



CENTER for BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

*Because life is good.*

For Immediate Release, March 8, 2013



[E-mail this page](#)  
[More press releases](#)

Contact: Emily Jeffers, (415) 779-4253 or [ejeffers@biologicaldiversity.org](mailto:ejeffers@biologicaldiversity.org)

### California Commission Rejects Navy Sonar Project That Threatened Whales, Marine Mammals

SAN DIEGO— The California Coastal Commission today rejected a dangerous plan by the U.S. Navy for sonar and explosives training that threatened marine animals in Southern California, including endangered blue whales. The war training exercises would have killed 130 marine mammals and caused hearing loss in about 1,600 animals, according to Navy estimates.

"These war games have real and deadly effects on California's wildlife, including some already trying to fight off extinction," said Emily Jeffers with the Center for Biological Diversity, which opposed the Navy's plan. "We're happy the commission saw this dangerous proposal for what it is and is taking the right steps to protect our state's wildlife."

Elsewhere, the Navy's mid-frequency sonar has been implicated in mass strandings of marine mammals. In 2000, 14 beaked whales and several other marine mammals stranded themselves in the Bahamas in response to U.S. Navy vessels operating offshore mid-frequency sonar. Necropsies revealed bleeding around the animals' ears and brains. The entire Cuvier's beaked whale population disappeared from the area after the incident. In 2003, 14 harbor porpoises were stranded during Navy sonar training in Puget Sound. In 2004, hundreds of melon-headed whales were driven into Hanalei Bay, Hawaii by Navy exercises.

"America's sea life has already paid too steep a price for these military exercises. Some are killed by explosives, others lose their hearing and die after the fact," Jeffers said. "Places where whales and other endangered species are congregating should be off-limits to these kinds of deadly actions."

Earlier this year, the National Marine Fisheries Service proposed to allow the Navy to harm marine mammals up to 9.5 million times in the Hawaii and Southern California Training Ranges and 21.8 million times in the Atlantic Training Range over a period of five years. This will surely result in thousands of cases of permanent hearing loss, lung injuries and death. Ocean noise is also known to harm fish; there have been reports of reduced abundance in areas with noise disturbance. The Fisheries Service is accepting comments on that proposal until March 11.

The Center for Biological Diversity is opposing these measures. Learn more about our work to reduce [ocean noise](#).

*Alaska · Arizona · California · Florida · Minnesota · Nevada · New Mexico · Oregon · Vermont · Washington, DC*

P.O. Box 710 · Tucson, AZ 85702-0710 tel: (520) 623.5252 fax: (520) 623.9797 [www.BiologicalDiversity.org](http://www.BiologicalDiversity.org)

[Go back](#)