



NMFS Announces the Availability of the Final Environmental Impact Statement for Amendment 3 to the Consolidated Atlantic Highly Migratory Species Fishery Management Plan

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) announces the availability of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for Amendment 3 to the Consolidated Atlantic Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Fishery Management Plan (FMP). The final rule, which would implement Amendment 3, will publish after the end of the FEIS 30-day waiting period. Based on public comment, updated data, and new analyses, NMFS has changed several of the preferred alternatives from the Draft EIS (DEIS) to the FEIS.

	Preferred Alternatives in DEIS	Preferred Alternatives in FEIS
Small Coastal Shark (SCS) Commercial Quotas	<u>Alt. A4:</u> - non-blacknose SCS: 56.9 mt dw - blacknose sharks: 14.9 mt dw	<u>Alt. A6:</u> - non-blacknose SCS: 221.6 mt dw (2004-08 average landings) - blacknose sharks: 19.9 mt dw (64% reduction from 2004-08 average landings)
Commercial Gear Restrictions	<u>Alt. B3:</u> Close the gillnet fishery from South Carolina south	<u>Alt. B1:</u> No Action, Maintain all currently authorized gears
Reason for Changes: Consideration of public comments and updated data & analysis shows: 1) gillnet fishermen can selectively target shark species, 2) blacknose mortality rates with gillnets are lower, 3) average size of blacknose in gillnets is larger. Both SCS and blacknose fisheries will close when either quota reaches 80%.		
SCS Recreational Measures	<u>Alt. D4:</u> Prohibit the retention of blacknose sharks in recreational fisheries	<u>Alt. D1:</u> No Action, Maintain recreational retention and size limits for blacknose sharks (54 inch FL, 1 shark/vessel/trip)
Reason for Change: Consideration of public and state comments that indicated that state measures provide adequate protection for blacknose. Note: biological impacts similar, as blacknose rarely reach 54 inches		
Pelagic Shark Commercial and Recreational Measures	<u>Alt. C5 & E3:</u> Take action at the international level to end overfishing of shortfin mako sharks <u>Alt. C6 & E4:</u> Promote the release of shortfin mako sharks brought to fishing vessels alive	<u>Alt. C5 & E3:</u> No Change <u>Alt. C6 & E4:</u> No Change
Smooth Dogfish	<u>Alt F2:</u> Add smooth dogfish under NMFS Management and establish a federal permit. Establish a smooth dogfish quota equal to the maximum average landings plus one standard deviation (645.8 mt dw)	<u>Alt F2:</u> Delay implementation of management measures until 2012 fishing season. Establish a smooth dogfish quota equal to the maximum average annual landings plus two standard deviation (715.5 mt dw)
Reason for changes: Delay provides time to 1) implement federal permit, 2) finalize biological opinion, 3) work with fishery participants regarding fins attached requirement. Higher quota minimizes changes in catch levels and better accounts for incomplete data reporting.		



The preferred alternatives are expected to rebuild blacknose sharks, and end overfishing of blacknose sharks and shortfin mako sharks, and provide a reasonable opportunity to catch the optimum yield for all sharks including smooth dogfish. Details on the reasons for changes from the DEIS to the FEIS are described in the FEIS. The FEIS is available at <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/> or by contacting LeAnn Hogan, Highly Migratory Species Management Division, National Marine Fisheries Service, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910, (301) 713-2347.

Questions or comments about the FEIS should be directed to LeAnn Hogan (LeAnn.Southward-Hogan@noaa.gov) or Karyl Brewster-Geisz (Karyl.Brewster-Geisz@noaa.gov) via email or fax at (301) 713-2347.

This notice is a courtesy to Atlantic HMS interests to keep you informed about your fisheries. Official notice of Federal fishery actions is made through filing such notice with the Office of the Federal Register.



Alan Risenhoover
Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries

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Date

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