

ALASKAN COMMAND



NORTHERN EDGE 2017

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

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



Background

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





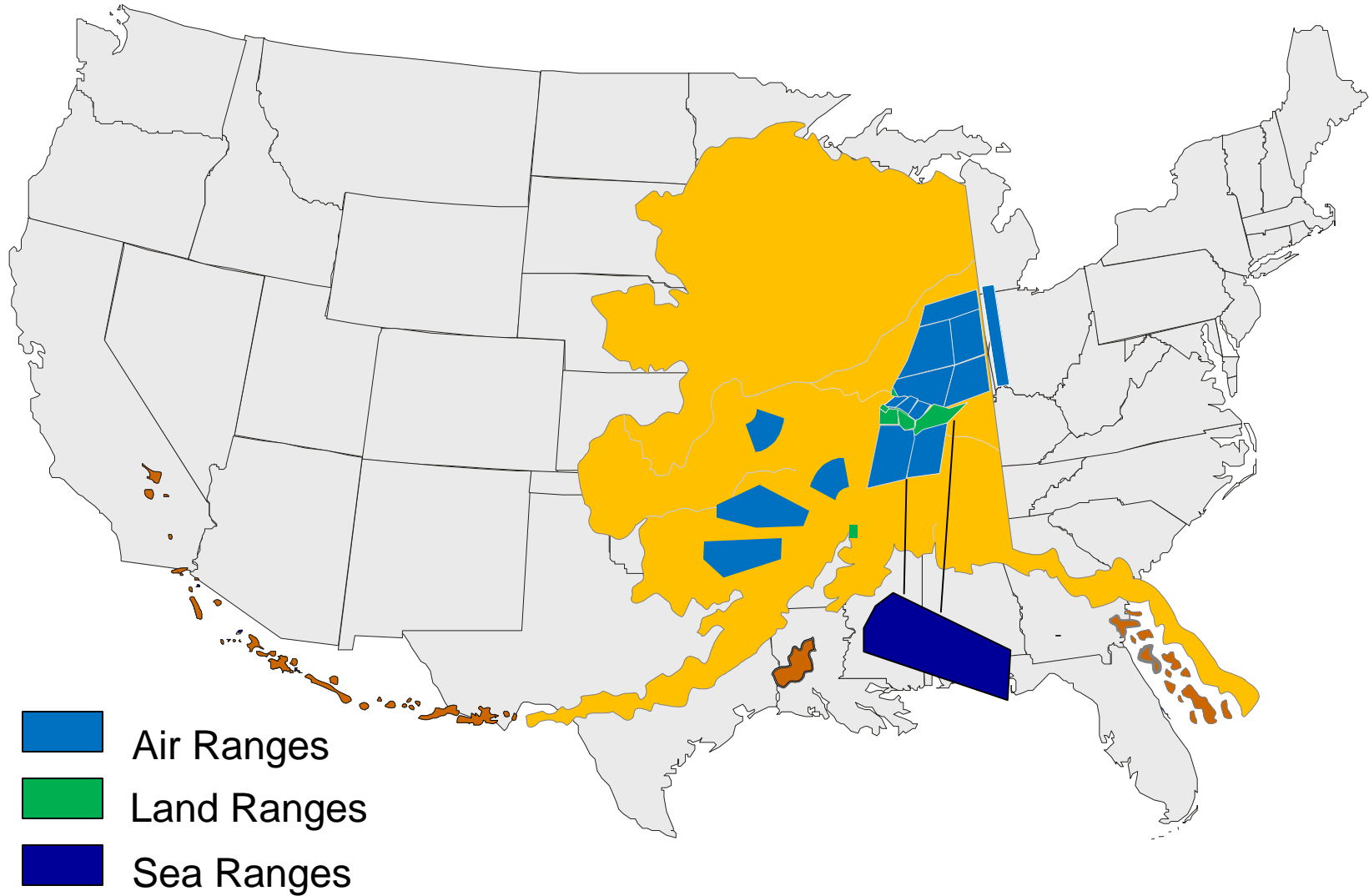
Overview

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



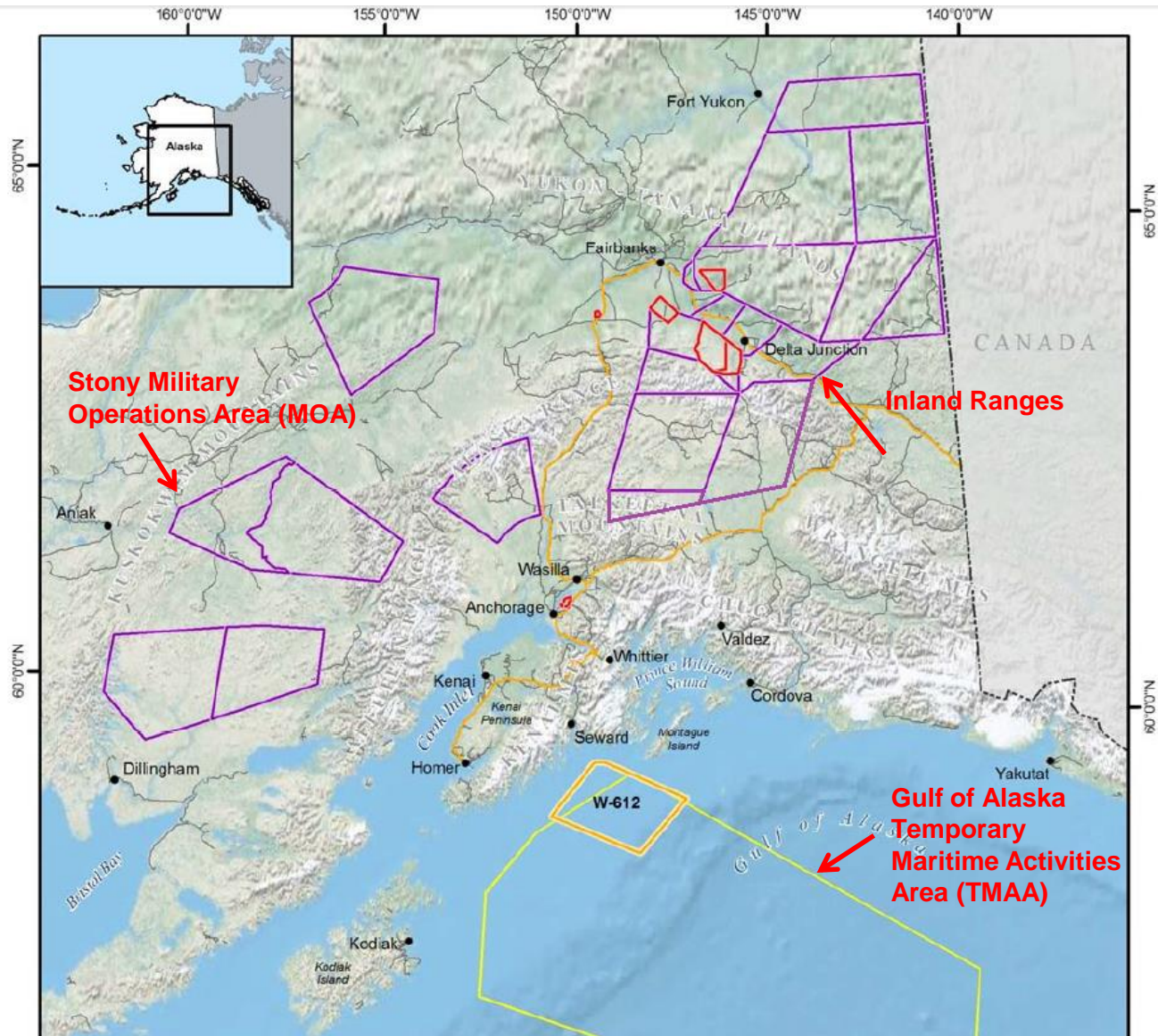


Joint Pacific Alaska Range Complex



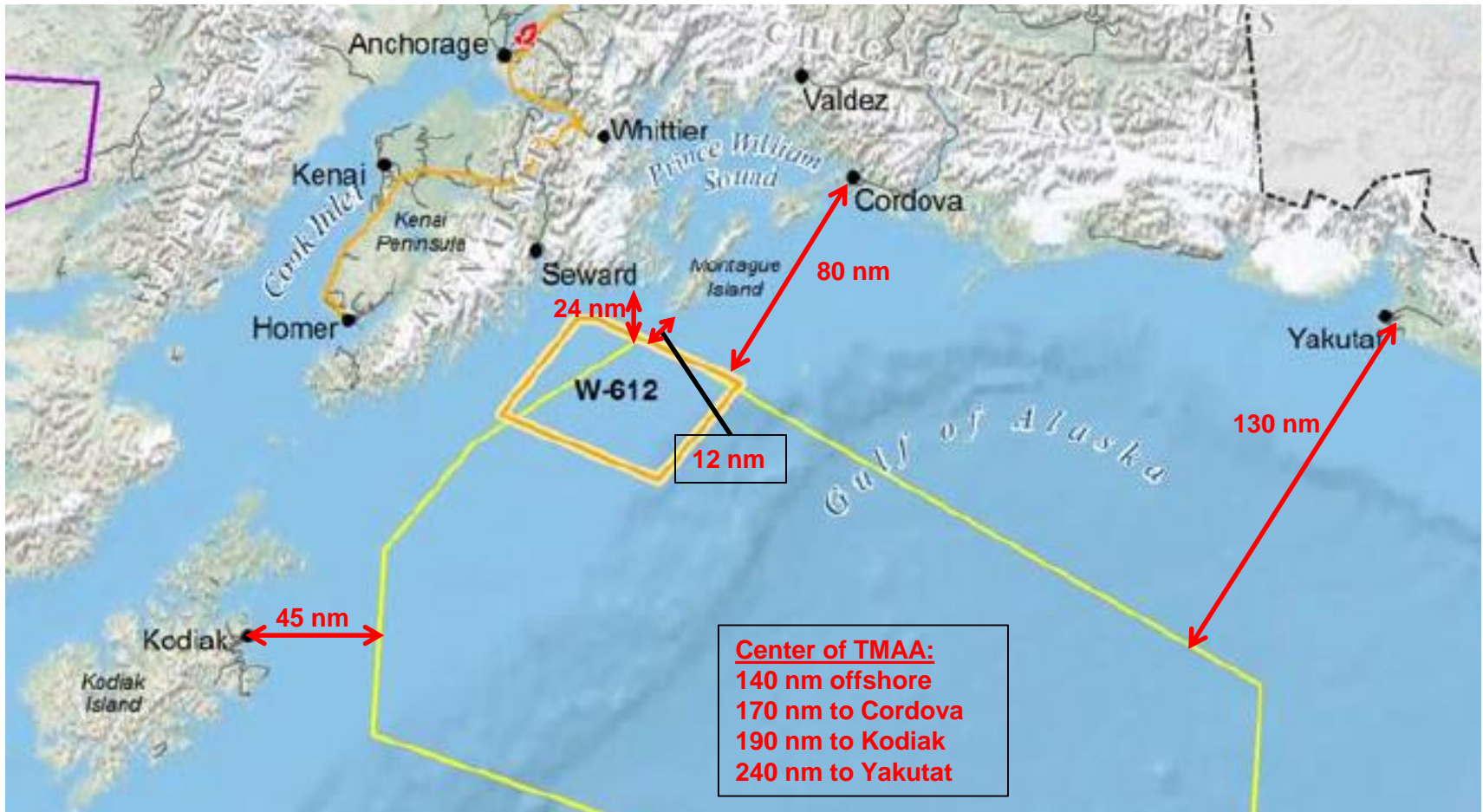


JPARC





Proximity of 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**



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



NORTHERN EDGE 17

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





NE17 Participants

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



NORTHERN EDGE Summary

- One of U.S. Pacific Command & DoD's premier exercises
- Alaska's military infrastructure allows top-quality training unmatched anywhere else
- Interagency cooperation & community support are keys to exercise success



Navy Environmental Planning

- **2011: Gulf of Alaska Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for training from 2011-2016**
- **2013: Initiated Supplemental EIS (SEIS) for beyond 2016**
- **July 2016: Released Final SEIS**
- **Record of Decision forthcoming**
- **National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)– Cooperating Agency**
- **G2G Consultation with tribes in Kodiak area and Eyak in Cordova**

