

Science, Service, Stewardship



The Future of the Atlantic Shark Fishery

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Objectives

- To examine the current issues in the fishery
- To discuss and gain an understanding of different visions for the fishery?
 - What should the fishery look like?
 - How do we achieve that?
- To discuss possible solutions and ways forward



Brief Outline

- Review of management and management process
- Current issues
- List of potential solutions
- Discussion



Shark Management

- Atlantic shark fishery is managed under the 2006 Consolidated HMS FMP and its amendments
- The Consolidated HMS FMP establishes:
 - Rebuilding plans
 - Quotas and retention limits
 - Regions and seasons
 - Time/area closures
 - Limited access permits
 - Prohibited species
- New information (e.g., stock assessments) = FMP amendment
- New information (e.g., quota went too fast) = A regulatory amendment
- Management must factor in MMPA, ESA, MSA, ATCA, etc.



Example of FMP Amendment: Amendment 3

- SCS fishery opened June 1 - non-blacknose SCS quota - 221.6 mt dw and blacknose quota - 19.9 mt dw
- Work internationally to prevent overfishing of shortfin mako, potential proposal for 2010 Nov. ICCAT meeting
- Outreach to commercial and recreational communities on live release of shortfin mako sharks
- Smoothhound public outreach on new management measures



Example: Regulatory Amendment

- Some regulatory changes can be made without amending the FMP
 - Implementing trip limits
 - Implementing Biological Opinion requirements
 - Changes to regional quotas
 - Changes to trip limits
 - BLL/Gillnet gear operation and deployment changes
- These changes are reactive and result when current management measures need to be changed to achieve existing FMP amendment



Example: Annual Specifications

- Establishes annual adjusted quotas based on over-
underharvests from previous year(s)
- Establishes season opening dates
- Example: 2010 Annual Specifications, published on
January 5, 2010
 - Propose to establish commercial quotas
 - Establish opening dates



The Fishery

- LCS Landings often exceed quotas
- Seasons are short, approximately 150 days per year
- Decline in number of fishing permits since limited access
- Market prices are lower now than in the past

- The fishery continues to have these problems and NMFS would like to start being more proactive and less reactive in addressing them



Current and Ongoing Issues

This is a short list; there are more

- Changing stock status
- Changing quotas (reductions, over/underages, species specific, etc)
- Short seasons
- Overcapacity
- Unstable markets
- Safety at sea concerns
- Splitting trips
- Recreational and commercial landings fluctuate and include prohibited species
- Increasingly complex regulations
- Increasing involvement at international level
- Bycatch in unauthorized gears



What are the goals and what should the future look like?

Here are some, not all, ideas mentioned over the years and at the May 2010 HMS AP Shark Working Group meeting



Targeted Fishery Goals (from May HMS AP meeting)

- Consider economic impacts to ensure fishermen can make living and continue to exist
- Ensure more timely reporting from dealers
- Ensure no unclassified sharks reported by fishermen and dealers
- Establish species specific management
- Establish closures during pupping seasons



Targeted Fishery Goals (from May HMS AP meeting)

- Improve observer program
- Achieve management success through trilateral and other international efforts
- Fund more independent research and foster timely assessments
- Improve EFH and collaborate on EFH projects
- Ensure rebuilding the stocks and consideration of ecosystem and protected resources



Identified Data Needs (from May HMS AP meeting)

- Improve transparency of stock assessments and input of fishermen
- Improve trust in observer program and competency of the observers
- Collect resources to support short and long term research
- Use more science, not just stock assessments
- Improve international collaboration
- Improve data collected from LA state waters



Potential Solutions (from May HMS AP meeting)

- Short term solutions:
 - Continue with current management structure
 - Explore permit stacking
 - Divide GOM into different regions
 - Remove GOM blacktip from LCS complex
 - Consider daily or weekly trip limits
- Long term solutions:
 - Catch Shares
 - Sectors



The Future of the Fishery

- Where is the shark fishery going?
- Short term solutions could take 1 to 2 years to implement
- Long term solutions could take about 5 or more years to implement
- In the next few slides you will see many ideas for changes/solutions



Potential Solutions: Change Quota Structure

- Only complexes, or only species-specific quotas
- Ridgeback/non-ridgeback for LCS
- Move species between complexes and adjust quota – e.g., move blacktip to SCS
- Re-consider regions, time/area closures, and/or seasons
- Establish bycatch quotas/caps – e.g., for prohibited species in shark fishery, for sharks caught in unauthorized gears, for protected species
- Limit quotas by gear and/or type of permit – e.g., gillnet quota, longline quota, regional quota, recreational quota



Example of Quota Change: Species Complex Quotas

- Species Complex: No individual species quotas, all species in complex would be managed by a single quota
- Close fishing season for all species in the complex when quota reaches 80%
- How would quotas be set if species within a complex have different stock status?
 - Based on species with poorest status?
 - Best status?
 - Average status?
- How are dead discards of overfished/non-target species accounted for?



Example of Quota Change: Species Specific Quotas

- Species Specific Quotas: Every Atlantic shark species has an individual quota (For sharks, this means 20 plus quotas)
- Current species specific quotas based on stock assessment recommendations
- If there were no species specific stock assessment, on what would quotas be based? Historical catches?
- Should species specific quotas be linked, or should they close individually?
- How would dead discards be accounted for?
- Should the quota for each species be lower to account for additional dead discards occurring after a species quota has been caught?



