



**NOAA
FISHERIES**

Atlantic HMS Caribbean Fisheries

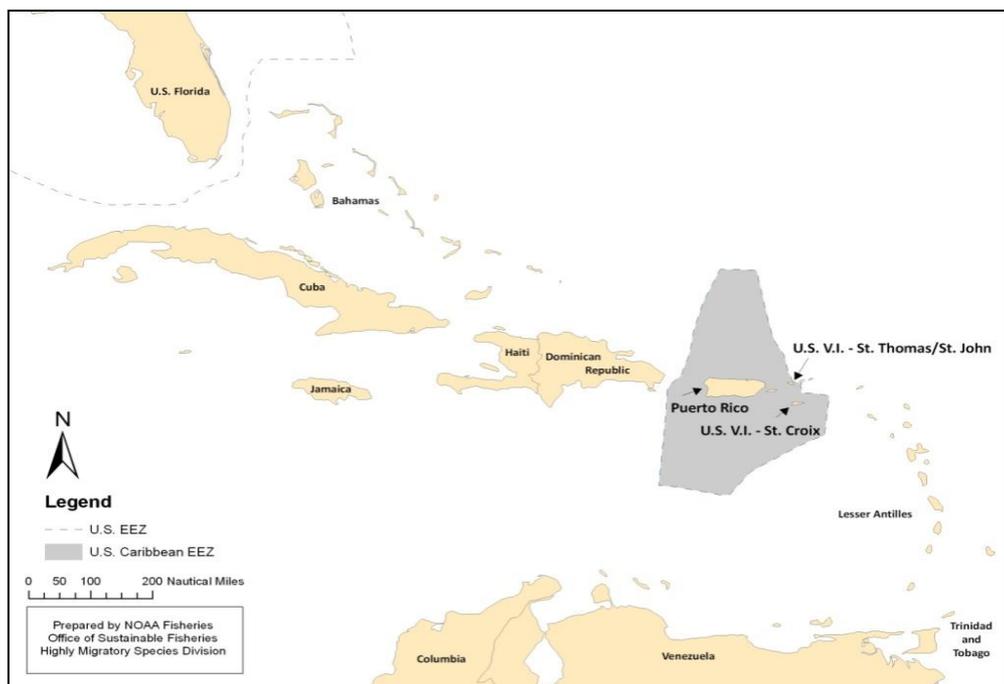
HMS Advisory Panel Meeting
September 2016

Brief Outline

- Background – Current Management
- Recent Requests for Management Changes
- Potential Challenges and Options Discussion

HMS Fisheries Management: U.S. Caribbean Region

- Caribbean Region is the area within the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) around Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.
- Atlantic HMS (tunas, billfish, sharks, and swordfish) are managed by the HMS Management Division



*Atlantic HMS fisheries regulations are at 50 CFR 635.

Background

2010 – Puerto Rico adopted HMS federal regulations for Puerto Rican territorial waters (0 – 9 nautical miles)

“El pez emperador o espada, el atún (Apéndice 1) y el tiburón, están cubiertos bajo el Reglamento Federal conocido como Especies Altamente Migratorias del Departamento de Comercio de los EE. UU. Código de Reglamentación Federal Número 50, Parte 635, en adelante denominado, “50 CFR § 635”. Debido a esto, los pescadores que capturen estas especies deberán cumplir con dicho Reglamento”

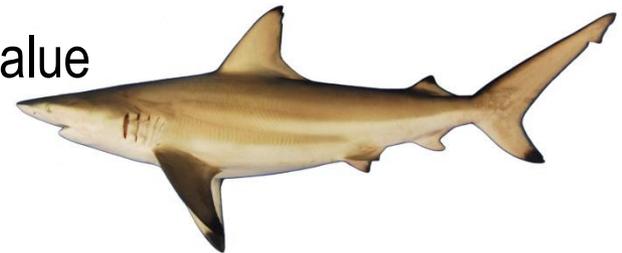
Reglamento de Pesca de Puerto Rico 2010

2001 – U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Planning and Natural Resources implemented a moratorium on issuance of new commercial fishing licenses in their territorial waters (0-3 miles).