EIS/SEIS Alternatives

- **Alternative 2 – (Preferred) - includes:**
 - Conducting up to two annual large-scale Carrier Strike Group (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
- **Alternative 1 includes:**
 - Conducting one annual large-scale Carrier Strike Group (CSG) exercises, occurring over a maximum time period of up to 21 consecutive days during the April–October timeframe

Training Ordnance or Expended Materials	Maximum Authorized per year in 2011 Final EIS/OEIS (for 2 events at 3 weeks each)	Northern Edge 2015 Proposed in TMAA (12 Days long)
Bombs	360	0
Missiles	66	0
Naval Gunshells (Various Types)	26,376	16 actual (all inert/non-explosive)
Small Arms Rounds	11,400	2,100
Pyrotechnics	156	5 (signal flares)
Targets	94	6 (“Killer Tomato” floating target)
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

Northern Edge 2015 Overview



Mitigation and Conservation

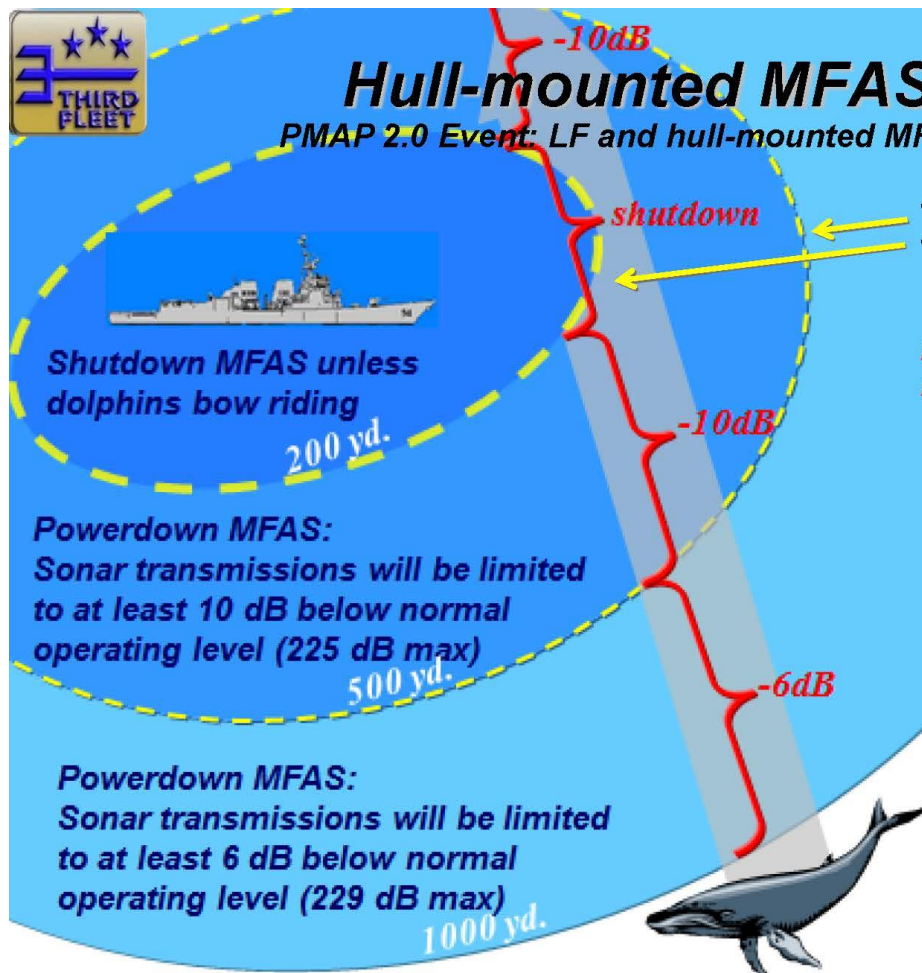
- Extensive mitigation measures developed with NMFS
- Implement mitigation zones for sonar and explosive activities
- Monitor zones before and during training
- Post qualified Lookouts
- Report monitoring results and training activities
- Coordinate with regulatory agencies stranding program
- No plastics discharge at sea
- Conduct population density surveys and other research
- No aircraft fuel release in air unless required for safety
- **New for 2017**
 - North Pacific Right Whale Cautionary Area during feeding time (June-September)
 - No hull mounted Mid-frequency Sonar
 - No explosive detonations
 - No explosives in Portlock Bank



