

Coast Guard**[CGD 95-066]****National Environmental Policy Act
Final Environmental Impact Statement
for the USCG Atlantic Protected Living
Marine Resource Initiative****AGENCY:** Coast Guard, DOT.**ACTION:** Notice of availability.

SUMMARY: The Coast Guard announces the availability of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Atlantic Protected Living Marine Resource Initiative (APLMR) that it is proposing for the Atlantic Coast of the United States. The FEIS contains an overview of the Coast Guard missions and describes how the proposed action aids the Coast Guard in its ability to fulfill its missions and enhance preservation of protected species. This FEIS was prepared concurrently with an Endangered Species Act consultation with the National Marine Fisheries Service.

DATES: The review period for this FEIS will end on 9 December 1996.

ADDRESSES: Commandant (G-O), U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters, 2100 2nd St SW, Washington, DC 20593-0001, ATTN: CDR Rooth.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Commander R. Rooth at (202) 267-1456, or by fax at (202) 267-4427 or (202) 267-4222.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Coast Guard encourages interested persons to review the FEIS.

Background Information

On August 9, 1995, the Coast Guard published, in the Federal Register (60 FR 40631), a notice of availability and request for comments announcing the availability of an Environmental Assessment (EA) and a proposed Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) on Coast Guard activities along the U.S. Atlantic coast. On October 11, 1995, the Coast Guard published in the Federal Register (60 FR 52949), a notice reopening and extending the comment period for the EA and FONSI.

The EA focused on the six whale and five turtle species listed as threatened or endangered found along the Atlantic coast. The Coast Guard received comments from Federal, State, and local agencies and the public.

On April 2, 1996, the Coast Guard published, in the Federal Register (61 FR 14590), a notice of intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to assess the impacts of a revised proposed project under Section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental

Policy Act. The decision to prepare an EIS was the result of new information concerning the October 1995 interaction between a Coast Guard vessel and a suspected Humpback whale, as well as recent observations of increased Northern Right Whale mortalities, and comments received in response to the EA and FONSI.

The Coast Guard prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and on July 31, 1996, published, in the Federal Register (61 FR 40062), a notice of availability and request for comments. The comment period ended September 16, 1996. All comments received on the DEIS were considered and addressed in the FEIS.

Proposed Action

The FEIS contains an overview of the Coast Guard missions and describes how the proposed action, the Atlantic Protected Living Marine Resource Initiative, aids the Coast Guard in fulfilling its mission while enhancing preservation of protected species. The proposed initiative in this FEIS works to preserve all protected species in the Atlantic.

Measures evaluated in the FEIS include:

1. Adding protected species information as part of the testing criteria for the public applying for USCG licenses to operate vessels.
2. Training programs on marine mammal identification for USCG vessel lookouts.
3. Distributing notices of species locations via marine radio (operating on VHF-FM frequency) and the NAVTEX program.
4. Surveying critical habitat areas, noting presence and activities of protected species.
5. Focusing on enforcement of existing laws.
6. Participating in regional whale recovery implementation groups.
7. Establishing or modifying vessel traffic routes.
8. Developing Coast Guard-wide and regional procedures to alert mariners of seasonally heightened potentials for interaction with protected species.
9. Including protected species awareness information in USCG basic boating safety training provided to the public.
10. Notifying the National Marine Fisheries Service regional office when a significant incident is brought to the attention of the Coast Guard.
11. Participating in regional species stranding networks.
12. Surveying lighting options for Coast Guard stations in the vicinity of turtle nesting beaches.

In its FEIS, the Coast Guard evaluates the latest data on the habits and habitats of protected species and the location of Coast Guard stations and vessels. The FEIS also examines navigational capabilities of Coast Guard vessels, training of Coast Guard employees regarding protected species, and possible modifications of vessel traffic control and aircraft operations. The FEIS also analyzes cumulative impacts of Coast Guard assets operating together and in conjunction with other vessels. This FEIS will serve as the basis for the Coast Guard's final Record of Decision (ROD) on the proposed APLMR Initiative.

Dated: October 28, 1996.

T.J. Meyers,

Captain, U.S. Coast Guard, Chief, Office of Aids to Navigation.

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[CGD 96-044]**International, Private-Sector, Tug of
Opportunity System Plan****AGENCY:** Coast Guard, DOT.**ACTION:** Notice of meeting; request for comments.

SUMMARY: This notice provides notice of a public meeting to obtain views and comments from the public on the International Tug-of-Opportunity System (ITOS) plan for the Strait of Juan de Fuca and the Waters of the Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary to be held on November 26, 1996. This plan was prepared voluntarily by a cross section of the marine operating community in the State of Washington and British Columbia, Canada.

DATES: The meeting will be held November 26, 1996, from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. and 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. Written statements and requests to make oral presentations should reach the Coast Guard on or before November 19, 1996. Other comments should reach the Coast Guard on or before November 30, 1996.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held in the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Western Region Conference Center, Building Nine Auditorium, 7600 Sand Point Way N.E., Seattle, Washington. Written materials may be mailed to the Executive Secretary, Marine Safety Council (G-LRA), U.S. Coast Guard, 2100 Second Street SW., Washington, DC 20593-0001, or may be delivered to room 3406 at the same address between 9:30 a.m. and 2 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: