

# ***ALASKAN COMMAND***

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## **NORTHERN EDGE 2017**



**Alaskan Command  
U.S. Pacific Fleet**

The Overall Classification of this Briefing is: **UNCLASSIFIED**



# Background

- **NORTHERN EDGE (NE)** is a U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM) exercise preparing for crisis in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region
  - ALCOM plans and conducts NE on behalf of PACOM
- **Biennial exercise (odd years) dating back to 1975**
  - Late spring/early summer since 2002
- **Participation from all military services and interagency partners**





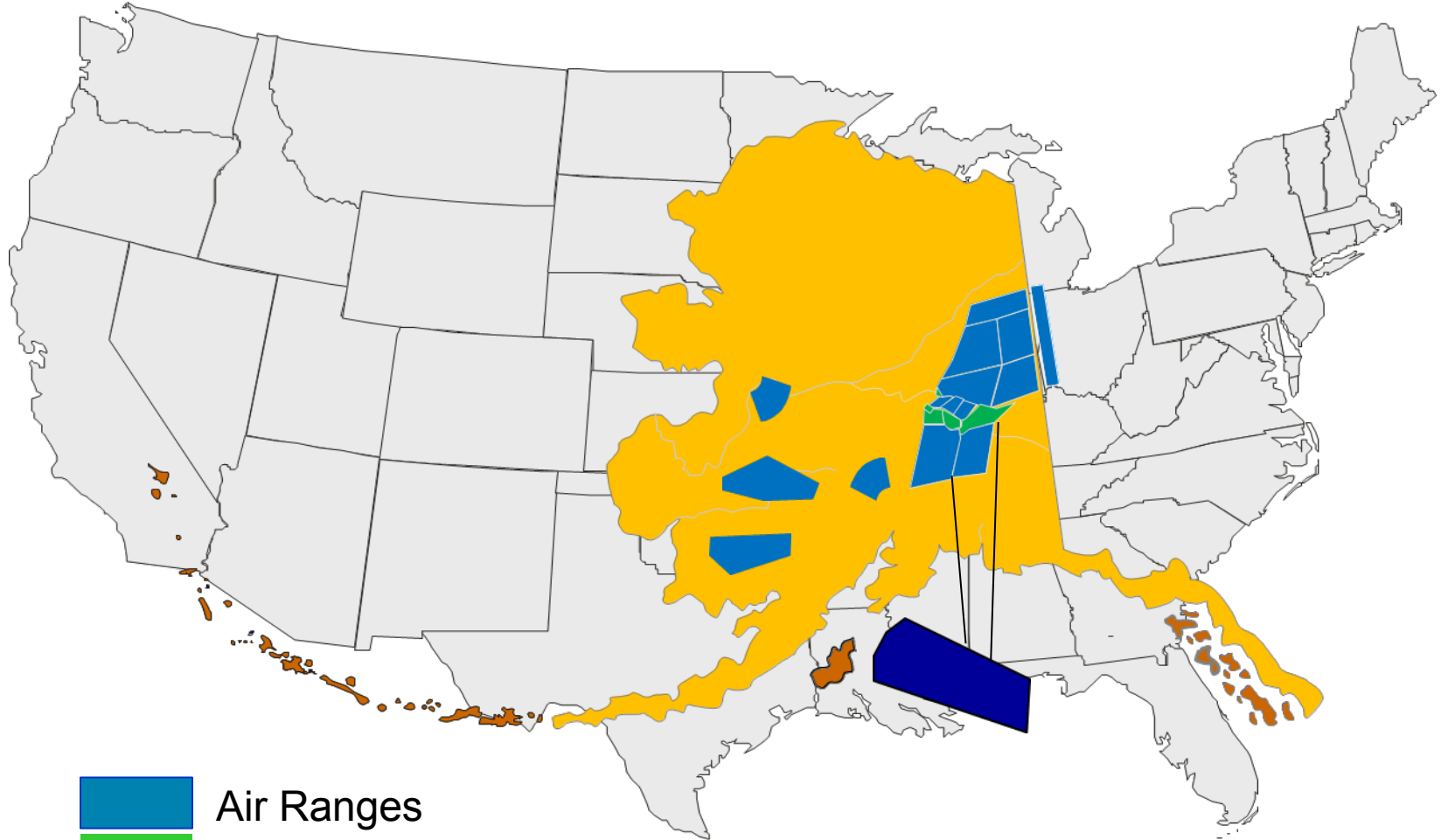
# Overview

- **PACOM contingency exercise**
  - Replicate most challenging Pacific theater scenarios
  - Joint interoperability tactics, techniques & procedures
  - Requires Alaskan-sized spaces to simulate vast distances that modern military forces face
- **Comprehensive, realistic training**
  - Air-to-Air
  - Air-to-Surface
  - Tactical Command and Control
  - Live-Virtual-Constructive Integration





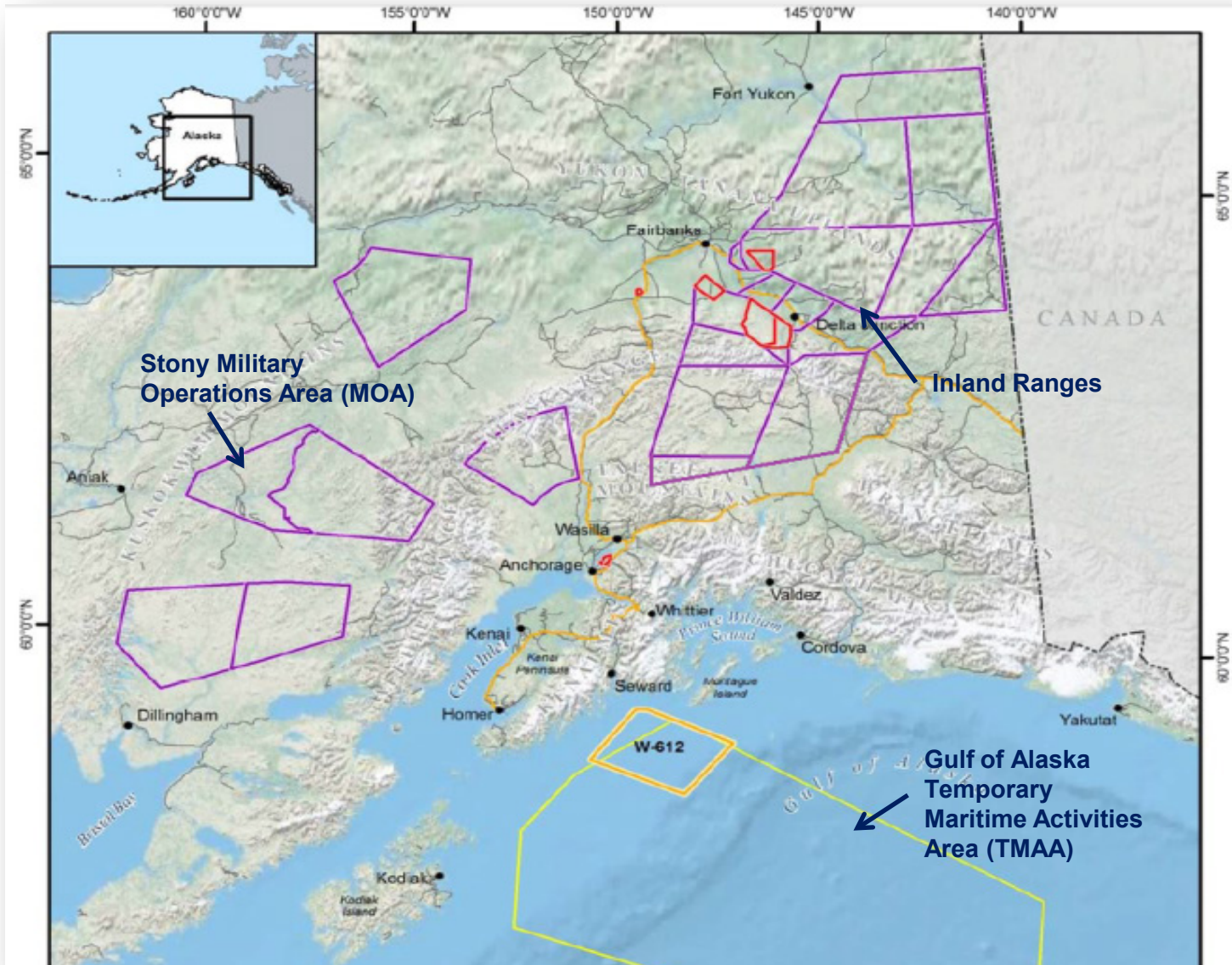
# Joint Pacific Alaska Range Complex (JPARC)