Commercial and Fisher’s Information Handbook – Department of Planning and Natural Resources Division of Fish and Wildlife Division of Environmental Enforcement 2012

Background

- Many fishermen want to retain sharks through the Commercial Caribbean Small Boat permit and land more swordfish
- Based on comments and data from fishermen in Puerto Rico, sharks are:
 - Caught incidentally when targeting yellowtail snapper, deep water snapper, and king mackerel;
 - Generally to be avoided, only to be caught by special request from a customer;
 - Not worth a lot; their fins and meat have a low value



Background: Permits

- To recreationally or commercially harvest Atlantic sharks or swordfish, vessel owners must obtain a valid recreational or commercial permit and adhere to requirements related to fishing gear, reporting, and retention, and other restrictions:

Swordfish Fishing Permits		Shark Fishing Permits	
Recreational	Commercial	Recreational	Commercial
HMS Angling	Directed Limited Access	HMS Angling	Directed Limited Access
HMS Charter/Headboat	Incidental Limited Access	HMS Charter/Headboat	Incidental Limited Access
Atlantic Tunas General Category*	Swordfish Handgear	Atlantic Tunas General Category*	**HMS Commercial Caribbean Small Boat
Swordfish General Commercial*	HMS Commercial Caribbean Small Boat	Swordfish General Commercial*	Smoothhound Shark Open Access
	HMS Charter/Headboat (on non for hire trip)		
	Swordfish General Commercial		

* Used recreationally **only** when participating in a registered HMS tournament

** Retention limit for sharks is set at zero at this time

Background: Retention Limits

Swordfish

Permits		Gear ³⁶	
1. HMS Angling, ³⁷ OR 2. HMS Charter/Headboat, ³⁸ OR 3. Swordfish General Commercial ³⁹ OR Atlantic Tunas General ⁴⁰ ONLY if participating in a registered Atlantic HMS tournament.		Handline and Rod and reel	
SIZE/BAG LIMITS AND SEASONS			
Permits	Minimum Size ⁴¹	Bag Limit ⁴²	Season
HMS Angling OR Atlantic Tunas General category (in a registered HMS tournament)	47" LJFL or 25" CK	1 per person, up to 4 per vessel per trip	Jan. 1 - Dec. 31
HMS Charter/Headboat*		1 per paying passenger, up to 6 per vessel per trip	
Charter Vessels	1 per paying passenger, up to 15 per vessel per trip		
Headboat Vessels			

RETENTION LIMITS (per vessel per trip)	
North Atlantic Swordfish (north of 5° N latitude)	
Directed permit	No trip limit (when the directed fishery closes, vessels may retain 15 per pelagic longline trip, 2 per handgear trip, and no swordfish per harpoon trip) ⁴⁶
Incidental permit⁴⁷	30
Handgear permit	No trip limit (when the directed fishery is closed, fishermen may retain two swordfish per handgear trip, and no swordfish per harpoon trip) ⁴⁸
HMS Commercial Caribbean Small Boat permit⁴⁹	2
Swordfish General Commercial permit	Default regional retention limits are listed below and may be adjusted during the fishing season. Visit http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfg/hms/ or call 301-427-8503 or 727-824-5399 for more information. ⁵⁰
HMS Charter/Headboat permit (on non-for-hire trip)	Northwest Atlantic: 3 U.S. Caribbean: 2 Gulf of Mexico: 3 Florida Swordfish Mgmt. Area: 0 (Map on page 7)
Incidental HMS Squid Trawl permit	15, including during a directed fishery closure (provided squid constitute not less than 75 percent of the total catch on board and trawl gear is the only gear onboard the vessel) ⁵¹
South Atlantic Swordfish	
(south of 5° N latitude; only vessels fishing with pelagic longline gear may retain swordfish) ⁵²	
Directed permit	No trip limit (when the directed fishery closes, no swordfish may be retained) ⁵³
Incidental permit	No retention allowed ⁵⁴

