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Atlantic Shark Fishery Update: Management & Recent Trends

Atlantic Highly Migratory Species (HMS)
Advisory Panel Meeting
May 15, 2024

Overview



Photo Credit: iStock

Recent Management Actions:

- Amendment 16
- 2024 shark commercial season rule
- Prohibition on oceanic whitetip (Atlantic Ocean) and hammerhead sharks (U.S. Caribbean)
- Oceanic whitetip sharks under the Endangered Species Act proposed rule
- Atlantic blacknose shark stock status update
- Shark stock assessments

Recent Trends:

- Commercial shark landings, 2019-2023

Recent Management Actions

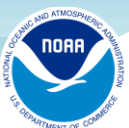
Photo Credit: iStock



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Draft Amendment 16 & Proposed Rule

- In May 2023, NMFS announced the availability of a scoping document for Amendment 16 to the 2006 Consolidated HMS Fishery Management Plan, and accepted public comments through Aug. 18, 2023
- Amendment 16 could result in substantial changes to the entire commercial and recreational shark fishery, and is necessary to implement the revised framework for establishing quotas and related management measures for Atlantic shark fisheries, as set forth in Amendment 14
- NMFS received 34 written comments and numerous oral comments during 5 in-person and virtual public hearings, and during presentations to 5 regional fishery management councils, the Atlantic State Marine Fisheries Commission, and the HMS Advisory Panel

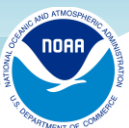


Summary of Public Comments on Amendment 16 Scoping

- Overall there was support for Amendment 16
- Councils and states were supportive of NMFS' intent to create more flexibility in shark fisheries management and supported management measures that would increase opportunities for sustainable harvest
- Some concerns about the potential lifting of restrictions on shark stocks with an overfished or unknown stock status
- Concerns about the size of this rulemaking, and recommendations to split management measures into multiple, smaller actions

Where are we now?

- Draft Amendment 16 is dependent upon the completion of the SEDAR 77 hammerhead stock assessment, expected end of 2024
- Considering options for a smaller, more focused initial rulemaking



Final Rule: 2024 Atlantic Shark Commercial Fishery Quotas, Opening Dates, and Retention Limits

- Published Nov. 8, 2023; Effective Jan. 1, 2024
- Adjusts 2024 quota levels based on underharvests from the 2023 fishing year, consistent with existing regulations
- Sets a new default retention limit of 55 large coastal sharks—other than sandbar sharks—per vessel per trip for Directed shark limited access permit holders
- Automatically opens the Atlantic shark commercial fishery on January 1 each year under base quotas and default retention limits
- For 2025 and future fishing years:
 - The commercial fishery will automatically open on January 1 under base quotas and default retention limits
 - NMFS will publish any quota adjustments early each year



Final Rule: Retention Prohibition of Oceanic Whitetip Sharks in U.S. Atlantic Waters and Hammerhead Sharks in the U.S. Caribbean



Photo Credit: Andy Mann

- Published Jan. 3, 2024; Effective Feb. 2, 2024
- Prohibits the commercial and recreational retention of:
 - Oceanic whitetip sharks in all U.S. waters of the Atlantic Ocean, Gulf of Mexico, and Caribbean Sea
 - Hammerhead sharks (great, scalloped, and smooth) in the U.S. Caribbean
- **Purpose:** To be responsive to two 2020 HMS Biological Opinions and reduce mortality of oceanic whitetip sharks and the Central and Southwest Atlantic Distinct Population Segment of scalloped hammerhead sharks, which are both listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act

Proposed Rule: Oceanic Whitetip Sharks Under the Endangered Species Act

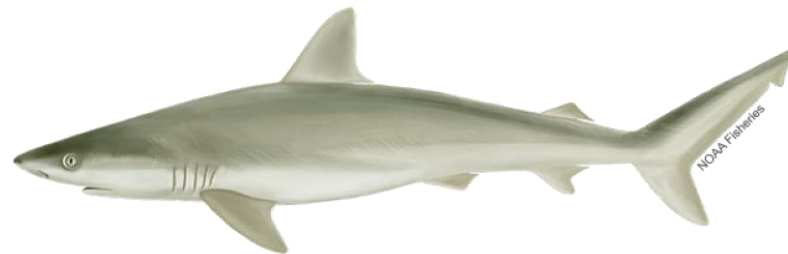


Photo Credit: Andy Mann

- On May 14, 2024, NMFS announced a proposed rule to issue protective regulations under section 4(d) of the Endangered Species Act for the conservation of oceanic whitetip shark
- The proposed rule would extend all ESA section (9)(a)(1) prohibitions to oceanic whitetip sharks, with limited exceptions for scientific research and law enforcement activities
- Public comments due July 15, 2024

Atlantic Blacknose Sharks - Stock Status

- In Amendment 14 (finalized 2023), NMFS revised the status determination criteria for Atlantic sharks
- In years when a stock assessment is not conducted, a 3-year rolling average of catch compared to the overfishing limit is used to support the overfishing status determination
- Based on this criteria, NMFS is re-evaluating the overfishing status for the Atlantic stock of blacknose sharks (currently experiencing overfishing)
- The result of the stock status re-evaluation is expected in summer 2024