Hull-mounted MFAS Mitigation Zones

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PMAP 2.0 Event: LF and hull-mounted MF Active Sonar during ASW & MIW



- 500 yard stand off for whales
- 200 yard stand off for all other marine mammals and sea turtles

Exceptions: safety of ship or restricted in ability to maneuver

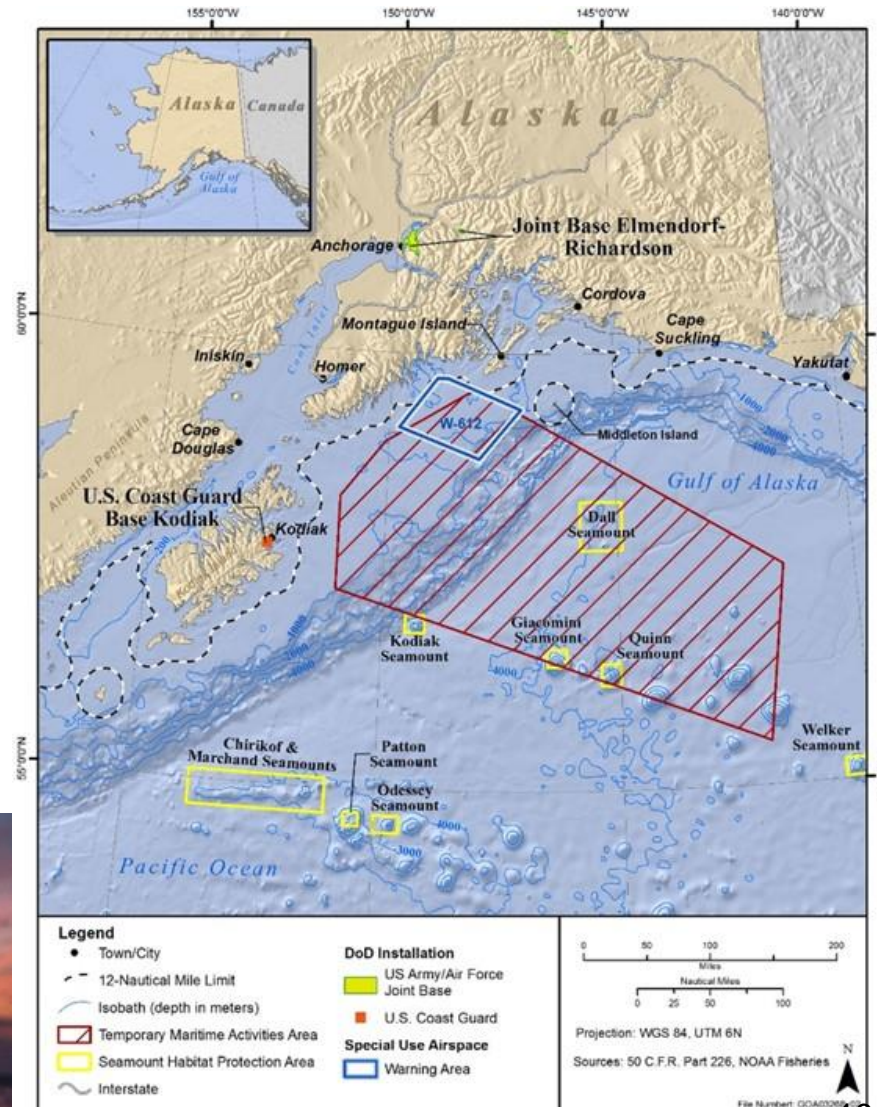
- Ships and submarines can recommence active sonar if:**
- (1) the animal has been seen to leave the zone, or
 - (2) the animal is thought to have left the zone based on relative motion, or
 - (3) the animal has not been seen for 30 minutes, or
 - (4) the vessel has transited >2,000 yards beyond the location of last sighting, or
 - (5) If, after conducting a course and/or speed change to avoid the animal, the ship concludes that dolphins are deliberately closing to ride the ship's bow wave, no further mitigation is required

If the initial power level of the hull-mounted sonar is being operated below 225 dB, then no powerdowns are required, though the 200 yard shutdown still applies.

