

ANNUAL MISSION ACTIVITIES REPORT

2010

FOR THE NAVAL SURFACE WARFARE CENTER PANAMA CITY DIVISION (NSWC PCD) STUDY AREA

**Submitted To:
Office of Protected Resources
National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3226**

**In accordance with:
January 21, 2010 Letter of Authorization for NSWC PCD Mission Activities;
50 CFR Part 218, Subpart S; and the 2010 Annual Biological Opinion for
NSWC PCD Mission Activities**



SEPTEMBER 2010

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**ANNUAL MISSION ACTIVITIES REPORT
FOR THE NAVAL SURFACE WARFARE CENTER PANAMA
CITY DIVISION (NSWC PCD) STUDY AREA**

2010

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I. INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Navy prepared this Annual Mission Activities Report covering the period from January 21, 2010 to August 1, 2010 pursuant to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) regulations (NMFS, 2010) for the Naval Surface Warfare Center Panama City Division (NSWC PCD) Study Area. The report also provides the information required by NMFS' Biological Opinion (BO) on NSWC PCD Mission Activities (NMFS, 2010a) issued pursuant to the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The scope of NMFS' BO includes the same research, development, test, and evaluation (RDT&E) activities using sonar systems, explosives, and projectiles by the above MMPA regulations (NMFS, 2010). Figures 1 and 2 show the geographic extent of the NSWC PCD Study Area.

In the MMPA regulations (NMFS, 2010 [50 C.F.R. §§ 218.184]) and the Letter of Authorization (LOA) for NSWC PCD Mission Activities (NMFS, 2010b [Section 7]), the following reporting requirements were specified and are presented in Sections II-IV of this report:

- 1) Test Activities Involving Mid-Frequency Active Sonar (MFAS)/High Frequency Active Sonar (HFAS)
- 2) Test Activities Involving Underwater Explosive Detonations
- 3) Test Activities Involving Projectile Firing

In NMFS' BO (NMFS, 2010a [page 152]), the following Reasonable and Prudent Measures listed in the Incidental Take Statement (ITS) were specified and are addressed in Section V of this report:

- The U.S. Navy shall submit reports that identify the general location, timing, number of hours and other aspects of the RDT&E activities the U.S. Navy plans to conduct at the Naval Surface Warfare Center – Panama City, Florida, over the twelve-month period between January 2010 and January 2011.

The information contained in this report represents the best practical data collection as of August 1, 2010. The operational data is collected through the NSWC PCD Environmental Review Process, which is detailed in Chapter 5 *Mitigation and Protective Measures* of the NSWC PCD Mission Activities EIS/OEIS (DON, 2009). While the report does not cover a full year of NSWC PCD RDT&E missions in the NSWC PCD Study Area, the data provided in the following tables indicates that the U.S. Navy is not exceeding the average annual allotment of authorized test events as of August 1, 2010, except for one event which exceeded the allotment only by 9.3 percent. Future activities conducted under the NSWC PCD Mission Activities LOA will ensure that the five-year total allotment for the AN/AQS-20 is not exceeded. U.S. Navy test events are variable within any given year based on the evolving nature of RDT&E test plans and the current status of operating systems undergoing RDT&E, as well as scheduling, budgeting, and environmental conditions. Therefore, the data on the amount of activities conducted in the

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NSWC PCD Study Area may vary annually, potentially resulting in higher or lower amounts of reported NSWC PCD RDT&E mission activities in future annual mission activity reports.

