

Science, Service, Stewardship



Future of the Atlantic Shark Fisheries (Amendment 6)

Presented to HMS AP Meeting
March 14, 2012

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Outline

- Background
- Comments Received
- Next Steps
- Discussion



Background

- Future of the Shark Fishery ANPR – 9/20/10
 - Quota Structure—species complexes/quotas, regions, retention limits
 - Permit Structure—permit stacking, “use it or lose it”
 - Catch Shares—support and opposition

- Notice of Intent to Amend the Consolidated HMS FMP – 9/16/11
 - NMFS announced intent to consider catch share programs
 - Established Control Date of **9/16/2011**
 - White paper distributed discussing design elements: regions, resource unit, eligibility, allocation, etc.
 - Scoping workshops announced to get feedback on potential design elements



Important

The following is a summary of comments received to date. The comment period ends on March 31, 2012.



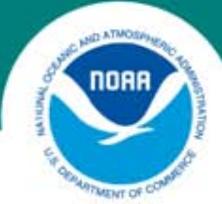
General Comments – Catch Shares (slide 1 of 3)

- The 33 non-sandbar LCS trip limit is not economical for fishermen
- Increase the trip limits
- Need management measures to decrease dead discards
- Modify the Mid-Atlantic BLL closure because it restricts the LCS opening dates
- Conduct a referendum or a weighted referendum
- Need control inputs to avoid overcapitalization (i.e., share caps)
- IFQs can save fuel and maximize price
- IFQs can make fishermen more efficient because there's no trip limit
- Catch shares are more predictable for managers
- Need flexibility for location of landing ports and landing times
- NMFS does not need an IFQ program, NMFS could establish community quotas
- NMFS needs to consider regional differences when designing a catch share program



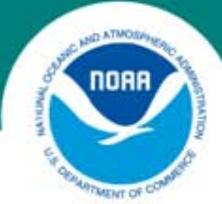
General Comments – Catch Shares (slide 2 of 3)

- Reevaluate quota distribution after three years
- Sharks are a public resource and should not be privatized or individualized
- NMFS should look into days at sea instead of catch shares
- GOM IFQ proposal puts GOM fishermen at an advantage
- Highgrading will still occur in a catch share program
- Give Florida a January opening and 33 non-sandbar LCS/trip and there will be no need for catch shares
- NMFS should not consider catch shares for the shark fishery
- Catch shares will take quota and profits away from fishermen
- Catch shares are being forced upon fishermen from the top down
- There is inequity in the shark fishery and catch shares would make it worse



General Comments – Catch Shares (slide 3 of 3)

- IFQs limit the maximum number of sharks fishermen can land
- Catch shares are not good for communities and will keep fishermen off the water
- NMFS doesn't have the science it needs to implement a catch share program
- A catch share program won't help conserve shark species
- If NMFS implements a catch share program in the GOM, then Atlantic fishermen couldn't fish there
- Fishermen are losing infrastructure as a result of state finning bans and catch shares won't help this problem
- Catch shares will shift effort in the shark fishery



Regions and States

- Include all regions in a catch share program
- Separate out the Caribbean region
- Split the GOM into two regions (western and northern GOM)
- How can one program meet the needs of Gulf of Maine and GOM?
- What would happen if NMFS implements a program in the GOM, but not the Atlantic?
- Implement two regions in Atlantic so Florida fishermen can fish in the winter
- Implement catch shares in the GOM and not in the Atlantic
- Implement catch shares in the Atlantic and not in the GOM
- If there is a scientific reason to split the regions (e.g., two separate blacktip stocks), then NMFS may have to split for some species
- It would be easier to sell shares if there is one region
- Consider state-water fishermen
- Implement sub-quota in GOM for state-water fishermen



Resource Unit

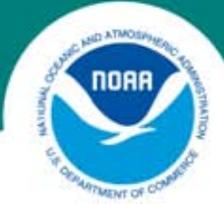
- Include LCS and SCS, not pelagic sharks
- Start with a single LCS species catch share program
- Only include LCS
- Break out the species by fin grade (e.g., A and B)
- Limit program to a male only LCS catch share program
- If species other than LCS are included, NMFS will need to increase the total quota
- Need sub-quotas in the GOM to reflect different species compositions (e.g., spinner, bull, blacktip)
- How will sandbar sharks be incorporated into a catch share program?
- NMFS needs to increase sandbar quota since they are now more abundant
- If all LCS are included, highgrading will occur
- Do not design catch share program based on gear types



Comments

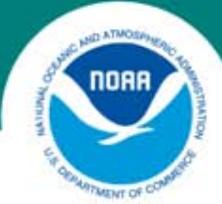
Eligibility

- Consider only active, directed, commercial shark fishermen
- Implement an eligibility threshold based on landings history and economic value in the fishery
- Do not include incidental or recreational fishermen in a catch shares program
- How would historic captains and crew members be included?
- Eliminate incidental permits
- NMFS can't eliminate incidental permits because of the triple pack
- Eliminate latent permits
- Sell recreational fishermen tags to limit the number of sharks they catch



Allocation (slide 1 of 2)

- Use catch history but don't go back too far when determining qualifying years
- Use catch history, not equal allocation
- If doing an LCS catch share, then use equal allocation to make it fair for all
- Allow for a small amount of the quota for equal allocation
- Need a fair system to include historical and active fishermen
- Take incidental and pelagic landings off, divide rest among directed permits
- If using historical landings, NMFS needs to factor in past species ID problems
- Use catch history from 1990s to present
- Use 2002-2011, so 10 qualifying years are used; 1st 5 yrs historical, 2nd 5 yrs active
- Using a 2002-2010 timeframe will disadvantage North Carolina since state waters were closed in 1997
- Use a catch history that includes 50% historical and 50% recent landings
- Look at percentage of landings/fishermen/year based on percentage of quota



Allocation (slide 2 of 2)

- Need to include landings history and level of participation for allocation
- When looking at levels of participation, analyze data by area
- How can NMFS include sandbar landings history if fishermen can not catch them now?
- Keeping sandbars out would exclude most historical fishermen
- Base allocation on logbook landings, then use trip tickets for appeals
- The quota is already so small, even the best fishermen won't get very much
- Using historical landings is bad for those that are active now, catch shares would take away from active fishermen and give to historical fishermen that aren't fishing
- Using current landings disadvantages some fishermen
- Would fishermen receive landings from previous permit holder/s?
- Fishermen should only get the landings they caught on their own permit
- NMFS should keep landings with the permit and remove all latent permits



Questions from Commenter's

- Should NMFS consider doing a referendum or a vote of directed permit holders?
- Should NMFS use the referendum/vote to decide on how to proceed?
- If NMFS proceeds with a catch share program,
 - Can one program meet the needs of all fishermen from Maine to Texas?
 - If the GOM is the only region with a catch share, should NMFS limit fishermen to fishing in one region or the other?
 - How should NMFS include landings from state-water fisheries?
 - How should landings be distributed if a fisherman/permit has landings from both regions?
 - Should the shark research fishery landings be included in the landings history?
 - Should sandbar landings be used in the catch history?
 - Should NMFS separate sandbar allocations now and implement the allocation once sandbar sharks are rebuilt?
 - Should fishermen receive the landings from the previous permit holder?
- If NMFS does not proceed with a catch share program, then what?



Questions?

Your thoughts are important to us, please share them with us

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HMS Catch Share Website:

<http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/sharks/catchshares.htm>

Comment Period Ends on March 31, 2012