Sharks

SIZE/BAG LIMITS AND SEASONS				
Permits	Species	Minimum Size ⁶⁰ (FL)	Trip Bag Limit ^{**61}	Season
HMS Angling, Charter/Headboat, Atlantic Tunas General Category*, or Swordfish General Commercial*	Atlantic sharpnose	None	1 per person	Jan. 1 - Dec. 31
	Bonnethead	None	1 per person	
	Smoothhound Sharks***	None	None	
	Hammerheads (Great, Smooth, and Scalloped)	78"	1 per vessel	
	All other sharks	54"		

RETENTION LIMITS ¹⁸ (per vessel per trip)				
	LCS*	SCS	Pelagic Sharks	Smoothhound Sharks**
Directed permit	45		No limit	0 (smoothhound shark permit required for retention; smoothhound permit may be held in conjunction with a limited access permit)
Incidental permit	3	16 (combined SCS and pelagic)		
HMS Commercial Caribbean Small Boat permit	0 (no shark retention; the Caribbean Small Boat permit cannot be held in conjunction with any other commercial shark permit)			
Smoothhound shark permit	0 (shark limited access permit required for retention of LCS, SCS, and pelagic sharks; smoothhound permit can be held in conjunction with limited access permit)		No limit (except when caught with trawl gear where retained catch cannot exceed 25% of total catch)	

Source: HMS Recreational and Commercial Compliance Guides

* Only in a registered HMS tournament

HMS Caribbean Commercial Small Boat Permit Regulations

Vessel size restriction: Less than or equal to 45 feet in length overall

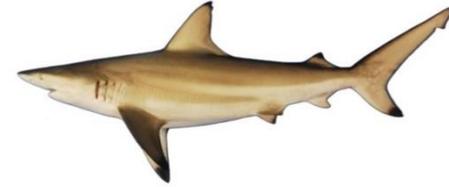
	# of fish per vessel per day	Minimum Size	Authorized Gear with this permit
Bigeye, Albacore, Yellowfin, and Skipjack Tunas	10 (total for all species)	<u>Bigeye and yellowfin tunas:</u> 27 inches (69 cm) CFL <u>Albacore and skipjack tuna:</u> no minimum size	Rod and reel, handline, harpoon, bandit gear, greenstick gear, buoy gear (yo-yo gear)
Swordfish	2	47 inches LJFL (if head naturally attached) 25 inches CK (if any portion of head removed)	Rod and reel, handline, harpoon, bandit gear, buoy gear (yo-yo gear)
Sharks	No retention	Not applicable	Rod and reel, handline, and bandit gear

Distribution of HMS Permits in Puerto Rico and the USVI (2015 and 2016)

Permit Category	Puerto Rico		US Virgin Islands	
	2015	2016	2015	2016
Atlantic Tunas General	67	71	7	6
HMS Charter/Headboat	22	21	22	14
HMS Angling	425	320	25	13
General Commercial Swordfish	9	8	0	1
Caribbean Commercial Small Boat	1	4	1	1
HMS Dealer	1 (Swordfish) 4 (Tunas)	1 (Swordfish) 4 (Tuna)	3 (Tuna)	3 (Tuna)

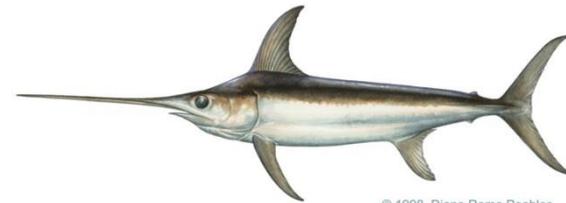
Recent Requests for Management Changes

Atlantic Sharks:



- Allow a shark retention limit through the HMS Commercial Caribbean Small Boat permit in Puerto Rico and USVI;
- Create a small-scale multi-fishery shark quota that incorporates the unique ecological and cultural elements (species, availability, market) of Puerto Rico and the USVI;