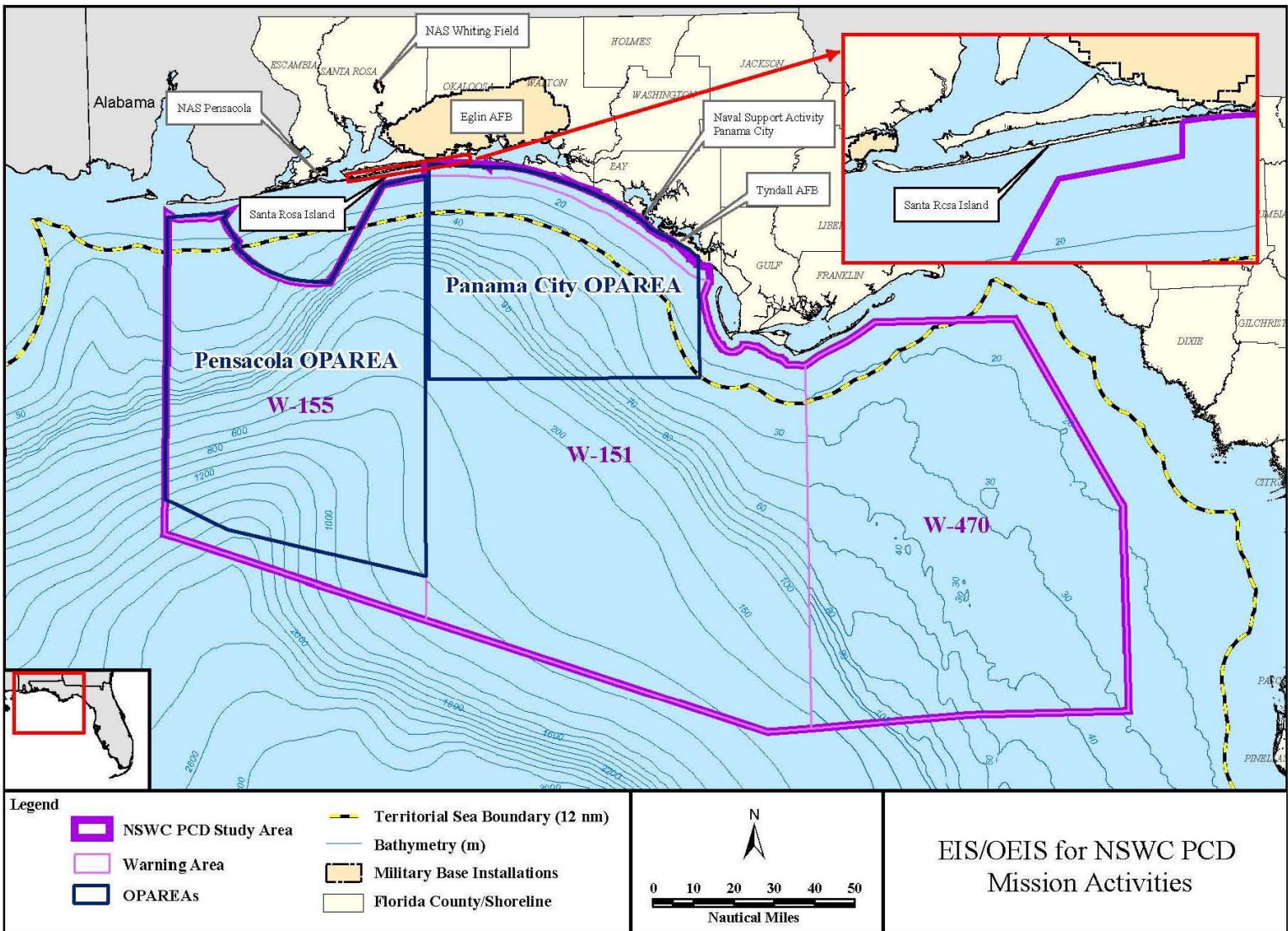


Figure 1. NSWC PCD Study Area: Gulf of Mexico

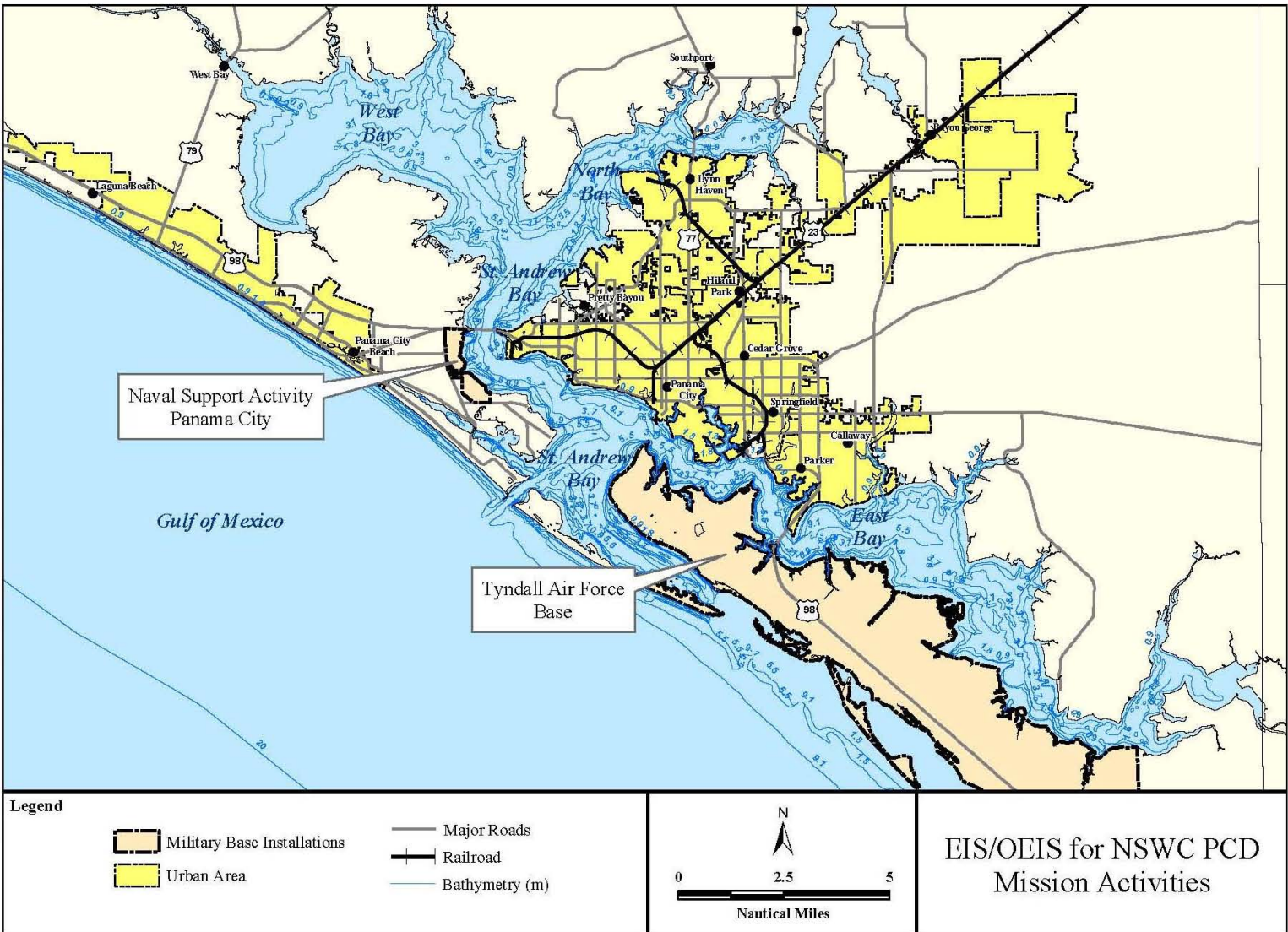


Figure 2. NSWC PCD Study Area: Nearshore and St. Andrew Bay

II. TEST ACTIVITIES INVOLVING MID-FREQUENCY ACTIVE SONAR (MFAS)/HIGH FREQUENCY ACTIVE SONAR (HFAS)

Table 1 and Table 2 below provide a summary of the use of MFAS and HFAS in the NSWC PCD Study Area. During this time period, NSWC PCD conducted 187.3 hours of sonar testing, 169.6 hours in territorial waters (Table 1) and 17.7 hours in non-territorial waters (Table 2).

