



## United States Department of the Interior

### FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Raleigh Field Office  
Post Office Box 33726  
Raleigh, North Carolina 27636-3726  
August 6, 2002

Commander, Atlantic Division  
Attn: Ms. Kelly Knight (BD33)  
1510 Gilbert Street  
Norfolk, Virginia 23511-2699

Dear Ms. Knight:

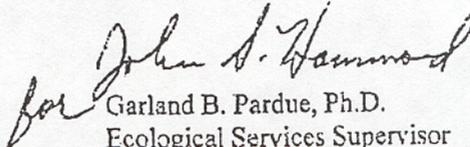
The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has received the Department of the Navy, U.S. Marine Corps' Environmental Assessment (EA) for Proposed Military Operations Areas in Eastern North Carolina, dated June 2002. Our comments are submitted pursuant to, and in accordance with, provisions of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (48 Stat. 401, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 661 et seq.), the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (16 U.S.C. 703 et seq.), and the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (87 Stat. 884, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.).

Department of the Navy is proposing to create two functionally independent Military Operations Areas (MOAs) to enhance training opportunities for the Second Marine Aircraft Wing and other aircraft operating out of Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, Craven County, North Carolina. The first proposed MOA, referred to as Core MOA, would provide a capability to conduct high-speed sea-to-land and land-to-sea operations at altitudes greater than 3,000 feet above mean sea level (MSL) and less than 17,999 feet MSL and airspeeds greater than 250 knots (but subsonic) by allowing access through non-SUA (Special Use Airspace). The second proposed MOA, referred to as Mattamuskeet MOA, would connect to other SUA and provide capability to conduct aviation training activities, such as combat training maneuvers.

The Service has several potential concerns about the proposed MOAs. However, due to staff limitations we have not had the opportunity to fully review the EA. We request a 45-day extension to more thoroughly evaluate the EA and coordinate with the Service's National Wildlife Refuges (NWR) potentially affected by the proposed action (i.e., Alligator River NWR, Mattamuskeet NWR, Pocosin Lakes NWR and Swan Quarter NWR). Our comments will be submitted to you by September 20, 2002.

If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me at (919) 856-4520 extension 11, or via email at [Garland\\_Pardue@fws.gov](mailto:Garland_Pardue@fws.gov).

Sincerely,

  
Garland B. Pardue, Ph.D.  
Ecological Services Supervisor

cc: Alligator River NWR, Manteo, NC (Mike Bryant, Bud Fazio, Dennis Stewart)  
Lake Mattamuskeet NWR, Swanquarter, NC (Don Temple)  
Pocosin Lakes NWR, Columbia, NC (Howard Phillips)