



NMFS Requests Applications for Participation in the Atlantic Highly Migratory Species 2012 Shark Research Fishery

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) requests applications for participation in the 2012 shark research fishery. Shark research fishery permits authorize participation in the shark research fishery and the collection of sandbar, non-sandbar large coastal sharks (LCS), small coastal shark (SCS), and pelagic sharks from federal waters in the Atlantic Ocean, Gulf of Mexico, and Caribbean Sea, for the purposes of scientific data collection, subject to 100 percent observer coverage. Generally, these permits will be valid through December 31, 2012, unless otherwise specified, subject to the terms and conditions of individual permits.

The commercial vessels selected to participate in the shark research fishery are the only vessels authorized to land/harvest sandbar sharks subject to the sandbar shark quota available for each year. Commercial vessels not participating in the shark research fishery may only land non-sandbar LCS, SCS, and pelagic sharks subject to the retention limits and quotas per 50 CFR 635.24 and 635.27, respectively. NMFS will select approximately 10 qualified applicants to participate in the 2012 shark research fishery based on the temporal and spatial needs of the research objectives, the available quota, and the availability of the qualified applicants. These selected applicants will be issued shark research fishery permits and will be subject to 100 percent observer coverage on all shark research fishery trips. A shark research fishery permit will only be valid for the vessel and owner(s), subject to the terms and conditions listed on the permit and thus cannot be transferred to another vessel or owner(s). Shark research fishery permits will only be valid if a NMFS-approved observer is onboard.

The 2012 trip limits and number of trips per month will depend on the number of selected vessels, available quota, and objectives of the research fishery. The trip limits and the number of trips taken have changed each year the research fishery has been active. Participants may also be limited on the amount of gear they can deploy on a given set (e.g., number of hooks, length of longline).

NMFS will review the submitted applications based on the selection criteria as described in the Federal Register notice and information provided on the application form to determine which applicants are qualified to participate in the shark research fishery.

Qualified applicants are those that:

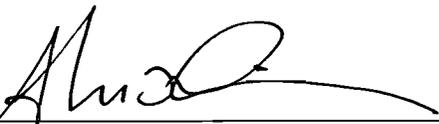
- possess a valid directed or incidental* commercial shark permit;
- possess a valid United States Coast Guard (USCG) safety inspection decal when the application is submitted;
- have not been charged criminally or civilly (e.g., issued a Notice of Violation and Assessment (NOVA) or Notice of Permit Sanction) for any HMS-related violation;
- have complied with NMFS observer programs and are able to take a NMFS-approved observer **; and,
- submit a completed application by 5 p.m., local time on November 30, 2011.



Only vessels which meet **all** of the above qualifications will be considered for the shark research fishery. * While incidental permit holders may apply, please note that for 2012, priority will be given to qualified directed permit holders to meet the research objectives. **Priority will also be given to vessels with past participation in the NMFS observer program.

Completed Shark Research Fishery Permit Applications must be received no later than 5 p.m., local time on November 30, 2011, in order to be considered. For copies of the application, please write to the HMS Management Division 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910 or call (301) 427-8503 (phone), or (301) 713-1917 (fax). Copies of the application are also available at the HMS Management Division's website at <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/index.htm>. Please submit completed applications to the HMS Management Division at the address listed above or by fax. Final decisions on the issuance of a shark research fishery permit will depend on the submission of all required information, and NMFS' review of applicant information as outlined in the Federal Register notice. Additionally, please be advised your application may be released under the Freedom of Information Act.

This notice is a courtesy to individuals interested in HMS fisheries activities to keep you informed about the fishery. Official notice of Federal fishery actions is made through filing such notice with the Office of the Federal Register. For further information, contact Karyl Brewster-Geisz or Delisse Ortiz at (301) 427-8503.



Alan Risenhoover
Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries

11/30/11

Date

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