Shark Stock Assessments

Preliminary Results from SEDAR 77 Research Assessment on Hammerhead Sharks

- **Scalloped/Carolina hammerhead:** not overfished; not experiencing overfishing (Stock Synthesis assessment model)
- **Smooth hammerhead:** overfished status is unknown; not experiencing overfishing (Simple Stock Synthesis assessment model)
- **Great hammerhead:** overfished; not experiencing overfishing (JABBA assessment model)

Next Steps for SEDAR 77

- Operational assessment (for management) expected to be completed in late 2024

Upcoming SEDAR Stock Assessments (Post-SEDAR 77)

- Bull shark (*Carcharhinus leucas*)
- Sandbar shark (*Carcharhinus plumbeus*)



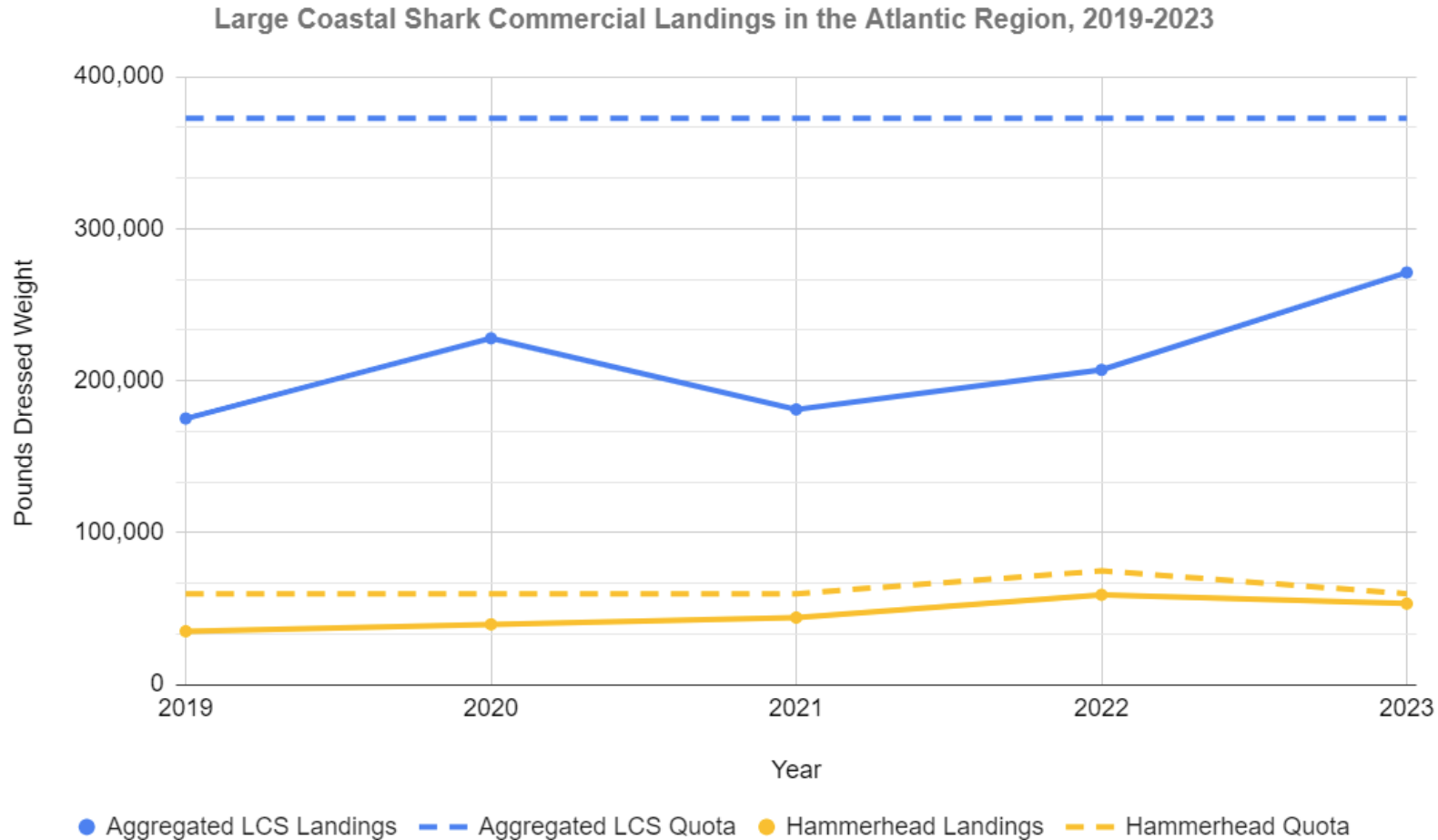
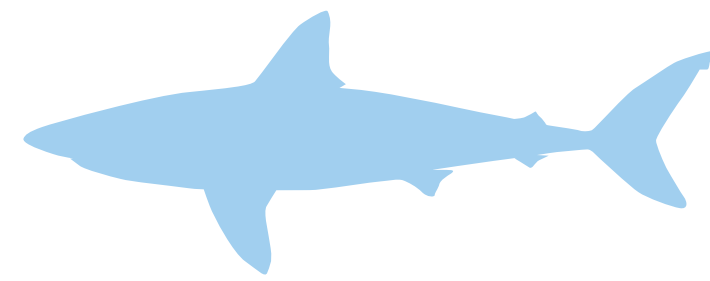
Recent Trends

