



NMFS Makes Stock Status Determinations and Requests Comments on Future Options to Manage Atlantic Shark Fisheries

Based on the latest Southeast Data, Assessment and Review (SEDAR) 2010/2011 stock assessments of sandbar, dusky, and blacknose sharks, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is making the following determinations of the status of several shark species:

Species	Overfished	Overfishing
Sandbar sharks	Yes	No*
Dusky sharks	Yes	Yes
Atlantic blacknose sharks	Yes*	Yes*
Gulf of Mexico blacknose sharks	Unknown*	Unknown*

*Indicates change from previous assessments

Copies of the assessments can be obtained by contacting the phone numbers or address listed below and online at <http://www.sefsc.noaa.gov/sedar/Index.jsp>.

Based on the 2010/2011 SEDAR shark stock assessments, and the previous notice that determined scalloped hammerhead sharks are overfished and experiencing overfishing (April 28, 2011, 76 FR 23794), NMFS believes the implementation of new management measures via an amendment to the 2006 Consolidated Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Fishery Management Plan (FMP) is necessary to rebuild and end overfishing of these stocks, as appropriate, per the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act).

NMFS also announces the scoping phase of this rulemaking process. NMFS has drafted an issues and options presentation that summarizes the scalloped hammerhead, sandbar, dusky, and blacknose stock assessments, and offers preliminary ideas on potential management approaches to address overfishing on/overfished stocks in order to encourage and initiate public comment. NMFS has scheduled the following scoping meetings and conference call to take public comment.

Date	Time	Meeting Location	Meeting Address
October 11, 2011	7 -9 p.m.	Dolce Seaview Resort	401 South New York Road, Galloway, NJ 08205
October 26, 2011	5 - 7 p.m.	Belle Chasse Auditorium	8398 HWY. 23, Belle Chasse, LA 70037
November 2, 2011	4:30 - 6:30 p.m.	Southeast Fisheries Science Center, Panama City Laboratory	3500 Delwood Beach Drive, Panama City, FL 32408
November 3, 2011	4:30 - 6:30 p.m.	Fort Pierce Branch Library	101 Melody Lane, Fort Pierce, FL 34950

Date	Time	Meeting Location	Meeting Address
December 7, 2011	4:30 – 6:30 p.m.	North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries, Central District Office	5285 HWY. 70 West/Arendell Street, Morehead City, NC 28557
December 15, 2011	2 – 4 p.m.	Conference Call	To participate, please call: 888-989-7538; Passcode: 3994893

In addition to the five scoping meetings and conference call, NMFS has requested to present the issues and options presentation to the five Atlantic Regional Fishery Management Councils (the New England, Mid-Atlantic, South Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico, and Caribbean Fishery Management Councils) and the Atlantic and Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commissions during the public comment period. Please see the Councils' and Commissions' fall meeting notices for times and locations. The scoping meetings will focus on the issues raised in the issues and options presentation. NMFS welcomes additional thoughts and comments on appropriate management measures. The issues and options presentation is available online (<http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/>) and by request at the address listed below.

Specifically, NMFS requests comments on commercial management options including, but not limited to, quota levels, regional and seasonal quotas, trip limits, minimum sizes, gear and effort modifications, time/area closures, and prohibited species. In addition, NMFS is seeking comments on recreational management options including, but not limited to, retention limits, minimum sizes, authorized gears, and prohibited species. NMFS also seeks comments on display quotas and collection of sharks through exempted fishing permits, display permits, and scientific research permits. Additionally, NMFS requests comments on management measures to reduce fishing mortality of dusky sharks, as these are already prohibited in commercial and recreational fisheries, and scalloped hammerhead sharks, which are often brought to the fishing vessel already dead. Comments received on this action will assist NMFS in determining the options for rulemaking to conserve and manage shark resources and shark fisheries, consistent with the Magnuson-Stevens Act and other applicable laws.

Scoping comments must be received no later than 5 p.m., local time, on December 31, 2011. Written comments, identified by "NOAA-NMFS-2011-0229", may be submitted electronically via the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal www.regulations.gov. To submit comments via the e-Rulemaking Portal, first click the "submit a comment" icon, then enter NOAA-NMFS-2011-0229 in the keyword search. Locate the document you wish to comment on from the resulting list and click on the "Submit a Comment" icon on the right of that line. Comments may also be sent by fax at (301) 713-1917 or by mail to Peter Cooper, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910. Please mark the outside of the envelope "Scoping Comments on Amendment 5 to HMS FMP."

Comments must be submitted by one of the above methods to ensure that the comments are received, documented, and considered by NMFS. Comments sent by any other method, to any other address or individual, or received after the end of the comment period, may not be considered. All comments received are a part of the public record and will generally be posted for public viewing on www.regulations.gov without change. All personal identifying information (*e.g.*, name, address, etc.) submitted voluntarily by the sender will be publicly

accessible. Do not submit confidential business information, or otherwise sensitive or protected information. NMFS will accept anonymous comments (enter "N/A" in the required fields if you wish to remain anonymous). Attachments to electronic comments will be accepted in Microsoft Word or Excel, WordPerfect, or Adobe PDF file formats only.

This notice is a courtesy for Atlantic shark fisheries interests to keep you informed about your fishery. Official notice of Federal fishery actions is made through filing such notice with the Office of the Federal Register. For further information, contact Peter Cooper or Karyl Brewster-Geisz at (301) 427-8503, or Jackie Wilson at (240) 338-3936.



FOL Alan Risenhoover
Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries

10/06/11
Date

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