

For Immediate Release

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NAVY TO STAGE TEST EXERCISE OFF VENTURA COUNTY COAST

Beginning in mid-March, the US Navy will conduct a training and evaluation exercise in the Point Mugu Sea Range, off the coast of Port Hueneme, which will continue for several months. The purpose of the exercise is to test and evaluate the use of unmanned surface and aerial vehicles.

The exercise will take place several miles offshore in the Sea Range, an area designated for military testing activities. It will involve the use of dozens of small boats, in the 16'- 24' size range, which will be launched from Naval Base Ventura County and adjacent harbors. They will be launched and steered to the Sea Range for maneuvers, and usually returned to their landside storage areas at night. The level of activity will be small initially, e.g., tens of boats deployed in March, then gradually scale up to larger numbers later in the year. The launch-and-recovery cycle will occur on only a handful of days each month, most likely mid-week. Concurrent with the small boat activity, a smaller number of unmanned aerial vehicles or drones will be launched from the Base and steered to the Sea Range.

All activity associated with the project will be safe for the public and for all forms of sea life. There will be no use of live ammunition at any time, nor will there be any use of sound devices underwater or nets which could endanger sea birds or mammals or fish. At the same time, there will be significant economic benefit to the local Ventura County community from the activities which will support the project. Hotel and related restaurant demand will be in the hundreds of room-nights and thousands of meals over the course of the project, from personnel who will be needed to operate and test both the boats and the unmanned aerial vehicles. Companies which are contractors in this project will have first-hand exposure to Ventura County as a potential location for their companies and jobs in the future.

Presentations covering the public-facing aspects of the project are being scheduled in the coming weeks, both for elected officials in the county and for community organizations which have interest in learning more about the project. Any such groups desiring to schedule a presentation should contact the project's Community Liaison, Steve Kinney, at skinney@me.com.