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Georgia: Suit Dismissed Over Submarine Training

By REUTERS

The Navy can build a \$100 million submarine training range off the coast of Southern Georgia and Northern Florida, a federal judge ruled Monday, dismissing a lawsuit by environmental groups claiming the project would harm the endangered North Atlantic right whale. Judge Lisa Wood in Savannah held that the Navy complied with federal law in analyzing the impact on the whale and its only known calving grounds. Although North American right whales have been protected from commercial whaling since 1935, their badly depleted population numbering as few as 313, Judge Wood wrote. Environmentalists say the training ground is too close to the waters where females and calves migrate in winter. But the judge noted that the Navy has developed procedures to mitigate harm to the whales, including requiring ships to slow down during calving season and, when practical, to travel near critical habitat only during daylight and when visibility is good.