA Draft Supplemental EIS/OEIS are

Resource Area/Topic	Issue/Concern
	<p>outdated and should match the distinct population segments as defined under the Endangered Species Act.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern about vessel strikes with, and vessel noise impacts on, the North Pacific right whale. • Concern about the Navy using a single, internal Navy document as the basis for its analytical methods for marine species. • Questions about whether current scientific research supports the continued use of weighting functions and permanent and temporary threshold shifts for marine species. • Concern about behavior thresholds for non-impulsive sources and the use of cut-off distances, which may underestimate potential takes of marine species and contradicts existing data. • Concern about behavior thresholds for explosives and the Navy’s claim that marine mammals do not exhibit behavioral responses to single detonations. • Concern the Navy does not accurately account for the probability of ship-strike risk, and that previous Navy ship-strikes have gone undocumented. • Concern the Navy has based its estimates of mortality and non-auditory injury from explosives on an averaging of risk, which is inconsistent with the probability standards in the Marine Mammal Protection Act. • Concern the Navy has applied erroneous and nonconservative criteria in its estimation of hearing loss. • Concern the Navy has based its behavioral response estimates for odontocetes on captive studies of bottlenose dolphins, which are considered an unresponsive species, and disregarded several relevant studies on wild marine mammals. • Concern the Navy has failed to account in its behavioral response functions a heightened response to dipping sonar. • Request for the Navy to re-estimate and request behavioral takes of marine mammals during all explosive activities, including those that involve single detonations consistent with in-air explosive events. • Concern about mortality and injury thresholds for explosives, including underestimating predicted mortalities and injuries, and requests for the Navy to explain the analysis results for constants and exponents for onset mortality and onset slight lung injury thresholds. • Request for the Navy to use onset mortality, onset slight lung injury, and onset gastrointestinal tract injury thresholds rather than the 50-percent thresholds to estimate the number of marine mammal takes and the ranges to effect. • Concern the Navy’s post-model analyses underestimate the various numbers of takes. • Concern about leatherback sea turtles because of their noise sensitivity and potential for vessel strikes; and request for the Navy to consider an updated density number from a recent National Marine Fisheries Service status review.

Resource Area/Topic	Issue/Concern
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Request for the Navy to use updated population estimates for the northern sea otter. Request to distinguish that the northern sea otter is managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; the National Marine Fisheries Services manages all other marine mammals.
Fish and Invertebrate Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concern about impacts on fisheries, including five species of salmon and many species of groundfish and shellfish. Concern the Navy does not acknowledge that high-intensity noise can harm fish and invertebrates, which will minimize prey availability for marine mammals and birds, and that the Navy did not consider recent surveys and studies on fish responses to noise in the 2020 GOA Draft Supplemental EIS/OEIS. Concern about income loss to fisherman, Alaska Native tribes, and supermarkets due to salmon decreases. Questions about why the Chinook salmon would be the most impacted by Navy training. Request for the Navy to analyze how sonar influences Pacific herring hearing. Request for the Navy to describe the potential hectares of zooplankton and other pelagic species that would be impacted by underwater explosions. Questions about whether shellfish and groundfish species within the TMAA bioaccumulate metals and toxins from the expended materials from Northern Edge exercises.
Bird Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concern about impacts on seabirds, migrating shorebirds, and waterfowl from explosive and sonar activities. Concern the analysis on seabirds is deficient and that a conclusion of unlikely impacts is the result of not having sufficient information on seabirds. Request for the Navy to consider new science that demonstrates seabird behavioral responses, such as startle and cessation of feeding, to underwater sonar. Concern the population density for short-tailed albatross is not accurate and should be updated. Request for the Navy to consider vessel strikes and light attraction for the short-tailed albatross and other seabirds. Concern that some birds, such as the red-throated loon, red-faced cormorant, Aleutian tern, and Kittlitz's murrelet, are missing from the analysis. Request for the Navy to provide additional information on the marine Important Bird Areas of global importance that exist within the TMAA. Concern the Navy used research on bird species that are not present in the Gulf of Alaska; other research and studies about waterbirds and shorebirds are available and more applicable. Request for the Navy to not discharge aircraft or vessel fuel over water to minimize impacts on bird species.