-  Air Ranges
-  Land Ranges
-  Sea Ranges



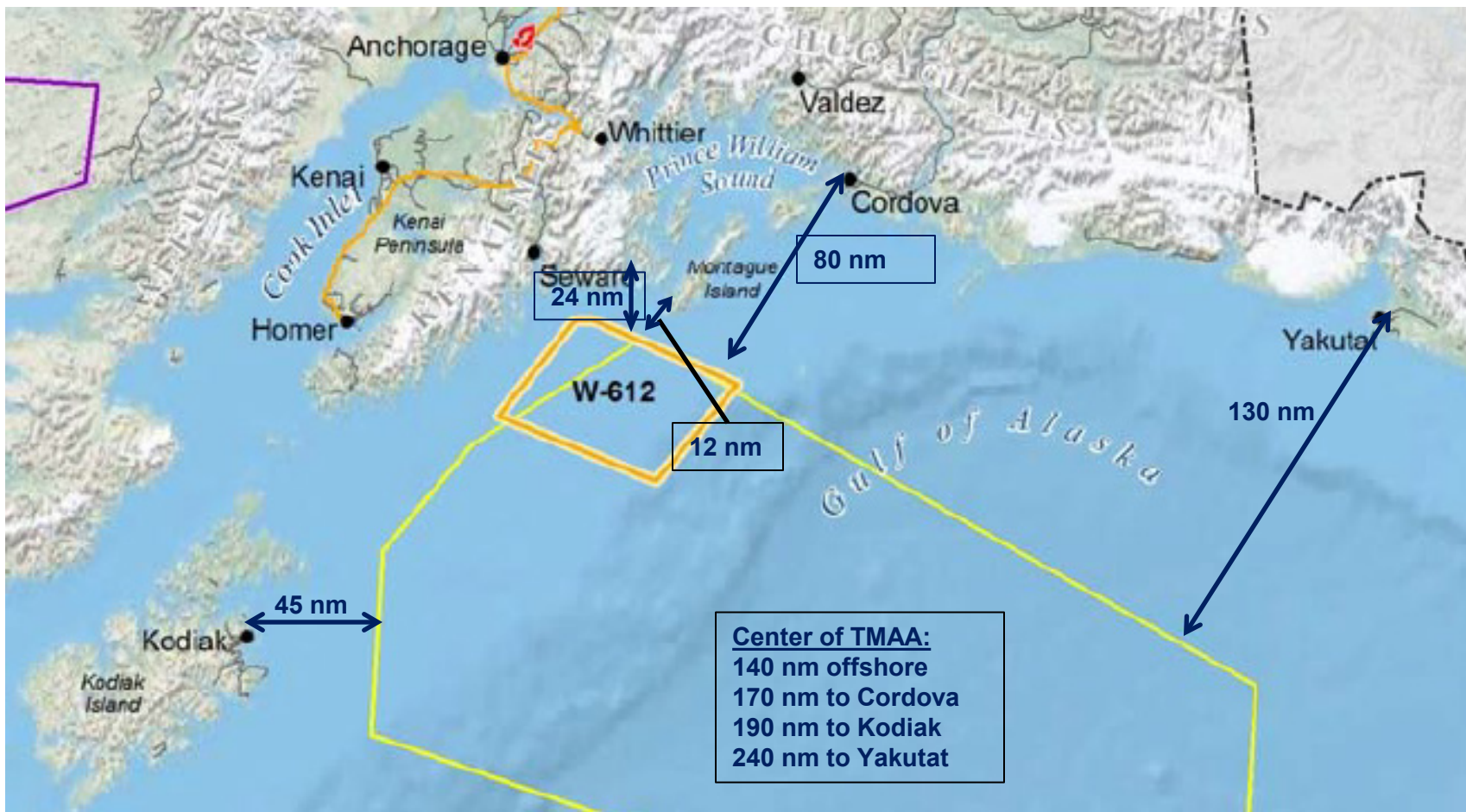
# JPARC







# Proximity of Temporary Maritime Activities Area (TMAA) to Shore





# NE15 Economic Impact

- **Total estimated economic impact of over \$13 million**
  - Lodging, rental cars, support contracts
  - Port fees for ship visit
  - Contracted fishing vessels
  - Participant spending in communities
- **Spread across Southcentral and Interior Alaska**
- **Expect similar economic contributions for NE17**



USS Shoup (DDG 86) mooring at the Port of Anchorage during NE15



# NE17 Exercise Planning

- **Scheduled exercise window: 1-12 May 2017**
  - Driven by force availability, resource constraints, weather considerations
  - Tied to / restrained by larger PACOM exercise calendar
- **Exercise planning on-going**
  - Maritime activities include air defense and anti-surface warfare
  - Final planning conference (Feb)







# NE17 Participants

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- **Participating organizations:**
  - **United States Army Alaska**
  - **Marine Corps Forces Pacific**
  - **U.S. Pacific Fleet**
  - **Pacific Air Forces**
  - **U.S. Coast Guard District 17**
- **Including:**
  - **Approximately 6,000 personnel**
  - **175 fixed-wing aircraft at JBER and Eielson AFB**
  - **2 Navy ships with embarked helicopters**