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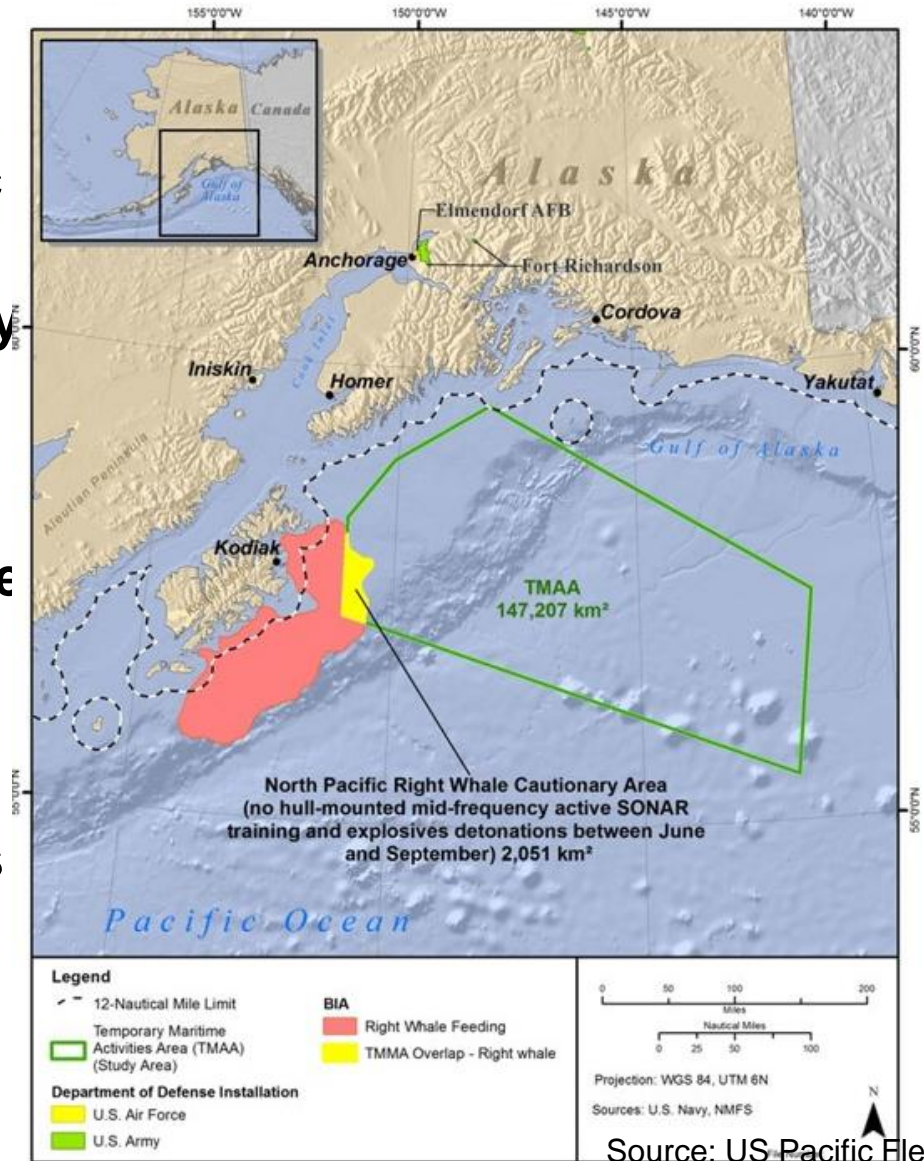
HAPC SINKEX Mitigation

- Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (HAPCs)
 - No SINKEX in HAPCs
 - No SINKEX within 50nm of land
 - Only in water greater than 6,000' deep
 - No SINKEX planned for NE17