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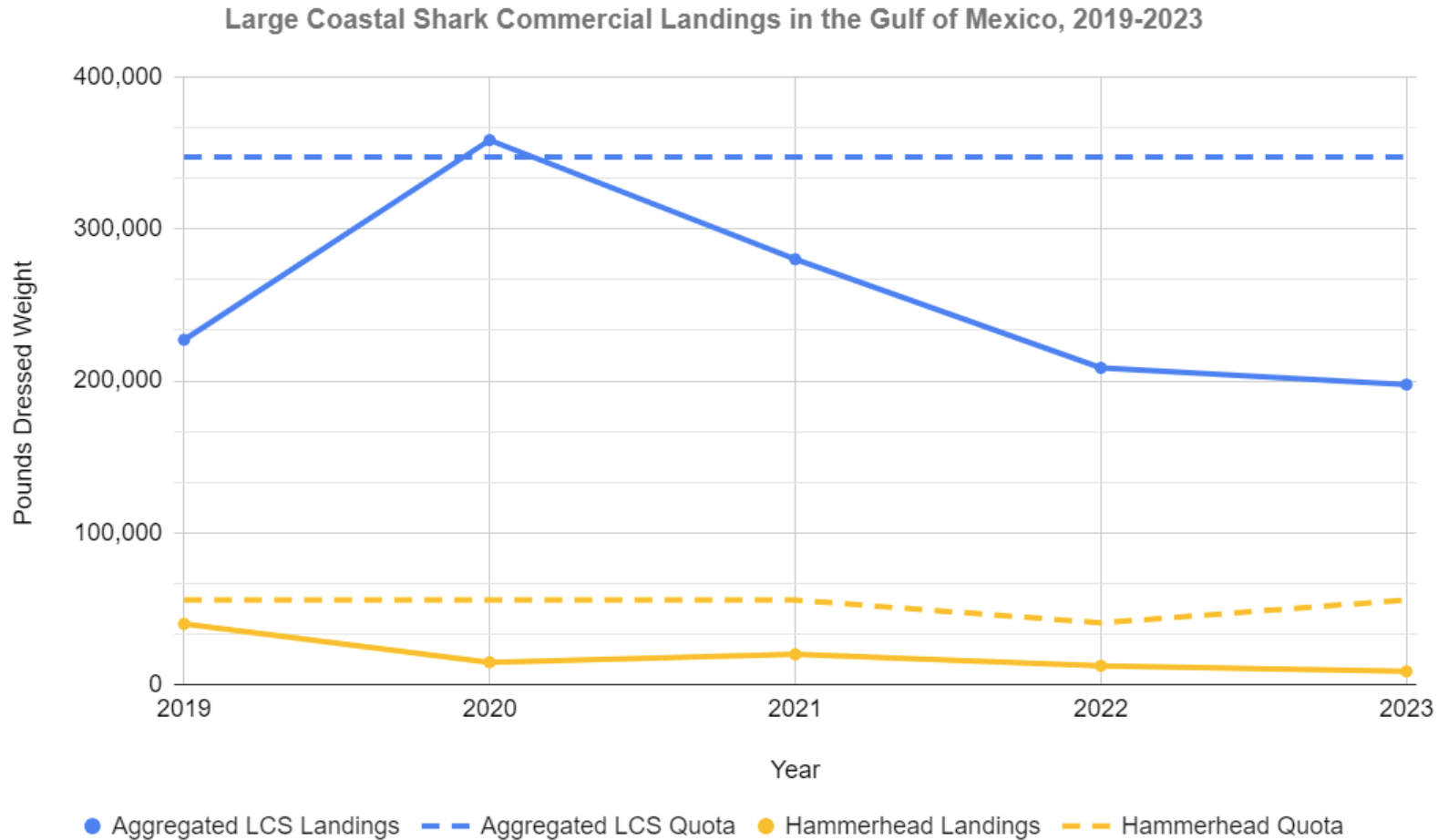
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Large Coastal Sharks - Atlantic Region



* 2022 and 2023 landings are preliminary estimates.