# Navy/Maritime Goals and Planned Activities

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- **One Navy surface combatant ship**
- **One support ship (fuel/food)**
- **One Coast Guard vessel**
- **Contracted Alaskan fishing vessels (~5) to play opposition force**
- **Training objectives/activities required by Combatant Commander (PACOM)**
  - **Coordination and integration with joint forces**
  - **Practice in anti-submarine exercises by aircraft and ships (i.e., tracking “simulated” submarine)**
  - **Practice in Visit, Board, Search, and Seizure techniques**
  - **Aircraft combat maneuvering between land and maritime areas**
  - **Small arms gunnery**
- **Port Visit – logistics planning underway**

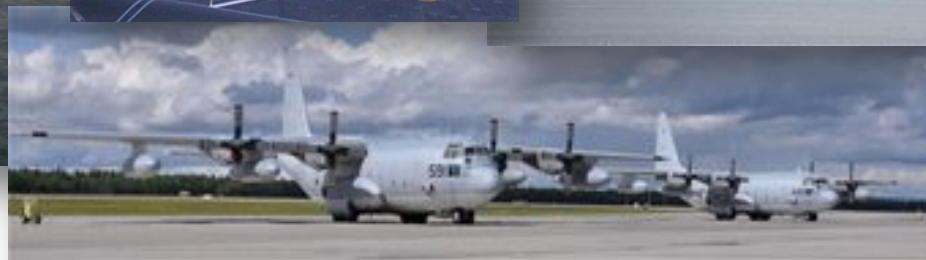
Training Ordnance or Expended Materials	Maximum Amount Analyzed in 2011 Final EIS/OEIS (for 2 events at 3 weeks each)	NE15 Level of Activity (12 Days long)
Bombs	360	0
Missiles	66	0
Naval Gunshells (Various Types)	26,376	15 actual (all inert/non-explosive)
Small Arms Rounds	11,400	2,100 (approximate)
Pyrotechnics	156	5 (signal flares)
Targets	94	6 (floating targets)
Sonobuoys	1,587 (80 explosive)	1200 (250 Active / 950 passive; all non-explosive)
Portable Undersea Training Range (PUTR)	7 (Anchors on Sea Floor)	0; Not Installed
Ordnance used during SINKEX (Various Types)	858	0

