



NMFS Announces a Closure of the Commercial Non-Sandbar Large Coastal Shark Fishery in the Atlantic Region

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) projects that the landings for the commercial non-sandbar large coastal shark (LCS) fishery in the Atlantic region exceed 80 percent of the available quota. As required by regulations at 50 CFR 6.35.28(b)(2), NMFS is closing the commercial non-sandbar LCS fishery in the Atlantic region as of 11:30 p.m. local time **November 15, 2011**. From the effective date and time of the closure until and if NMFS announces, via a notice in the Federal Register, that additional quota is available and the season is reopened, the fishery for that specific quota is closed, even across fishing years.

On December 8, 2010 (75 FR 76302), NMFS announced that the non-sandbar LCS fishery for the Atlantic region for the 2011 fishing year would open on July 15 and the non-sandbar LCS quota would be 190.4 metric tons (mt) dressed weight (dw) (419,756 lb dw). Dealer reports through November 1, 2011, indicate that 140.6 mt dw or 74 percent of the available quota for the commercial non-sandbar LCS Atlantic fishery has been landed. Dealer reports received to date indicate that 22 percent of the quota was landed from the opening of the fishery on July 15, 2011, through July 31, 2011; 20 percent of the quota was landed in August; 21 percent of the quota was landed in September; and 11 percent of the quota was landed in October. Assuming landings continue at the current rate, NMFS projects that 83 percent of the quota will be landed by November 15. Because this exceeds the 80 percent threshold specified in the regulations, NMFS is closing the commercial non-sandbar large coastal shark fishery in the Atlantic region.

As such, as of November 15, 2011, all commercial non-sandbar LCS fisheries in all regions and fisheries will be closed. All of the pelagic shark fisheries remain open until further notice.

During the closure, fishing vessels issued an Atlantic Shark limited access permit (LAP) pursuant to §635.4 may not possess or sell a non-sandbar LCS in the Atlantic region. A shark dealer issued a permit pursuant to § 635.4 may not purchase or receive non-sandbar LCS from a vessel issued an Atlantic Shark LAP, except that a permitted shark dealer or processor may possess sharks that were harvested, off-loaded, and sold, traded, or bartered, prior to the effective date of the closure and were held in storage consistent with 50 CFR §635.28(b)(4). Additionally, a shark dealer issued a federal permit pursuant to § 635.4 may in accordance with state regulations, purchase or receive a non-sandbar LCS if the shark was harvested, off-loaded, and sold, traded, or bartered from a vessel that fishes only in state waters and had not been issued an Atlantic Shark LAP, HMS Angling permit, or HMS Charter/Headboat permit pursuant to § 635.4.



This notice is a courtesy to the HMS fishery participants to help keep you informed about the fishery. For further information on this landings update or the closure, contact Karyl Brewster-Geisz or Peter Cooper at 301-427-8503. The information will also be posted on the HMS website at: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms>.



FoR

Alan Risenhoover
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Date

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