Large Coastal Sharks - Gulf of Mexico Region

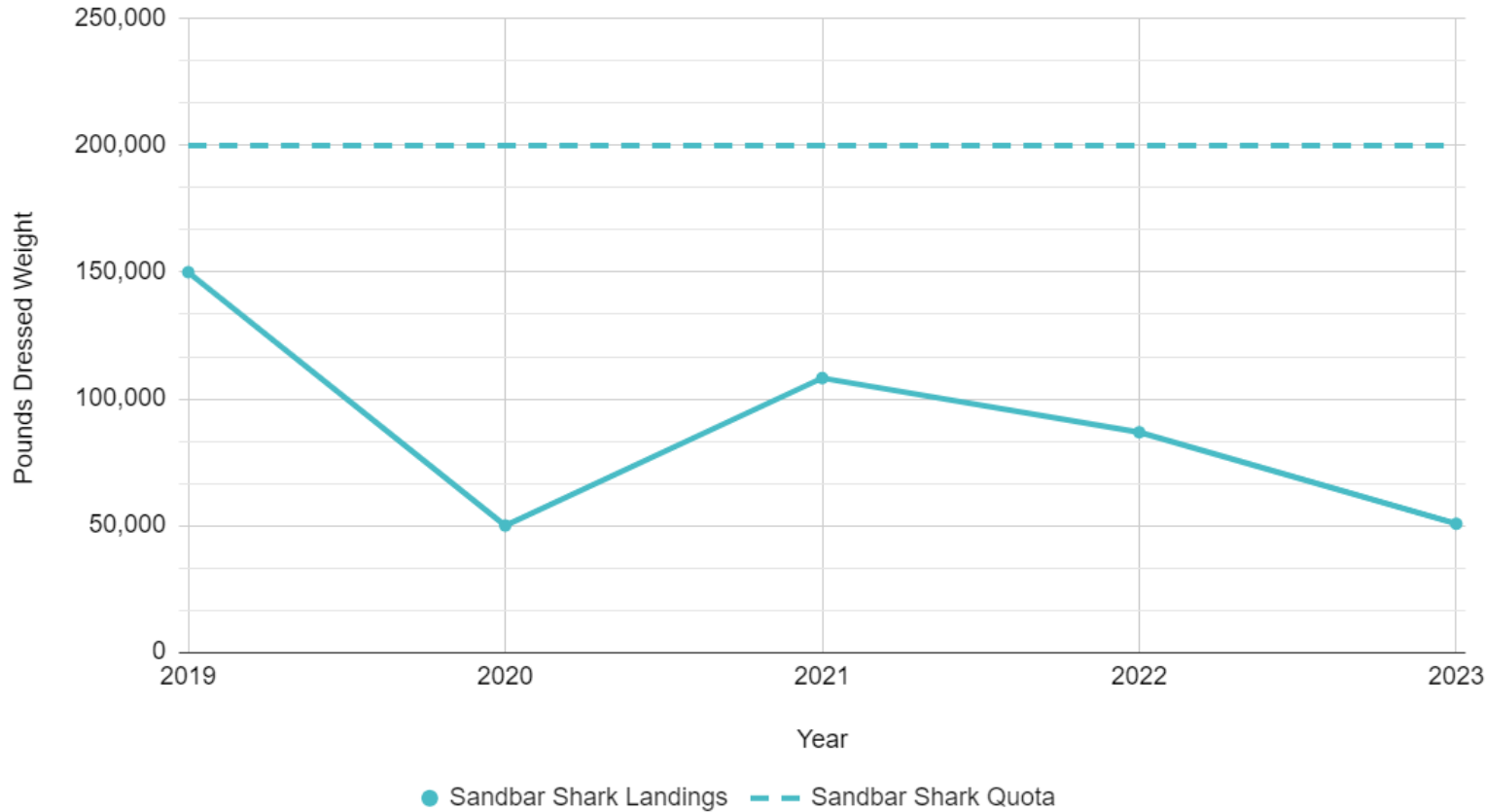


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Shark Research Fishery