**NE17 levels would be similar to or less than NE15**



# NE Exercise Summary

- One of PACOM & DoD's premier exercises
- Alaska's military infrastructure allows top-quality training unmatched anywhere else
- Interagency cooperation & community support are keys to exercise success
- Level of activity varies by exercise







# Navy Environmental Planning

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- **2011: Gulf of Alaska Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for training from 2011-2016**
- **2013: Initiated Supplemental EIS (SEIS/SOEIS) for beyond 2016**
- **July 2016: Released Final SEIS/SOEIS**
- **Marine Mammal Protection Act Permit (MMPA), Endangered Species Act (ESA), and Record of Decision forthcoming**
- **National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS): Cooperating Agency in the environmental planning process**
- **Government-to-Government consultation with tribes in Kodiak area and Native Village of Eyak Tribe in Cordova**



# EIS Alternatives

- **Alternative 1 includes:**

- Conducting one annual large-scale Carrier Strike Group (CSG) exercise, occurring over a maximum time period of up to 21 consecutive days during the April–October timeframe
- No sinking exercise

- **Alternative 2 includes:**

- Conducting up to two annual large-scale CSG exercises, each occurring over a maximum time period of up to 21 consecutive days during the April–October timeframe
- Conducting one sinking exercise per CSG exercise for a total of two per year

**EIS analyzes maximum levels of activity –  
Actual activity is generally considerably less**



# EIS Analysis – Marine Mammals

- **Marine Mammal EIS analysis addresses impacts between April and October**
- **Quantitative analysis (modeling) done for entire date range**
- **Navy’s monitoring program has supported species occurrence information in GOA**
  - **Over 8 years (2009-2017), monitoring found higher likelihood for more marine mammal species in summer-fall (July-Oct) as compared to spring-early summer (May-June)**
- **Overall, analysis using best available science shows the potential for minimal impacts to individuals of various species, but no population level effects**