Table 1. Total annual number of each type of MFAS and HFAS listed at 50 C.F.R. § 218.184 conducted in the NSWC PCD Study Area in territorial waters (number authorized vs. conducted).

Sonar System	Number Authorized (hrs)	Number Conducted (hrs)
AN/SQS-53/56 Kingfisher	3	0
Sub-bottom profiler (2-9 kHz)	21	0
REMUS SAS-LF	12	12
REMUS Modem	25	25
Sub-bottom profiler (2-16 kHz)	24	24
AN/SQQ-32	30	0
REMUS-SAS-LF	20	20
SAS-LF	35	35
AN/WLD-1RMS-ACL	33.5	26.3
BPAUV Sidescan	25	0
TVSS	15	0
F84Y	15	0
BPAUV Sidescan	25	0
REMUS-SAS-HF	10	0
SAS-HF	11.5	0
AN/AQS-20*	545	27.3
AN/WLD-11 RMS Navigation	15	0
BPAUV Sidescan	30	0

* NMFS' LOA incorrectly listed this system as the AN/SQS-20. The correct notation is AN/AQS-20 (DON, 2010).

Table 2. Total annual number of each type of MFAS and HFAS listed at 50 C.F.R. § 218.184 conducted in the NSWC PCD Study Area in non-territorial waters (number authorized vs. conducted).

Sonar System	Number Authorized (hrs)	Number Conducted (hrs)
AN/SQS-53/56 Kingfisher	1	0
Sub-bottom profiler (2-9 kHz)	1	0
REMUS Modem	12	1.3
Sub-bottom profiler (2-16 kHz)	1	0
AN/SQQ-32	1	0
SAS-LF	15	0
AN/WLD-1RMS-ACL	5	0
BPAUV Sidescan	38	0
TVSS	16.5	0
F84Y	15	0
REMUS-SAS-HF	25	0

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Sonar System	Number Authorized (hrs)	Number Conducted (hrs)
SAS-HF	15	0
AN/SQS-20	15	16.4
BPAUV Sidescan	25	0

During these sonar test events, the U.S. Navy employed the appropriate mitigation measures as outlined in the NSWC PCD Mission Activities EIS/OEIS (DON, 2009).

III. TEST ACTIVITIES INVOLVING EXPLOSIVES

NSWC PCD did not conduct any RDT&E mission activities involving explosives during the reporting period.

IV. TEST ACTIVITIES INVOLVING PROJECTILES

NSWC PCD did not conduct any RDT&E mission activities involving projectile firing during the reporting period.

V. ANNUAL FREQUENCIES AND LOCATIONS FOR NSWC PCD MISSION ACTIVITIES

U.S. Navy RDT&E mission descriptions, frequencies, and locations for the NSWC PCD Study Area have not changed from those described in the U.S. Navy's Biological Evaluation (BE) for NSWC PCD Mission Activities (DON, 2008), and the U.S. Navy's Final EIS/OEIS for NSWC PCD Mission Activities (DON, 2009). RDT&E mission activities conducted in the NSWC PCD Study Area have not changed since NMFS issued the BO (NMFS, 2010a). The type, manner, and frequency of RDT&E activities in the NSWC PCD Study Area for the next 12 months is described in the U.S. Navy's BE (DON, 2008) and not repeated in this report.

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- NMFS. 2010a. Biological opinion on the Permits Division's proposal to issue a Letter of Authorization for the U.S. Navy to "take" marine mammals incidental to research, development, test, and evaluation activities at the Naval Surface Warfare Center in Panama City, Florida, from January 2010 through January 2011. Issued, January 14, 2010.
- NMFS. 2010b. Letter of Authorization to Take Marine Mammals Incidental to U.S. Naval Surface Warfare Center Panama City Division Mission Activities. Issued, January 21, 2010.