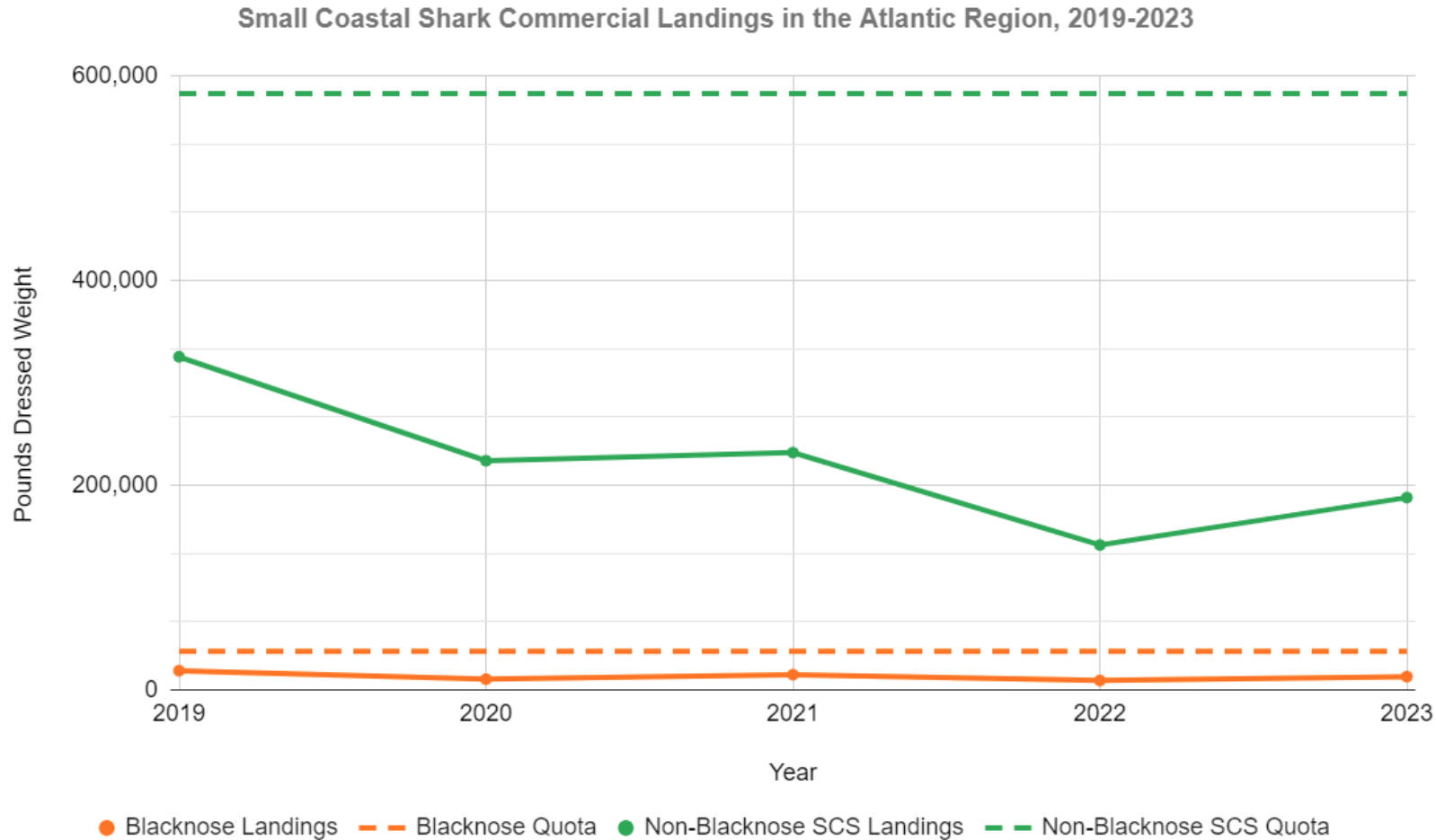
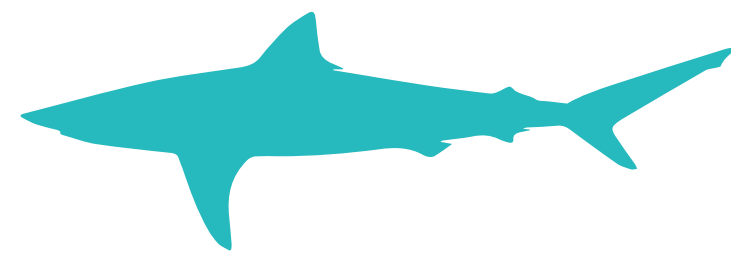
Sandbar Shark Commercial Landings, 2019-2023



* 2022 and 2023 landings are preliminary estimates.