# EIS Analysis – Fisheries

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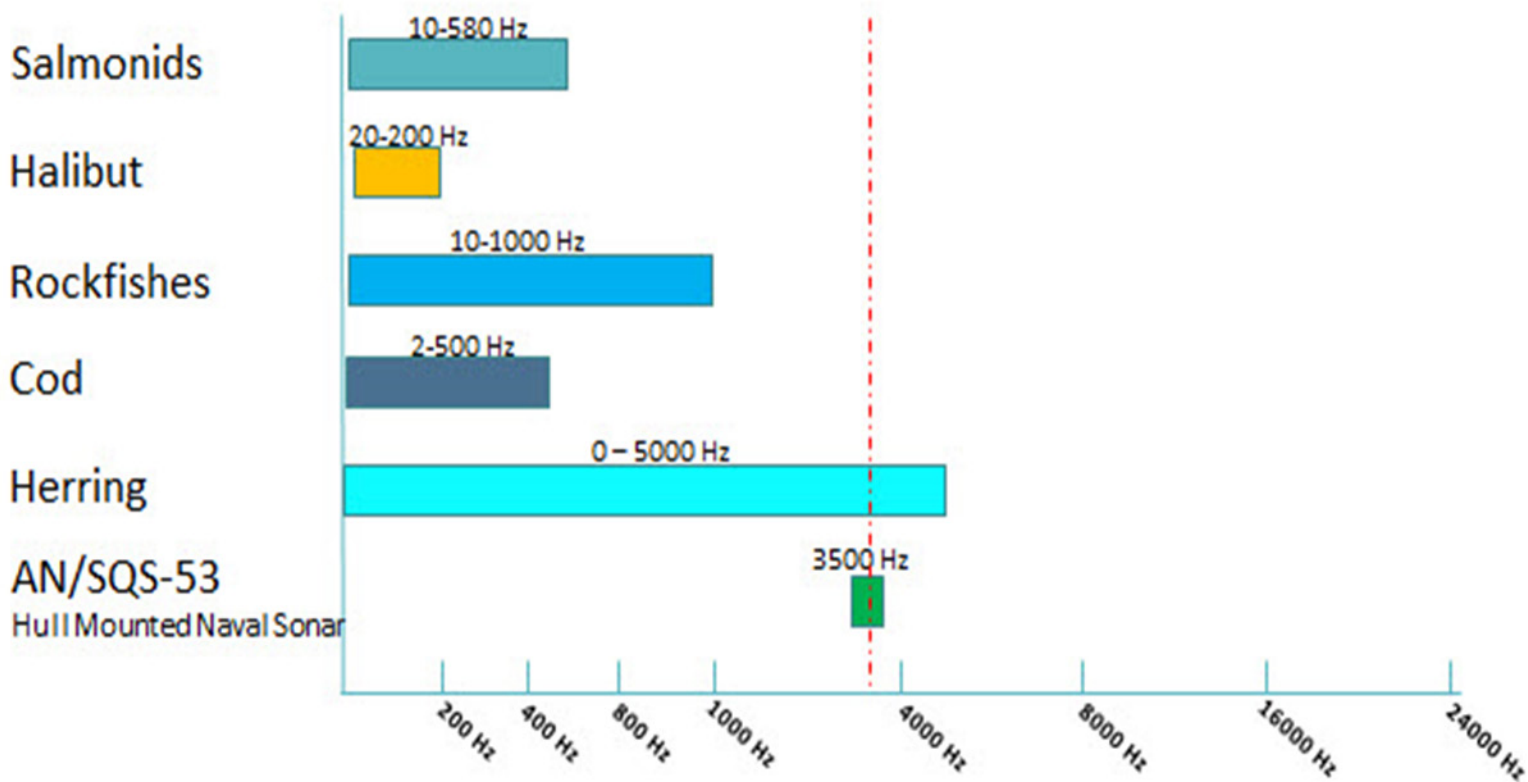
- **Alaska commercial fishing seasons occur throughout the year. However, not all fisheries management areas overlap the TMAA:**
  - Partial overlap with groundfish management areas
  - Minimal overlap with shellfish management areas
  - No overlap with salmon management areas
  - No overlap with herring management areas
- **Training will not interfere with commercial, subsistence or recreational fishing**
  - De-confliction of training activities and other users
  - Similar training levels as previous years planned for near term future





# Fish Hearing and Sonar

## FISH HEARING AND NAVAL SONAR



Sources: Astrup 1999; Astrup and Mohl 1993; Hawkins and Johnstone 1978; Jorgensen et al. 2003; Lovell et al. 2005; Mann et al. 2003; Popper 2008; and Popper and Carlson 1998.



# Potential Impacts to Fish

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- **Mid-frequency active sonar is not heard by most fish species**
- **The few fish species that are able to hear sonar are not likely to be affected**
  - Not impulsive source, vessel movement and fish behavior
- **Use of explosives during training may injure individual fish if present and only those close to the surface and within the immediate vicinity of where explosives may be used**
  - No effects to bottom fish species or fish swimming at depth below surface
- **Military expended materials will not have significant effects on fish or fish habitat**