Resource Area/Topic	Issue/Concern
Noise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern the Navy’s analysis does not adequately address ocean noise pollution, and the request for the Navy to consider the February 2021 Science publication “The Soundscape of the Anthropocene Ocean,” to better understand how man-made sounds disrupt almost all life stages of marine life, from larval fish to marine mammals. • Request to provide an introduction in the Supplemental EIS/OEIS to better explain the analyses presented for sonar and other acoustic noise in the marine environment. • Request to provide additional information on the differences between “sound” and “shockwaves” to clarify when the noise becomes a percussive force experienced by marine biological resources. • Request for additional analysis of the impacts of noise on pelagic species, specifically, plankton. • Request for the Navy to re-examine aircraft noise impacts due to a recent study that demonstrates the sea surface does not serve as an acoustic barrier to military aircraft noise, and that noise levels 30 meters below the sea surface exceeded thresholds that can trigger behavioral responses in marine mammals, fish, and sea birds. • Request for the Navy to analyze "Aircraft Overflights" rather than "Aircraft Noise," which would cover impacts outside of decibel-caused injury.
Mitigation Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for the Navy’s long-term baseline Marine Species Research and Monitoring program in the Gulf of Alaska, and appreciation for the Navy’s detailed discussion of monitoring and mitigation measures throughout the 2020 GOA Draft Supplemental EIS/OEIS. • Concern the Navy’s mitigation measures are not fully effective, especially for explosive activities. • Concern mitigation zones are not sufficient to protect various hearing groups. • Concerns about the effectiveness of visual monitoring, especially for deep-diving species like beaked whales, and the lack of Navy funding available for the Lookout effectiveness study. • Request for the Navy to use passive or acoustic monitoring, including the use of hydrophones and sonobuoys, to supplement visual monitoring. • Request for the Navy to consider new mitigation measures to avoid large plankton blooms or to plan training activities when the plankton would not be in the same strata of the water column when detonating explosives. • Request for the Navy to implement more robust mitigation measures by imposing additional time (seasonal) and area restrictions to protect marine mammals. • Request for the Navy to consider protections granted for “Biologically Important Areas” as are in place for other Navy range complexes in Hawaii and Southern California. • Request for the Navy to consider third-party observers, such as commercial fisheries. • Request for the Navy to consider standard operating procedures or mitigation measures to reduce potential impacts on short-tailed albatross

Resource Area/Topic	Issue/Concern
	<p>and other seabirds, and to apply current mitigation measures in place for marine mammals for short-tailed albatross and other large-bodied seabirds.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Request for the Navy to implement long-term biological research and monitoring efforts and to develop a long-term monitoring plan to include with the Supplemental EIS/OEIS.
Cumulative Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Request for the Navy to consider oil spill risk on Endangered Species Act-listed bird and marine mammal species within the cumulative impacts section. Request for the Navy to consider accidental hydrocarbon release to the marine environment from the Proposed Action. Request for the Navy to evaluate the potential cumulative impacts of climate change and acoustic noise on pelagic resources, which are critical to a successful food web within the marine environment. Request for the Navy to determine cumulative impacts related to other Department of Defense activities, such as the Missile Defense Agency missile launching. Request for the Navy to complete an assessment of economic losses from cumulative impacts.
Tribal Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concern the Navy has provided only general notifications to Alaska Native federally recognized tribes and has not adequately consulted with tribal communities of Prince William Sound and Kodiak Island. Request for the Navy to consult with Alaska Native tribes on a government-to-government basis to address issues concerning tribal self-government, trust resources, and tribal treaty and other rights, and to clearly document this consultation in the Final Supplemental EIS/OEIS. Request to partner with Alaska Native tribes and other organizations to help provide “take” or catch rate biomass data of important species, and for the Navy to report take estimates as a proportion of total takes for marine mammals, birds, fish, and other marine species. Concern that adequate time was not provided to engage in meaningful dialogue or consultation with Alaska Native tribes, and that formal government-to-government consultation was not offered.
Tribal Resource Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Request for the Navy to identify historic resources, including subsistence resources, and assure that resource protections and privileges are addressed appropriately. Concern that subsistence harvesting references are 15 years old and that subsistence use patterns change and need to be better reflected in the Supplemental EIS/OEIS. Concern the activities would adversely impact Alaska Native tribe fishing communities in the Gulf of Alaska. Concern the Navy overlooks repeated concerns of commercial, subsistence, and Indigenous fishermen regarding the available data on timing of and migratory patterns of all species of salmon in the Gulf of Alaska, and requests for the Navy to conduct training in the fall.

Resource Area/Topic	Issue/Concern
Environmental Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern the Navy does not consider impacts on low income or minority communities, including, but not limited to, cumulative and indirect impacts, exposure pathways unique to the impacted communities, historic exposures, and impacts on cultural, historic, and protected resources. • Concern impacts on marine mammals may alter the accessibility, quality, or spiritual connection of subsistence or traditional way-of-life practices of an indigenous minority community and therefore, have direct impacts on environmental justice communities. • Request for the Navy to evaluate if tribal environmental justice communities would bear disproportionately high and adverse effects from the Proposed Action. • Concern that the environmental justice analysis is outdated and deficient, and requests that the environmental justice analysis be revised to evaluate and avoid adverse impacts on Alaska Native tribes.
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request for the Navy to consider a permanent installation in Alaska. • Support for the Navy's efforts to protect marine species, being a good steward of the environment, and preventing pollution from vessel operations. • Request for the Navy to fully comply with the Endangered Species Act and Marine Mammal Protection Act, and to complete all required consultations with the appropriate agencies. • Request for the Navy to not conduct any training activities in Alaska.

D. MEDIA COVERAGE

There were six news articles, announcements, or opinion pieces published in various local media outlets during the public review and comment period. Articles published general project information about the Proposed Action, project need, and Northern Edge activities; the dates of the virtual public meetings; the project website; and commenting methods and dates.