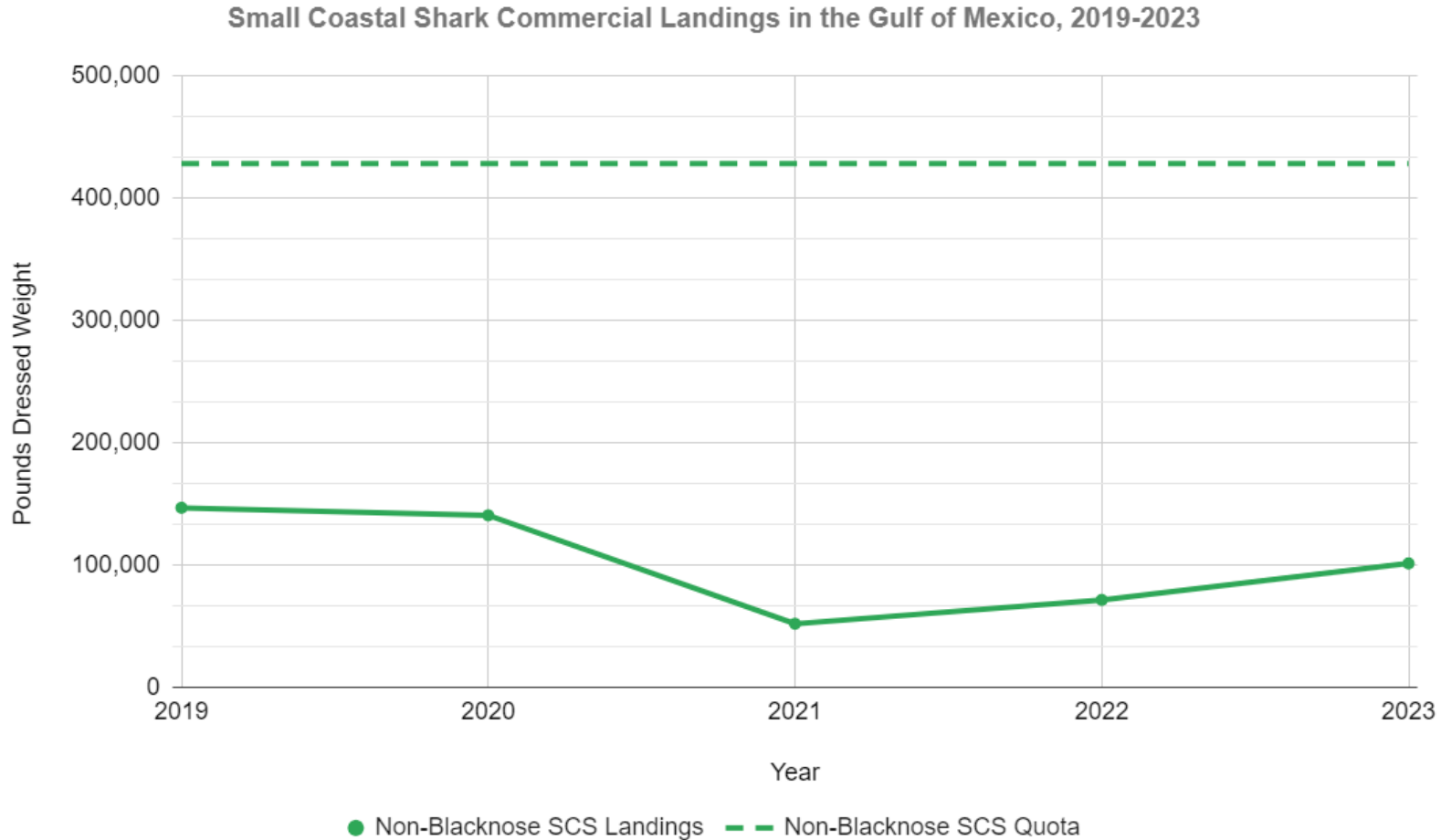
Year	Participants
2019	5
2020	8
2021	4
2022	5
2023	2

Small Coastal Sharks - Atlantic Region



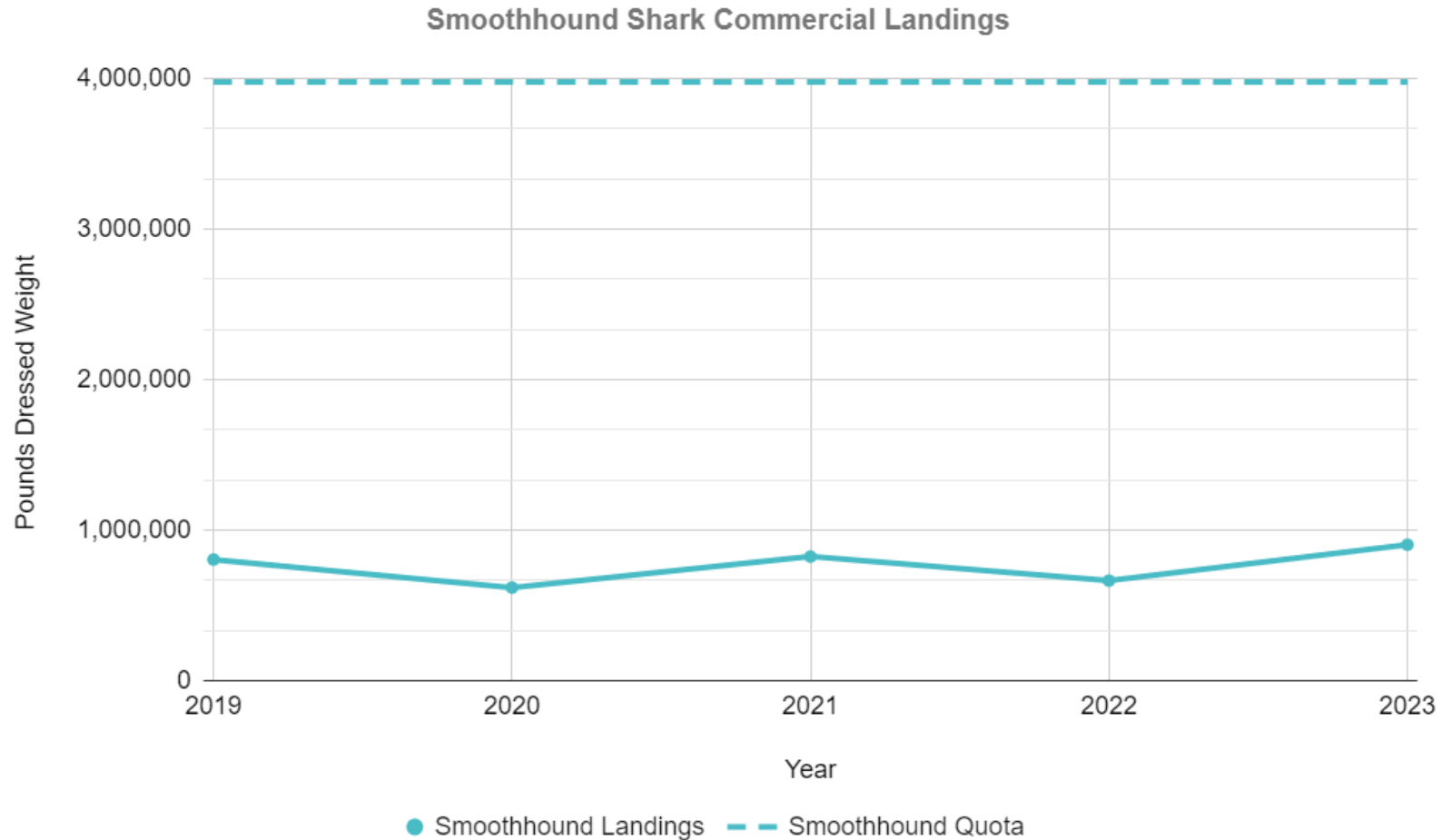
* 2022 and 2023 landings are preliminary estimates.