Atlantic Swordfish:

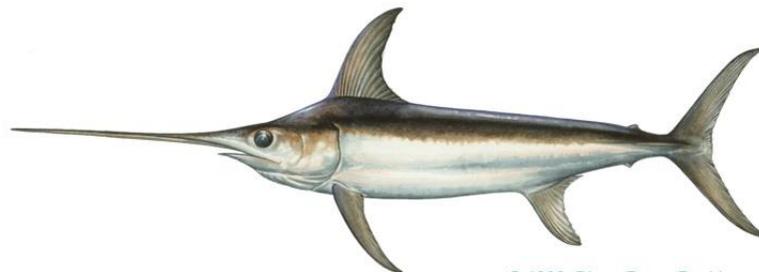


- Increase the swordfish limit allowed under the HMS Commercial Caribbean Small Boat Permit

Reported Commercial Swordfish Landings (lb dw) in Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands (2012-2016)

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Grand Total
U.S. Virgin Islands	395	105	268	1,177	88	2,033
Puerto Rico	0	0	338	34	0	372

Source: SEFSC Commercial Landings Reports (2012- 2016; as of June 16, 2016)



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Reported Commercial Shark Landings (lb dw) in Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands (2012-2016)

Species Name	Area	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Grand Total
Caribbean Reef Shark*	PR	451	347	548	332	77	1,906
	USVI	43	0	0	108	0	
Great Hammerhead Shark	PR	0	487	414	36	18	2,040
	USVI	173	9	662	241	0	
Lemon Shark	PR	1,181	539	681	1,800	96	4,366
	USVI	25	23	7	0	14	
Scalloped Hammerhead Shark**	PR	26	66	86	15	0	193
	USVI	0	0	0	0	0	
Sevengill Shark*	PR	88	93	80	43	29	333
	USVI	0	0	0	0	0	
Tiger Shark	PR	776	323	3,835	2,349	314	8,002
	USVI	345	9	0	37	14	
Sharks (unclassified)	PR	4,442	3,786	4,667	3,534	520	17,531
	USVI	434	140	1	7	0	
Grand Total	PR/USVI	7,984	5,822	10,981	8,502	1,082	34,371

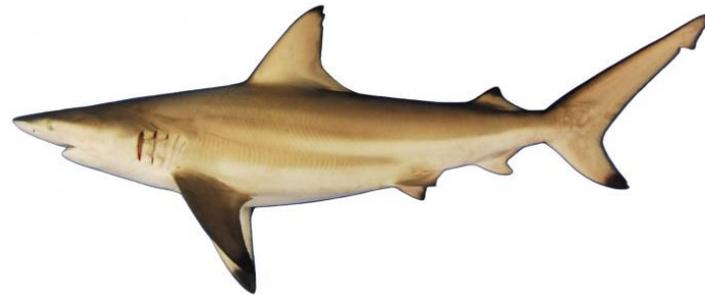
- **Caribbean sharpnose sharks*** are also caught and landed in Puerto Rico (M. Hanke)

* Prohibited species ** Threatened species in Caribbean region

Source: SEFSC Commercial Landings Reports (2012-2016; as of June 16, 2016)