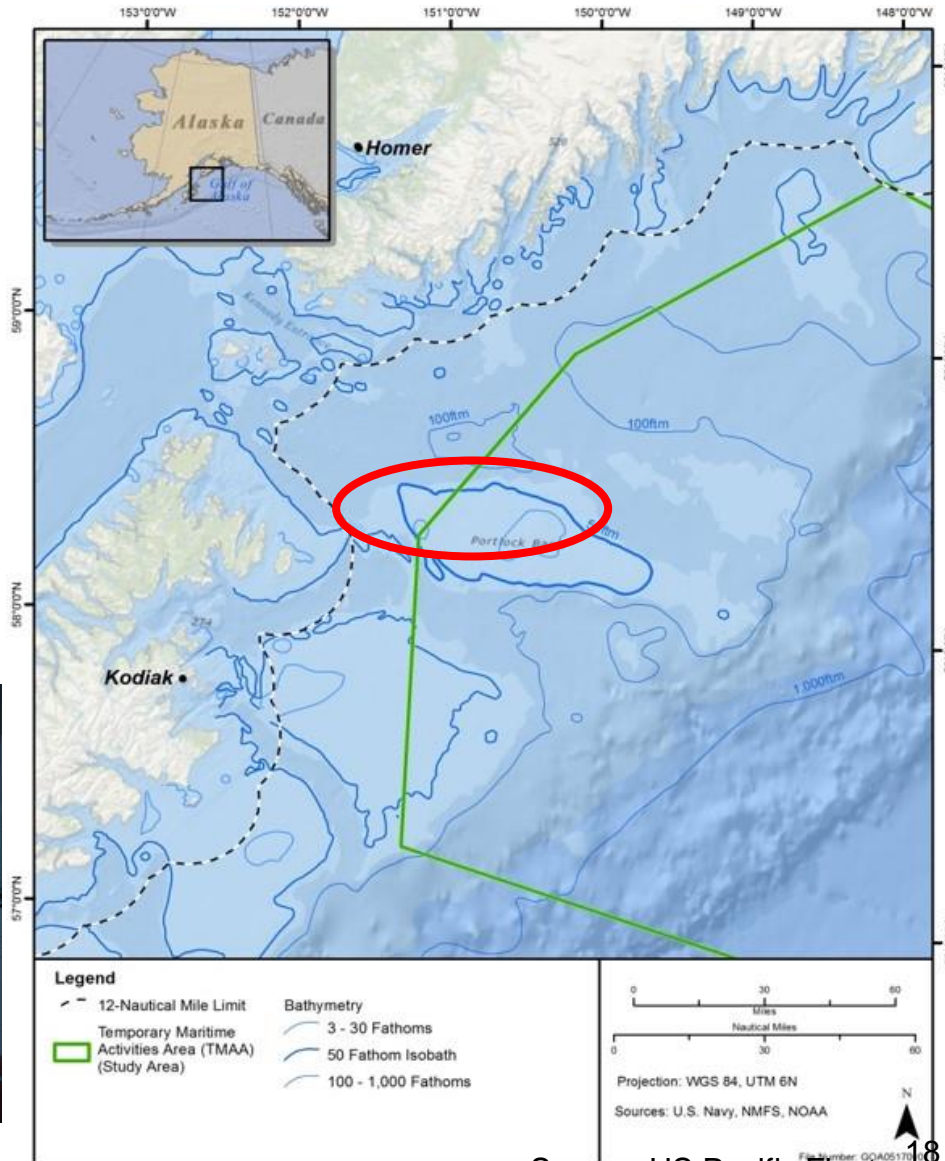
North Pacific Right Whale Cautionary Area

- 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 detonations
 - 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

