

*Science, Service, Stewardship*



# Atlantic Shark Fishery Update

HMS Management Division  
October 2008

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## What is happening...

- Amendment 2 Final Measures
- Shark Research Fishery
- Fins On Requirement
- Landings
- Upcoming Actions



## Amendment 2 Final Measures

- Final rule published June 24 (corrected July 15)
- Effective July 24
- Analyzed Alternative Suites that Examined Several Key Topics:
  - Quotas/Species Complexes
  - Commercial Retention Limits
  - Time/Area Closures
  - Reporting Requirements
  - Seasons
  - Regions
  - Recreational Measures



## Final Quotas/Species Complexes

- Shark Research Fishery
  - Sandbar: Adjusted quota for 2008-2012: 87.9 mt dw
  - Non-sandbar: Adjusted quota for 2008-2012 : 37.5 mt dw
- Outside Research Fishery
  - Sandbar: Prohibited
  - Non-sandbar: Adjusted quota for 2008-2012 : GOM = 390.5;  
ATL = 187.8
- Status Quo SCS
- Status Quo Pelagic Sharks
- Porbeagle: Reduced TAC of 11.3 mt dw; commercial quota of 1.7 mt dw



## Final Retention Limits

- Sandbar: Retention by vessels with shark research permit ONLY (retention limits depend upon research objectives)
- Non-sandbar (outside research fishery through 2012):
  - 33 non-sandbar LCS/vessel/trip for directed permit holders
  - 3 non-sandbar LCS/vessel/trip for incidental permit holders
- All sharks offloaded with fins naturally attached



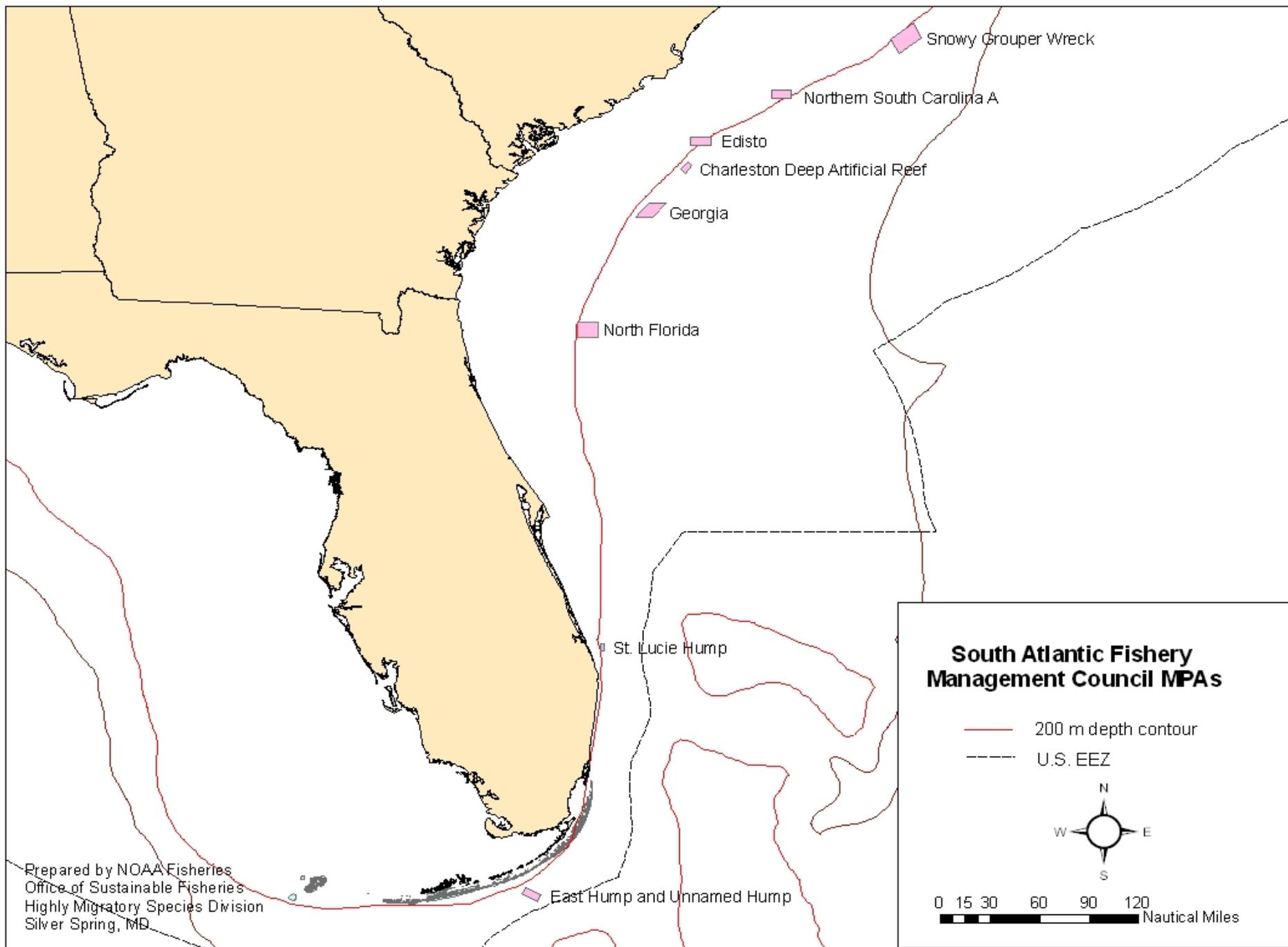
## Final Regions and Reporting

- Two regions (GOM and ATL) for non-sandbar LCS; One region for SCS , sandbar sharks, and pelagic sharks
- Research Fishery: 100% observer coverage on research vessels
- Observers/Logbooks: Status Quo
- Dealer Reporting: Dealer reports *received* within 10 days of end of reporting period
- “Fins on” check box added to dealer form
- Unclassified sharks counted against appropriate quota per spp. composition on observed non-research trips and/or dealer reports