Small Coastal Sharks - Gulf of Mexico Region



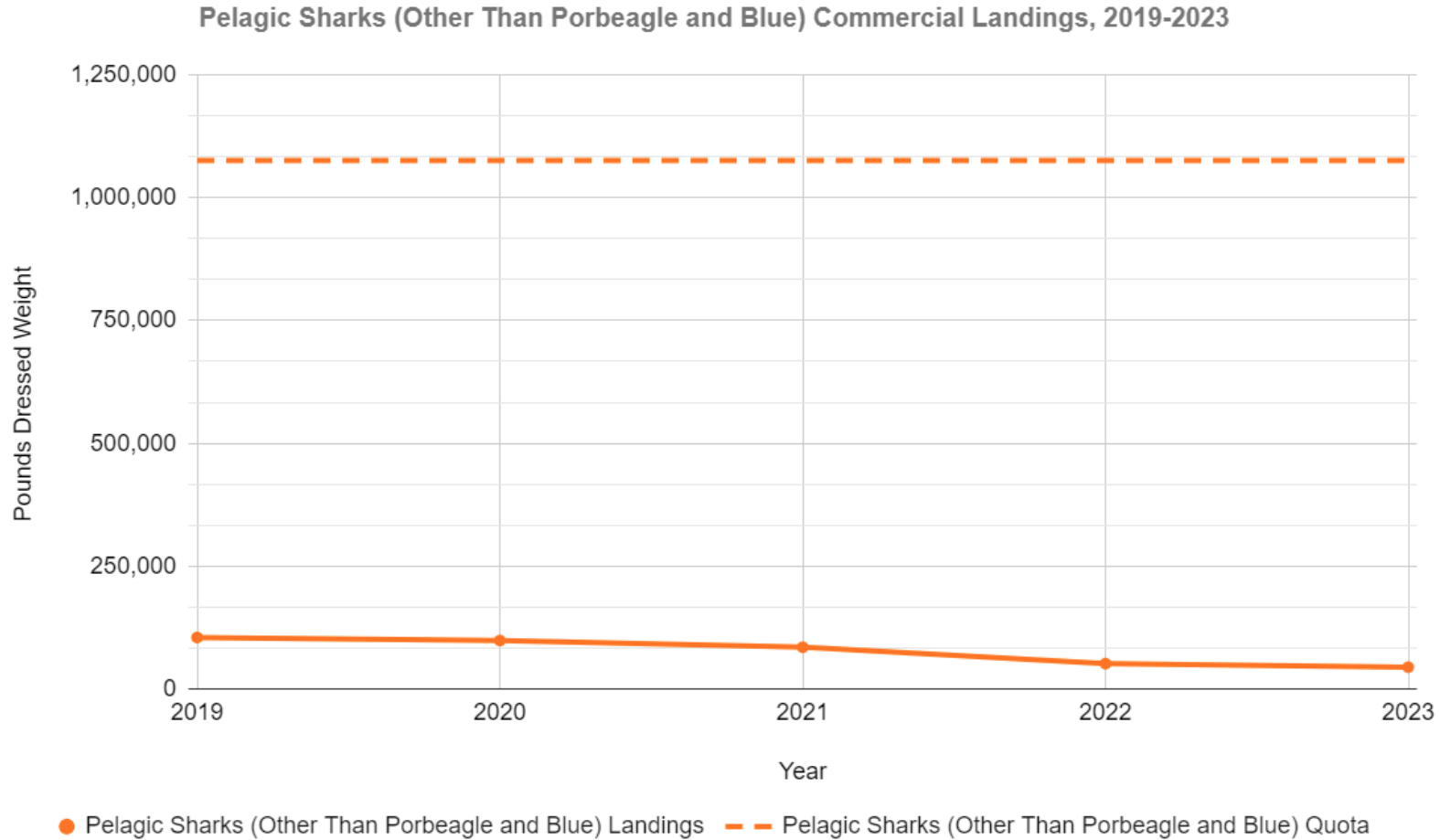
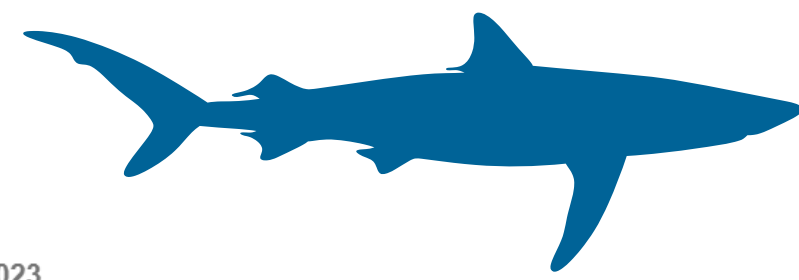
* 2022 and 2023 landings are preliminary estimates.

