

Ruling curbs Navy sonar off Calif. coast

by UPI

LOS ANGELES -- A federal judge in Los Angeles has imposed the most rigid set of limits ever on the U.S. Navy's use of mid-frequency sonar off the coast of Southern California. U.S. District Judge Florence-Marie Cooper's ruling marks the first time the judge outlined detailed rules for the Navy's use of sonar, suspected of causing disruptions to whale and dolphin navigation systems, The Los Angeles Times said Friday. Cooper's ruling bans sonar within 12 nautical miles of the California coast, increases the Navy's "shut down" zone for sonar use near marine mammals, and mandates the Navy monitor for marine mammals one hour prior to sonar exercises. The legal counsel for the concerned environmental groups in the case, Joel Reynolds, said the rule was "the most significant environmental mitigation that a federal court has ever ordered the U.S. Navy to adopt in its training with mid-frequency sonar," the Washington Post said. Cmdr. Jeff Davis, a spokesman for the U.S. Navy, said the order did not strike "the right balance between national security and environmental concerns."

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