# Protective Mitigation Measures

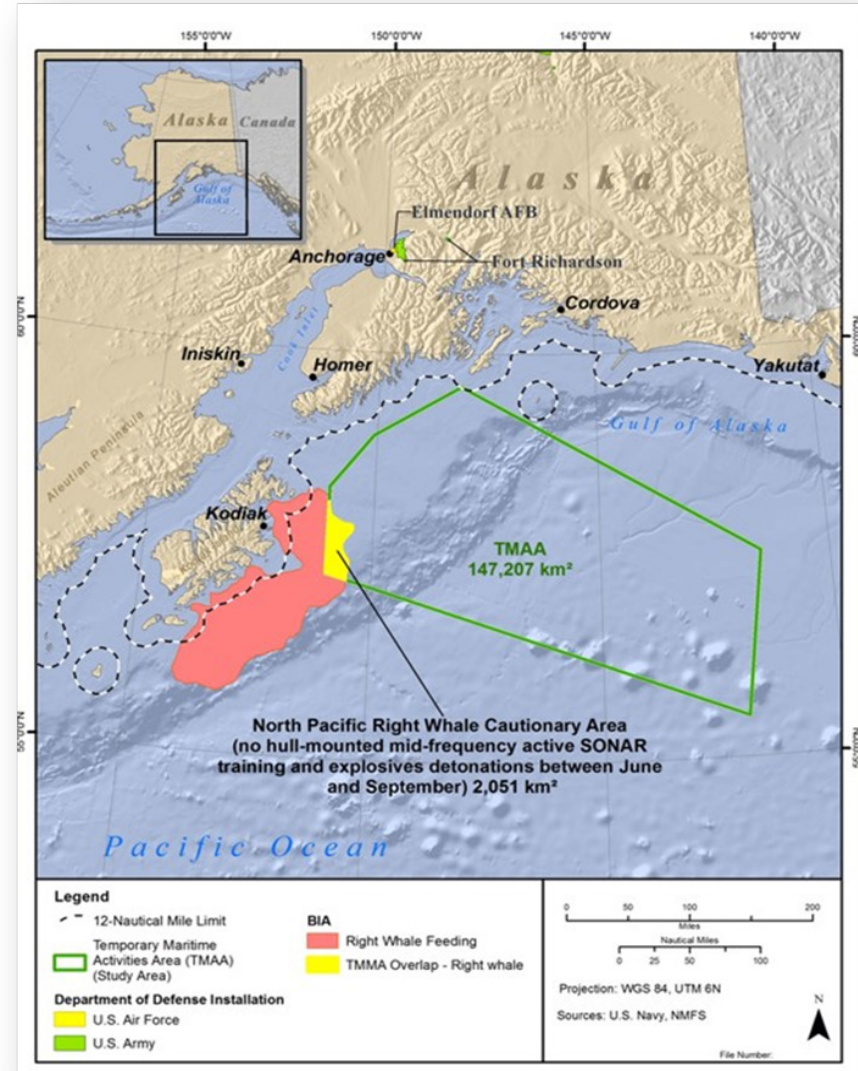
- **Extensive mitigation measures developed in coordination with NMFS**
  - Implement mitigation zones for sonar and explosive activities
  - Monitor zones before and during training
  - Post qualified Lookouts
  - Report monitoring results and training activities
  - Coordinate with regulatory agencies stranding program
  - Conduct population density surveys and other research
  - No aircraft fuel release in air unless required for safety
- **New Mitigations for NE17**
  - North Pacific Right Whale Cautionary Area during feeding time (June-Sept)
    - No hull mounted Mid-Frequency Sonar
    - No explosives
  - No explosives over Portlock Bank





# North Pacific Right Whale Cautionary Area

- Measure developed with NMFS as part of MMPA process and based on public comments
- Implementation of Cautionary Area in months of feeding importance (June – September) in southwest corner of Temporary Maritime Activity Area (TMAA)
  - No hull-mounted mid-frequency active SONAR
  - No explosives
  - Not a factor for NE17