Smoothhound Sharks - Atlantic Region



* 2022 and 2023 landings are preliminary estimates.

Pelagic Sharks - All Regions



* 2022 and 2023 landings are preliminary estimates.

Summary of Actions and Timing

Action	Relevant Dates
Amendment 16 to the 2006 Consolidated HMS FMP	Proposed rule expected in early 2025
Final Rule: 2024 Atlantic Shark Commercial Fishery Quotas, Opening Dates, and Retention Limits	Effective Jan. 1, 2024
Final Rule: Retention Prohibition of Oceanic Whitetip Sharks in U.S. Atlantic Waters and Hammerhead Sharks in the U.S. Caribbean	Effective Feb. 2, 2024
Proposed Rule: Oceanic Whitetip Sharks Under the Endangered Species Act	Public comments due July 15, 2024

HMS Management Division webpage: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/topic/atlantic-highly-migratory-species>



Reminder: Zero Retention of Shortfin Mako Sharks

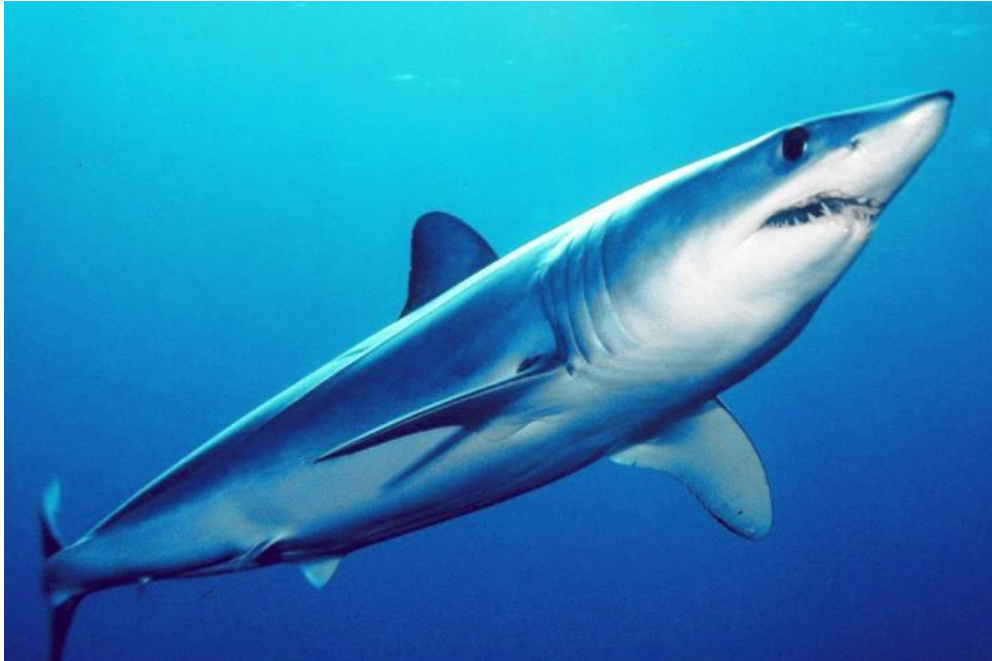


Photo Credit: NOAA Fisheries/Mark Conlin

- The shortfin mako shark retention limit of zero has been in place since July 2022
- There have been no changes in international measures
- For more information:
<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/action/zero-atlantic-shortfin-mako-shark-retention-limit>

Questions?

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Thank you!

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Shark Fin Sales Elimination Act (SFSEA)

- On December 23, 2022, President Biden signed into law the James M. Inhofe National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023, which included provisions on shark fins
- Under the SFSEA, it is illegal (with certain exceptions) to possess, buy, sell, or transport shark fins or any product containing shark fins
- There is an exemption for smooth or spiny dogfish fins
- NMFS is currently drafting a proposed rule to implement the SFSEA

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)

- CITES is an international agreement that regulates the global trade in plants and wildlife to ensure that international trade does not threaten their survival
- As of November 2023, 31 out of 42 Atlantic shark species we manage are now listed under Appendix II of CITES (species that are not listed include tiger, nurse, smoothhound, and a few prohibited sharks)
- Any products of any species listed on Appendix II must be properly certified and permitted by the the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service before it can be imported or exported
- Specifics can be found at <https://speciesplus.net/species>

