

Science, Service, Stewardship



Update On Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Training Workshops

HMS Advisory Panel Meeting
September 23, 2010

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HMS Oversees Two Types of Required Workshops

- **Protected Species Safe Handling, Release, & Identification Workshops** – SWO and SHK Vessel Owners and Operators that Deploy Longline or Gillnet Gear
- **Atlantic Shark Identification Workshops** – Atlantic Shark Dealers or their Proxies



Background

(Protected Species Safe Handling,
Release, & Identification Workshops)

- **June 2001 BiOp** – Found that Atlantic PLL fishery is likely to jeopardize continued existence of both leatherback and loggerhead sea turtles
- **July 2002 Final Rule (67 FR 45393)** – Northeast Distant (NED) Area (*i.e.*, Grand Banks) closed to PLL fishing to reduce catch and post-release mortality of sea turtles per 2001 BiOp
- **2001 – 2003 NED Experiment** – Cooperative research in the NED between SEFSC and 12 – 15 PLL vessels to reduce bycatch and post-release mortality of sea turtles



Background (cont.)

- **2001 - 2003** – Leatherback & loggerhead takes continue to exceed ITS. NMFS decides that “*a more comprehensive strategy*” is needed to address turtle bycatch in PLL fishery.
- **January 2004** – NMFS hosts meeting with industry to present preliminary results of NED Experiment.
- **June 2004 BiOp** – Concludes that PLL fishery still likely to jeopardize leatherbacks, but is not likely to jeopardize loggerheads. Reasonable & Prudent Alternative (RPA) requires *hands-on* safe handling/release training & certification program for captains, among other requirements.
- **2006** – Free HMS protected species workshops begin.



Implementation

- **Required Attendees** – SWO and SHK vessel owners & operators on vessels that deploy longline or gillnet gear
- **Curriculum** – Sea turtle & sawfish safe handling, release, & identification; Marine mammal safe handling, release, identification, & reporting; Protected species regulations
- **Instructors** – Contractor (Angler Conservation Education)
- **Certification/Renewals** – Certificates expire after 3 years
- **Locations/Frequency of Workshops** – Coastwide; 2/month
- **Verification of Compliance** - Must submit copy of certificate issued at workshop when renewing SWO or SHK permits; Owner & operator certificates must be on board vessel



Display of Required Gears at Workshop



Classroom Lecture Session



Hands-On Training with J-Style Dehooker



Hands-On Training with Long-Handled Dehooker & Line Cutter₉



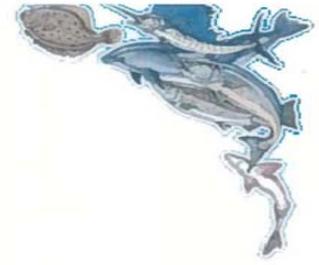
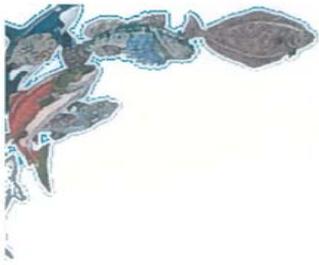
Hands-On Training with Long-Handled Dehooker