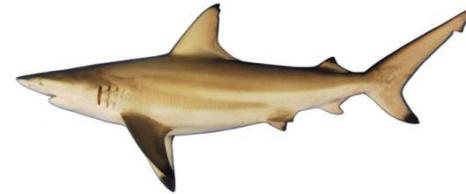
Potential Challenges and Options

Option: Allow landing of sharks with the HMS Caribbean Small Boat Permit



Potential Challenges and Options

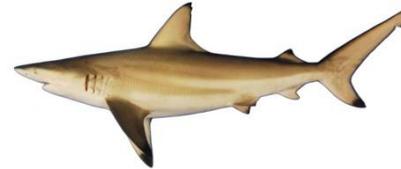
Atlantic Sharks



Potential Challenges	Potential Options
<p>Some of the species landed are prohibited species:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caribbean reef • Caribbean sharpnose • Sevengill 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Maintain prohibited species list and only allow authorized species? – Remove some species from the prohibited species list and allow them to be landed? <p>Current criteria to de-list a species from the prohibited list (must meet only one criteria): (1) Biological information indicates that the stock warrants protection; (2) Information indicates that the species is rarely encountered or observed caught in HMS fisheries; (3) Information indicates that the species is not commonly encountered or observed caught as bycatch in fishing operations for species other than than HMS; and (5)The species is difficult to distinguish from the other prohibited species.</p>
<p>If removed from the prohibited species list, which management group should the species should go in?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Put in previous management group (LCS, SCS, and Pelagic) and manage same as other sharks in those groups? – Create a new management group of Caribbean shark species?

Potential Challenges and Options

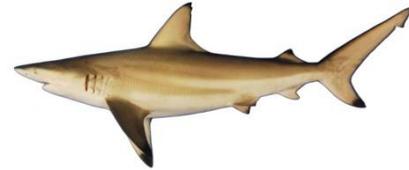
Atlantic Sharks:



Potential Challenges	Potential Options
Caribbean shark commercial landings are currently counted towards the Gulf of Mexico commercial shark quota	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Maintain current structure?- Allow landings of authorized shark species only and continue to count landings against Gulf of Mexico quota?- Remove some species from the prohibited species list and count their landings against the Gulf of Mexico quota?- Remove some species from the prohibited species list and authorize their harvest only in the Caribbean (against a Caribbean quota)?

Potential Challenges and Options

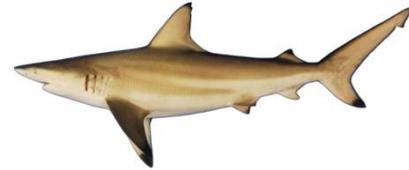
Atlantic Sharks:



Potential Challenges	Potential Options
Caribbean Small Boat Permit has a shark retention limit of zero at this time	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Establish criteria to adjust retention limits?- What should the retention limit be?- Require shark dealer workshops and electronic reporting requirements for Caribbean Small Boat permit holders?

Other Potential Challenges

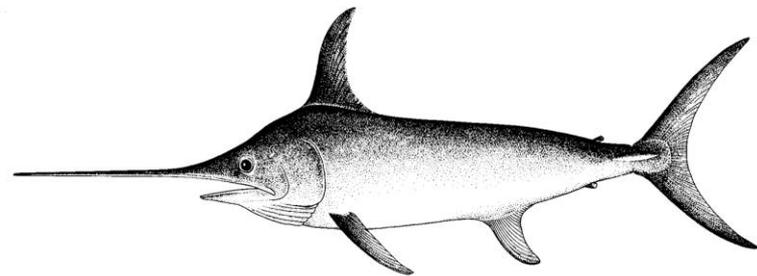
Atlantic Sharks:



- Endangered Species Act:
 - Changes in management would require additional consideration of impacts to Scalloped hammerhead shark in the Caribbean as this species is listed as threatened in this area under the ESA

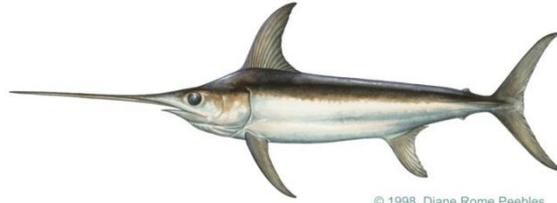
Potential Challenges and Options

Option: Increase Retention Limit of Swordfish for the HMS Caribbean Small Boat Permit



Potential Challenges and Options

Atlantic Swordfish:



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Potential Challenges	Potential Options
Current Commercial Caribbean Small Boat Permit retention limit: 2 swordfish per vessel per day	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Establish criteria to adjust retention limits inseason?– Establish a retention limit range within which inseason adjustments could be made; establish a default retention limit within this range– What should the retention limit be?



Thoughts?

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