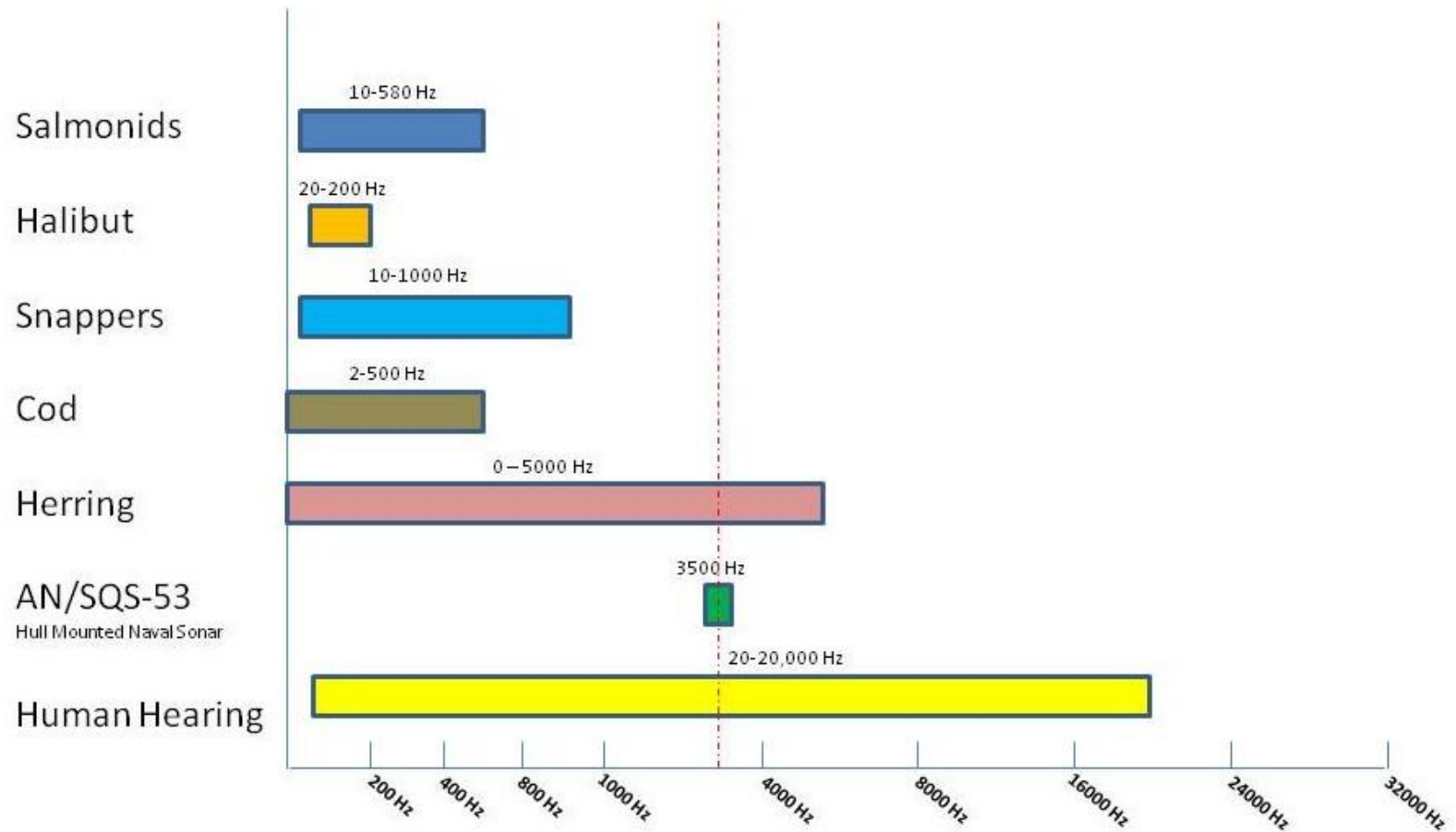




Potential Impacts to Fish

- **Mid-frequency active sonar is not heard by most fish species**
- **Fish species that are able to hear sonar are not likely to be affected**
- **Use of explosives during training may injure individual fish, if present, close to the surface and within the immediate vicinity of detonations**
- **Military expended materials will not have significant effects on fish or fish habitat**

FISH HEARING AND NAVAL SONAR





Fishing Impacts Conclusion

- **NMFS Biological Opinion – concluded that activities are not likely to adversely affect Endangered Species Act listed fish**
- **No adverse effect to Essential Fish Habitat**
- **Training will not interfere with commercial, subsistence or recreational fishing**

Summary

- **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**
- **NORTHERN EDGE planned activity in Gulf of Alaska well below max allowable under the EIS**
- **Operations in Gulf of Alaska deconflicted 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 our expansive training ranges**



Questions?