## Final Seasons, Time/Area Closures, and Recreational Measures

- Seasons: Open approx. Jan. 1; Close individual shark seasons and regions @ 80% with 5 days notice
- Time/Area Closures: Status Quo + SAFMC's closures
- Recreational measures:
  - Size and retention limit: Status Quo
  - Authorized Species: Non-ridgeback LCS plus tiger sharks, SCS, and pelagic sharks (no sandbar or silky)
- Recreational Species Identification Placard Available





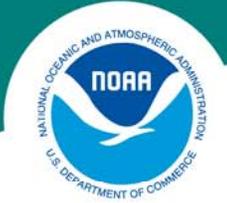
## 2008 Shark Research Fishery

- Request for applications published June 24
- Application deadline was July 15
- 25 Applications received (17 applicants)
  - 8 incomplete/missing information
  - 15 deemed qualified
  - 11 randomly selected from qualified vessels
- Requirements for qualified vessels were:
  - Complete application received by July 15
  - Valid safety decal
  - Landings history of sharks in logbooks
  - No HMS-related NOVA or Permit Sanction
  - Complied with observer program in the past 2 years



## 2008 Shark Research Fishery, cont.

- Trip limit:
  - 2,750 lbs dw (of which no more than 2,000 lbs dw can be sandbar sharks)
  - No retention limits for small coastal sharks (SCS) and pelagic sharks
- Each vessel goes out on 2 trips/month while research fishery is open
- To date:
  - 18 Trips on 7 vessels
  - ~50 more trips expected if fishery remains open



## Fins On Requirement

- Since July 24, fins are required to be naturally attached to the shark carcass through offloading; fishermen may cut the fin as long as the fin remains attached to the carcass by some skin
- During and after rulemaking :
  - Questions on how to comply
  - Concerns about quality of meat
  - Questions about what to do with excess shark parts
  - Request for NMFS to provide diagram showing how to keep the fins on the shark



## What has happened...

- Fishermen have been experimenting
  - Some fishermen have been cutting sharks like swordfish, leaving the belly flaps on until landing
  - Some fishermen have insisted that they cannot dress the shark, that the shark goes bad too quickly, and want to land the shark whole, selling only the fins
    - These fishermen have been selling fins and not reporting shark weight or have been reporting a back-calculated shark weight using 5% fin weight as a guide
    - Regulations require dealers to report weight of dressed carcass and fins; failure to do so may result in enforcement action
  - Some fishermen have designed a new “Moon” cut (named after the captain)
    - Head removed with final cut ending in middle of pectoral fin cut
    - Dock dress cut made on one side to pelvic fins/anus



## "Moon" Cut



Photo credit: S. Gulak, NMFS Shark Bottom Longline Observer Program



## Modified "Moon" Cut

Two belly cuts towards pelvic area



Photo credit: S. Gulak, NMFS Shark Bottom Longline Observer Program



## Details

## Dorsal



## Pectoral



## Caudal



## Details, cont.



57.3 lb carcass with all fins attached



Dressed trunk: 42.6 lbs

Belly and upper caudal : 12.4 lbs

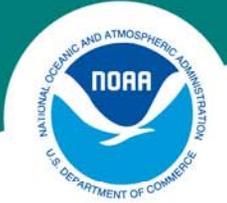
Fins: 2.5 lbs

~0.2 lbs (error between two weights)



## Landings Update: LCS

Species	Quota (mt dw)	80% of quota (mt dw)	Landings (mt dw)	% taken
Sandbar	87.9	70.3	27.2 (59,965.1 lb dw)	31
Non-Sandbar LCS GOM	390.5	312.4	92.9 (204,807.3 lb dw)	24
Non-Sandbar LCS Atlantic	187.8	150.2	118.6 (261,465.6 lb dw)	63
Non-Sandbar LCS Research	37.5	30.0	3.3 (7,275.2 lb dw)	9



## Landings Update: Non-LCS

Species	Quota (mt dw)	80% of quota (mt dw)	Landings (mt dw)	% taken
SCS	454	363.2	153.4 (338,185.6 lb dw)	34
Blue	273	218.4	0.6 (1,322.8 lb dw)	>1
Porbeagle	1.7	1.4	0.9 (1,984.1 lb dw)	53
Other Pelagic	488	390.4	103.6 (228,396.6 lb dw)	21



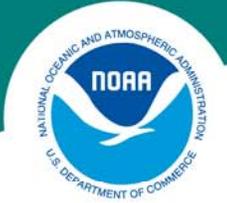
## New MSA Provision on Fishery Disasters

- Request under Sec. 312(a) of MSA:
  - (1) At the discretion of the Secretary or at the request of the Governor of an affected State or a fishing community, the Secretary shall determine whether there is a commercial fishery failure due to a fishery resource disaster as a result of—
    - (A) natural causes;
    - (B) man-made causes beyond the control of fishery managers to mitigate through conservation and management measures, including regulatory restrictions (including those imposed as a result of judicial action) imposed to protect human health or the marine environment; or
    - (C) undetermined causes.
- Received request from FL; Have requested additional information from FL, and are reviewing the request



## Shark Upcoming Actions

- 2009 Shark Season Rule
- Request for applications for 2009 Shark Research Fishery
- ICCAT – new assessments for pelagic sharks
- Amendment 3 for SCS
- Implementation of ASMFC Shark FMP



## Questions?

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