Hands-On Training with Short-Handled Dehooker with Bite Block



Hands-On Training with Long-Handled Dehooker & Line Cutter



**2008 PROTECTED SPECIES SAFE HANDLING, RELEASE,
AND IDENTIFICATION WORKSHOP**

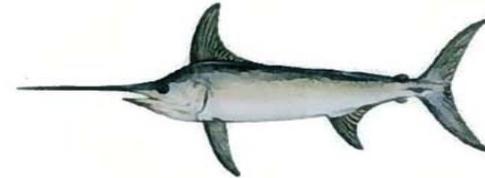
Vessel Operator Certificate

Participant Name: PEARSON, RICHARD

Identifier: 09PNR61131

Date of Certification: 11/25/2008

Date of Expiration: 9/30/2011



Signature of Instructor: Christina Clow **Date:** 11/25/08

Signature of Participant: Richard A. Pearson **Date:** 11/25/08



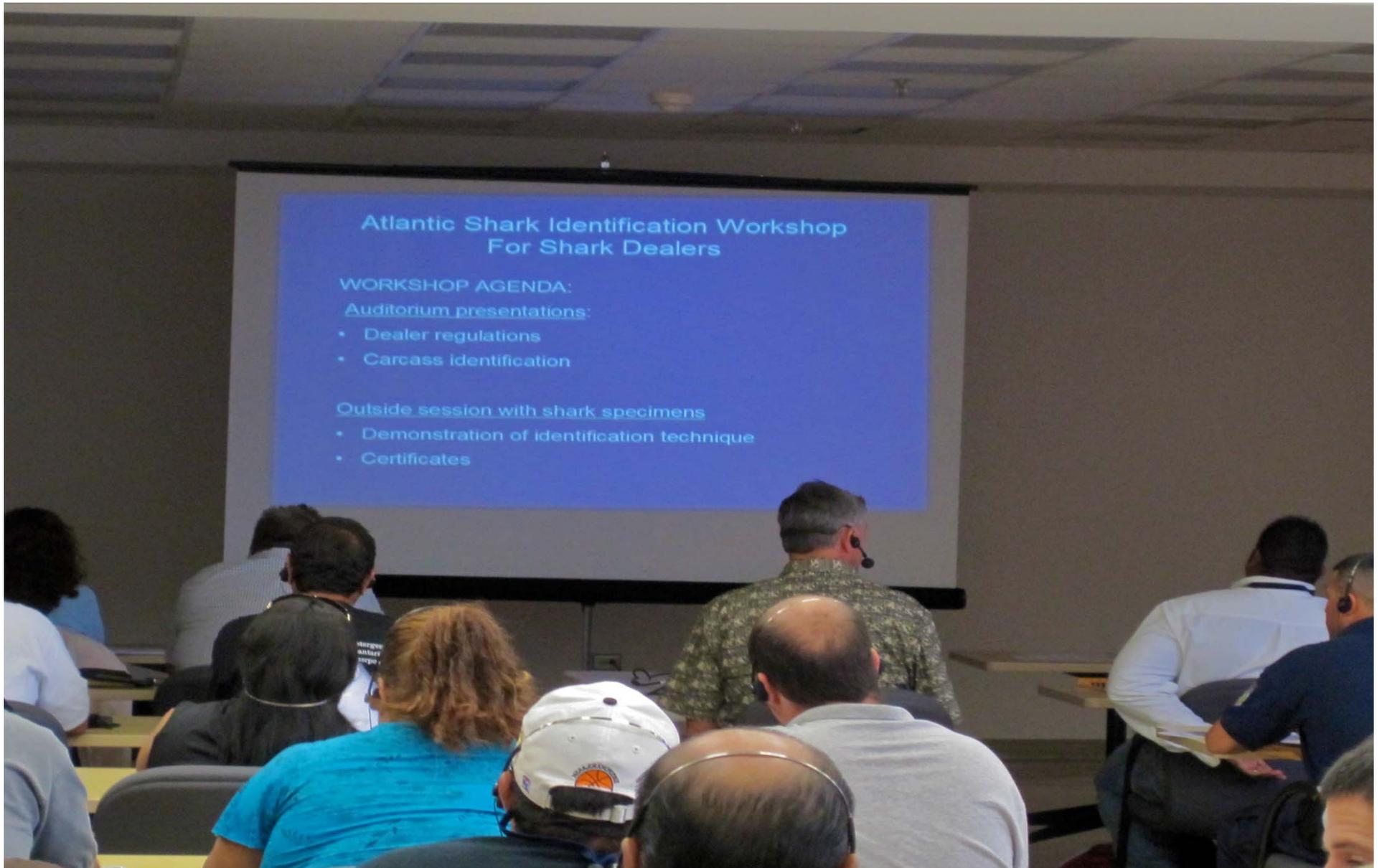
National Marine Fisheries Service
HMS Management Division
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910
301-713-2347