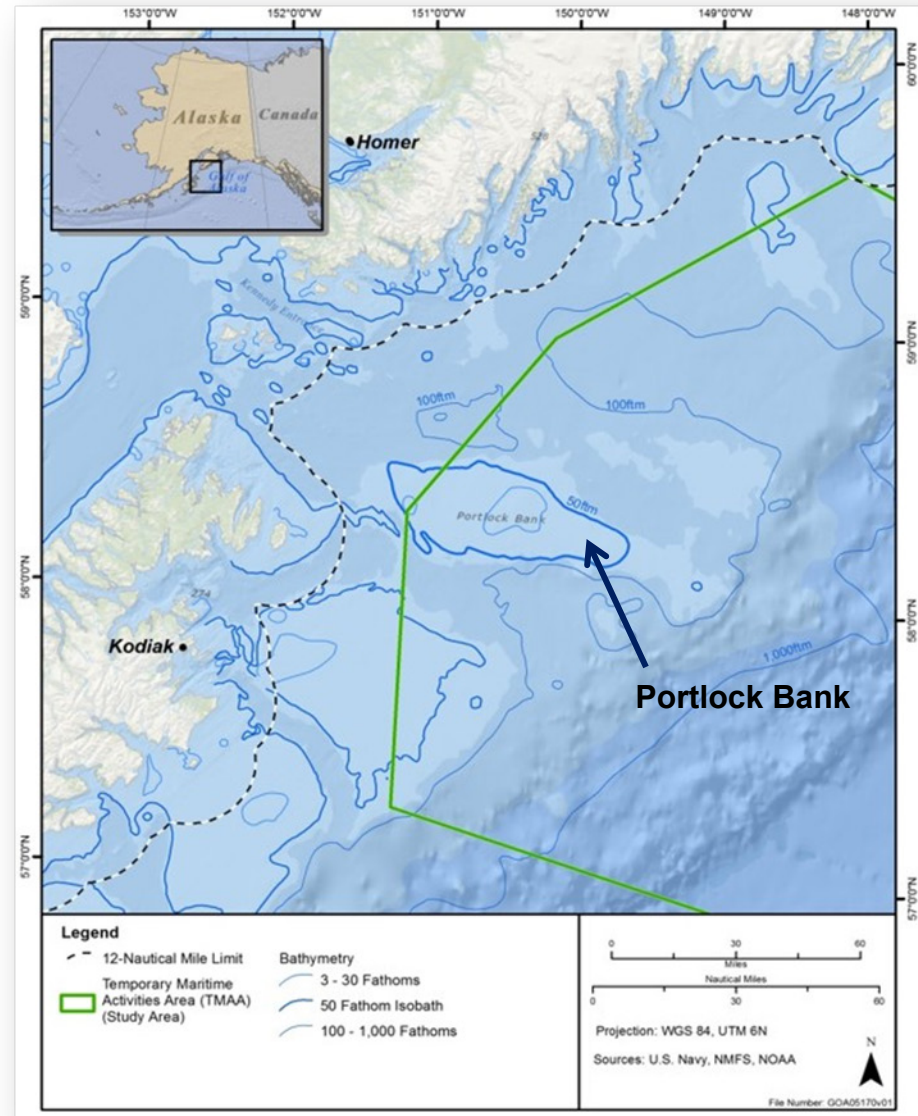






# Portlock Bank

- Westernmost portion of TMAA
- Area identified during consultation with fishermen and tribes
- Agreed not to conduct training with explosives





# Summary

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- **Environmental protection is an integral part of the exercise.**
  - **The Navy's at-sea training activities are conducted with an extensive set of mitigation measures designed to minimize the potential risk to marine life**
- **NE planned activity in Gulf of Alaska well below max allowable under the SEIS/SOEIS**
- **Training in Gulf of Alaska de-conflicted from areas of concern highlighted by fishing communities**
- **We are grateful to the citizens of the state of Alaska for their support as we use the unique training environment in Alaska**



# Questions?

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