

NEPA/EIS FACT SHEET

The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969

What is the NEPA?

The purposes of the NEPA are to:

- Encourage harmony between man and the environment;
- Promote efforts to prevent or eliminate environmental damage; and
- Enrich man's understanding of important ecological systems and natural resources.

NEPA requires that the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS):

- Consider the potential environmental consequences of its decision before deciding to proceed; and
- Provide opportunities for public involvement, which includes participating in scoping, reviewing the Draft and Final EIS, and attending public hearings.

NEPA does not dictate the decision to be made by NMFS.

What is an EIS?

An EIS evaluates the environmental actions that an agency plans to undertake with respect to a comprehensive program or set of actions. The purpose of this EIS is to objectively analyze and evaluate the potential significant impacts on environmental resources from research activities on northern right whales.

The EIS will include descriptions of

- Proposed Action
- Purpose and need for the Proposed Action
- Alternatives
- Affected environment
- Environmental consequences of the Proposed Action and alternatives
- Required mitigations or recommended best management practices (or BMPs)

Advantages of this EIS document include:

- Full disclosure of the potential effects related to all research that may be authorized to recover and manage northern right whales;
- Incorporation of comprehensive analyses to evaluate cumulative effects effectively;
- Formulation of comprehensive mitigation efforts and suggested BMPs; and
- Reduction of the need to re-address environmental consequences, mitigation measures, and BMPs at the permit-specific level.

What environmental factors are normally considered during the EIS process?

- Wildlife
 - Protected Species
 - > Threatened and Endangered Species
 - > Marine Mammals
 - > Migratory Birds
 - Non-protected Species
- Special Biological Resource Areas
 - National Marine Sanctuaries
 - Essential Fish Habitat
 - Designated Critical Habitat
- Coastal, Marine, and Benthic Communities
- Coastal Zone Management
- Water Resources
- Human Safety
- Socioeconomics
- Noise
- Air Quality
- Cultural Resources
- Cumulative Impacts



Photo: MMC

The EIS Process

Opportunities for Public Involvement

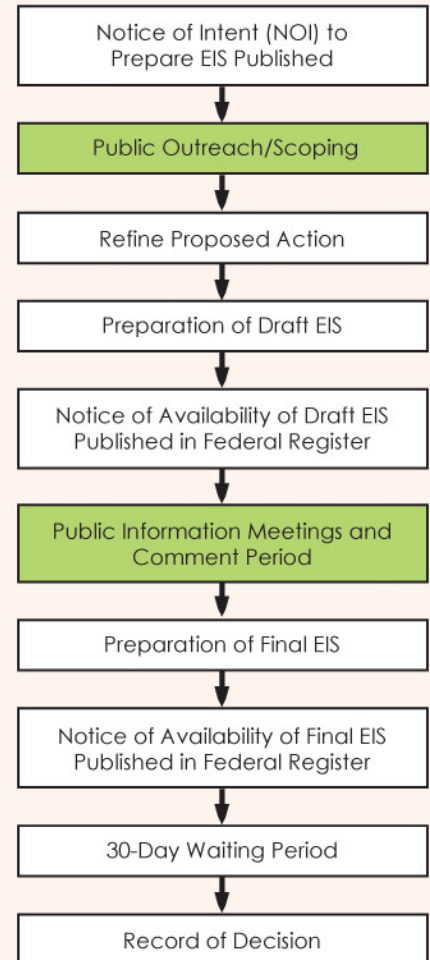


Photo: M. Moore, WHOI