Atlantic Shark Identification Workshops

- Workshops first implemented in 2007. Certificate required for 2008 Atlantic Shark Dealer permit renewal
- **Purpose** – To reduce the amount of unclassified or incorrectly identified sharks reported to NMFS to improve stock assessments, quota monitoring, and management in general
- **Required Attendees** – Atlantic shark dealers or proxies
- **Curriculum** – Atlantic shark identification & regulations
- **Instructors** – Contractor (Eric Sander)
- **Certification/Renewals** – Certificates expire after 3 years
- **Locations/Frequency of Workshops** – Coastwide; 1/month



Classroom Lecture Session



Hands-On Display of Various Preserved Shark Specimens



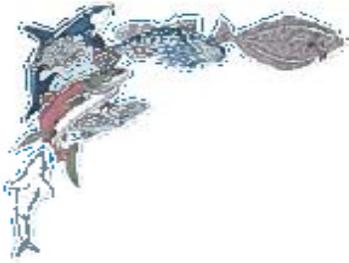
Models Are Also Used to Demonstrate Key Features



Dealers Learn to ID Sharks Using a Reference Guide



State Law Enforcement Officers in Attendance



2009 ATLANTIC SHARK IDENTIFICATION WORKSHOP



GENERAL PARTICIPANT CERTIFICATE

Participant Name: Pearson, Richard



Date of Certification: 2/11/2009

Date of Expiration: 2/12/2012

Signature of Instructor: *Eric Hurd* **Date:** 2/11/2009

Signature of Participant: *R Pearson* **Date:** 2/13/09



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FIMS Management Division
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Attendees Receive a Certificate Upon Completion of Workshop



Summary of Completed Workshops

- **97 Protected Species Workshops Since 2006**
 - 1,663 Protected Species Certificates Issued to Vessel Owners, Operators, and Other Participants
- **49 Atlantic Shark Identification Workshops Since 2007**
 - 592 Atlantic Shark Identification Certificates Issued to Shark Dealers, Proxies, and Other Participants



Daily HMS Workshop Activities

- Maintain Record of Attendees
- Issue New Certificates for Permit Transfers & Lost Certificates
- Publish FR Notices for Quarterly Schedules & Inform Constituents
- Maintain Up to Date Handout Materials & Ensure Supply
- Oversee Contract
- Maintain Communications with Contractors & Constituents
- Verify that HMS Workshop Website is Up to Date

Currently, These Activities Require ~ 1/3 FTE



Results

- The Atlantic PLL Fishery has Remained Below the 3-Year ITS Established for Loggerhead and Leatherback Sea Turtles*
- Compliance with 2004 PLL BiOp Workshop RPA is Being Met
- The Amount of “Unclassified” or Misidentified Sharks Being Reported Has Been Reduced by 83% from 2006 – 2009.
- Atlantic HMS Fishers and Shark Dealers Have Become More Familiar with HMS and Protected Species Regulations

*** Other factors (such as circle hooks and specified baits) have contributed to bycatch reduction as well. Also, there was a “one-time” overage of the leatherback ITS from 2004 – 2006 due to the implementation of measures occurring midway through 2004.**



How's it Going?

- HMS workshops require a significant commitment of NMFS resources and industry time, but the results have been very encouraging.
- Attendees may be apprehensive at first, but later seem to appreciate the Agency effort, information gained, and the certificate earned.
- Workshops provide a unique opportunity for communication with fishers/dealers in a neutral setting.
- Many industries and companies have formal training requirements. Other than USCG licensing programs, HMS workshops are one of the few training opportunities available to, or required of, U.S. commercial fishing industry participants.



Looking Forward

- The decision to reduce bycatch and bycatch mortality ultimately rests with the individual vessel operator and crew.
- NMFS is considering modifications to PR workshop curriculum to further emphasize the importance of reducing bycatch and bycatch mortality, and to foster an increased sense of personal stewardship for the fishery.
- NMFS is considering streamlining the workshops for repeat participants (certificates must be renewed every 3 years).
- NMFS will work with the media to increase publicity of workshops and better inform U.S. consumers about these innovative programs.

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The End

How can HMS workshops be utilized to
achieve their maximum potential?

Your comments and ideas are appreciated!