Potential Solutions: Change Permit Structure

- Permit stacking – allow multiple permits and trip limits up to a certain amount, on 1 vessel (2 permits = 2 trip limits)
- Use or lose for all or some permits – e.g., don't use permit for 2 years, lose permit
- Match permit capacity to quota – e.g., limit number of permits to the match the effort needed to catch the quota over the entire year



Example of Permit Change: Permit Stacking

- Allow multiple limited access shark permits and trip limits to be stacked onto one vessels:
 - Example: 2 directed shark permits on one vessel = 66 non-sandbar LCS per trip
- How many permits can be stacked on one vessels?
- How are inactive/latent permits handled?
- Can incidental shark permits be stacked?
- Can a fishermen without multiple permits buy additional permits to stack?
- Would this disadvantage some fishermen?
- What about upgrading restrictions



Potential Solutions: Catch Shares

- Umbrella term used to describe fishery management programs that provide a portion of the TAC to individuals, cooperatives, communities, or other eligible entities.

Can Include:

- Limited Access Privilege Program (LAPPs)
- Individual Fishing Quotas
- Sector Allocations/Fishery Cooperatives

** Note: Legal distinctions of a MSA Section 303A LAPP affects cost recovery, referendum requirements, participation and eligibility requirements, new entry, community protections, among others



Why look at Catch Shares?

To Address Some Fishery Needs...

- Lengthen fishing season / eliminate closures
- Lower operating costs
- Improve market conditions
- Promote safe fishing operations
- Reduce bycatch and discard mortality
- Improve quota monitoring
- Improve timely reporting



Catch Shares Can Address Different Fishery Goals

Goal	Example Program
Eliminate overfishing	GOM Red Snapper IFQ
Stop derby fishing	Alaska Sablefish and Halibut IFQ
Reduce bycatch	BSAI Non-pollock Cooperatives
Improve socio-economic conditions for communities	Western Alaska CDQ Program



Catch Shares Can Address Different Fishery Concerns

- There is no “one size fits all” catch share program
- Learn from other programs, but design a unique catch share program that works for you.

Concerns	Design Feature	Example	Flexible Measures
Loss of small boat fleets and communities	Allocation, Transferability	GOM Red Snapper IFQ	Limit transferability in first two years to only allow leases (not sales) to preserve distribution of privileges
Leaves small vessel owners/new entrants out	Financial measures	Bering Sea Crab IFQ; Halibut / Sablefish IFQ	Low interest 25-year federal assistance program loans to small vessels and first time purchasers to acquire quota shares
Fishing community sustainability	Sectors	Northeast sector	Special community provisions in MSA, including preservation of working fishery infrastructure



Catch Share Design Considerations

- Eligibility – who participates in the program?
- Allocation – how should shares be apportioned?
- Duration – how long do quota shares last?
- Transferability – when and how can participants transfer or sell their shares, and to whom?
- Preventing excessive shares – how can inequitable concentration be prevented?
- Protecting existing community and business sectors – how to ensure the stability and participation of traditional operations?
- Monitoring / Enforcement – how to ensure compliance?
- Cost recovery – MSA requires at least partial cost recovery from LAPPs, but funds must be used in the fishery in which the fees were collected



Catch Share Design Considerations for Shark Fishery

- Would catch shares encompass all sharks?
- Would there be species-specific catch shares program?
- What about a pilot program for some species and/or regions?
- If catch shares were implemented, how would that work with states? Would states have their own allocation?
- What about the recreational fishery?
- Before we start going down this road, we need to hear from you on how this would work



Sectors: One Type of Catch Share

- One definition: group of persons acting as an entity to which NMFS has granted a share or fraction of the Total Allowable Catch (TAC) in order to achieve objectives consistent with a Fishery Management Plan (FMP)
- Share is to the sector and not a “person”
- Distribution of any allocation to members is internal to the group, not NMFS



Sectors: One Type of Catch Share

- Sectors may negotiate and enforce plans, agreements, and contracts similar conceptually to those required of Fishing Communities and Regional Fishery Associations
- Sector participants select who will participate; participation is voluntary
- Rules set up by sector and agreed upon by NMFS



Sectors: Existing Examples

- Georges Bank Cod Hook Sector
- Georges Bank Cod Fixed Gear Sector
- Rhode Island Fluke Sector
- Northeast Multispecies Sector



Potential Sectors for Shark Fishery

- A group of fishermen decide on a sector approach and work with NMFS to design regulations specific to that sector
- Regulations could include season openings and quota shares
- Potential Examples:
 - Florida gillnet fishery
 - North Carolina
 - Western Gulf of Mexico
- Anyone outside of sectors would follow general shark regulations



Summary

- We have discussed the ongoing issues and many solutions that NMFS could implement to address these issues
 - Quota Structure Changes: i.e., species specific quota
 - Permit Structure Changes: i.e., permit stacking
 - Catch Shares: i.e., sectors
- Now we need to move forward and decide which of these will achieve the goals for the future of the shark fishery



Discussion

- What are the pros and cons of
 - Quota Structure changes
 - Permit Structure changes
 - Catch Shares
- Keeping in mind these questions:
 - What should the fishery look like?
 - How do we achieve that?
- Which solution should we choose?

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More thoughts?

Your thoughts are important to us, please share them:

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