



Closure of the Commercial Non-Sandbar Large Coastal Shark Fishery in the Gulf of Mexico Region

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) projects that the landings for the commercial non-sandbar large coastal shark fishery in the Gulf of Mexico region soon will reach or exceed 80 percent of the available quota. As required by regulations, 50 CFR 635.28(b)(2), we are closing the commercial non-sandbar large coastal shark fishery in the Gulf of Mexico region as of 11:30 p.m. local time July 6, 2012. From the effective date and time of the closure until and if we announce, 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 January 24, 2012 (77 FR 3393), we announced that the non-sandbar large coastal shark fishery for the Gulf of Mexico region for the 2012 fishing year would open on February 15 with a quota of 392.8 metric tons (mt) dressed weight (dw) (866,063 lb dw). Dealer reports through the June 15, 2012, reporting period indicate that 295.9 mt dw or 75.3 percent of the available quota for non-sandbar large coastal sharks has been taken. Based on our calculations and projections, the 80 percent limit specified in the regulations will have been reached or exceeded by June 30, 2012. Accordingly, we are closing the commercial non-sandbar large coastal shark fishery in the Gulf of Mexico region.

At 50 CFR 635.27(b)(1)(ii), the boundary between the Gulf of Mexico region and the Atlantic region is defined as a line beginning on the east coast of Florida at the mainland at 25°20.4' N. latitude, proceeding due east. Any water and land to the south and west of that boundary is considered, for the purposes of quota monitoring and setting of quotas, to be within the Gulf of Mexico region.

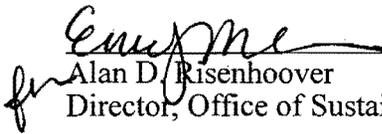
During the closure, fishing vessels issued an Atlantic Shark Limited Access Permit pursuant to §635.4 may not possess or sell non-sandbar large coastal sharks in the Gulf of Mexico region, except under the conditions specified in §635.22(a) and (c) or if the vessel possesses a valid shark research permit under §635.32 and a NMFS-approved observer is onboard. A shark dealer, issued a permit pursuant to §635.4, may not purchase or receive non-sandbar large coastal sharks in the Gulf of Mexico region from a vessel issued an Atlantic Shark Limited Access Permit, 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 permitted shark dealer or processor may possess non-sandbar sharks that were harvested by a vessel issued a valid shark research permit with a NMFS-approved observer onboard as long as the non-sandbar shark research fishery is open. During this closure, a shark dealer issued a permit pursuant to §635.4 may, in accordance with state regulations, purchase or receive non-sandbar large coastal sharks in the Gulf of Mexico region if the sharks were harvested, off-loaded, and sold, traded, or bartered from a vessel that fishes only in state waters and that has not been issued an Atlantic Shark Limited Access Permit, HMS Angling permit, or HMS Charter/Headboat permit pursuant



to §635.4. Additionally, under this closure, a shark dealer issued a permit pursuant to §635.4 may purchase or receive non-sandbar large coastal sharks if the sharks were harvested, off-loaded, and sold, traded, or bartered from a vessel issued a valid shark research permit (per §635.32) that had a NMFS-approved observer on board during the trip sharks were collected.

This notice is a courtesy 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>.

JUN 29 2012


Alan D. Risenhoover
Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries

Date

SIGN UP FOR ATLANTIC HMS NEWS

-- An electronic newsletter informing you of the latest HMS-related actions --

<http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/newslist/>