



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20350-1000

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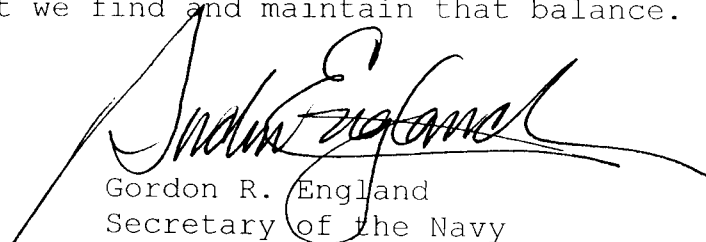
MEMORANDUM FOR CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS  
COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS

SUBJECT: Policy Guidance for Endangered Species Actions

Active Navy and Marine Corps participation in Endangered Species Act (ESA) listing decisions, critical habitat designation, and recovery planning is essential to prevent or minimize restrictions on mission related activities. Providing timely comments on ESA rule-making provides us the opportunity to communicate to the regulators about potential military mission impacts, and to demonstrate that a proposed action may not be warranted, in certain situations, because of on-going military conservation efforts and implementation of installation Integrated Natural Resources Management Plans.

As a matter of policy, Navy and Marine Corps installations and commands shall properly staff through their chain of command ESA actions that have potential to affect mission readiness. Moreover, comments in response to any proposal to designate critical habitat or to introduce federally protected species onto Navy and Marine Corps property, shall undergo review and approval by the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (N4) or the Deputy Commandant of the Marine Corps (I&L). This will ensure that the final determination on such matters is consistent with the Department's obligations under Title 10 of the U.S. Code to maintain ready forces.

This guidance does not alter the Department's commitment and obligation under the ESA to use its authority to enhance the recovery of federally listed species and their habitats. Federal agencies are responsible for conserving endangered species as part of their normal activities. The Navy and Marine Corps will continue to play a vital role in support of the ESA. However, we have a duty to balance that effort with the need to use our lands to support the Defense mission. We count on you to help ensure that we find and maintain that balance.

  
Gordon R. England  
Secretary of the Navy

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