

#### VESSEL MONITORING SYSTEMS

Directed shark bottom longline vessels located between 33° N and 36° 30' N are required to operate a VMS unit from January through July.

Shark gillnet vessels are required to operate a VMS unit during the Right Whale Calving Season (November 15 - April 15) regardless of fishing location. Please contact the HMS Management Division at (301) 713-2347 for more information.

#### OBSERVER PROGRAM

Fishermen with a commercial shark permit may be selected to carry a NMFS-approved observer. If selected, you are required to carry an observer on every trip unless notified otherwise. If an observer is assigned for a trip, the operator of the selected vessel must arrange to embark the observer and shall not fish for or retain any Atlantic HMS unless the NMFS-assigned observer is aboard. Information on how to comply with the observer requirement will be specified in the selection package. Compliance requirements include all U.S. Coast Guard and NMFS safety regulations such as having a valid safety decal for your vessel, having a useable life raft that will fit everyone on board, and providing the observer with the same accommodations as any crew member. Please call the HMS Management Division at (301) 713-2347 for details.

#### UPCOMING EVENTS AND RECENT UPDATES

Amendment 2 to the Consolidated Atlantic HMS Fishery Management Plan - Available now  
HMS Identification Guide - Available now  
Schedule for Small Coastal Shark I.D. and Safe Handling and Release Workshops - Scheduled Quarterly  
Small Coastal Shark Assessment - Available now  
Small Coastal Shark Amendment 3 Scoping - Summer 2008  
Small Coastal Shark Amendment 3 - 2008

#### HMS CHARTER/HEADBOAT PERMITS

If you own or operate a Charter/Headboat vessel that fishes for Atlantic HMS, including sharks, you must have an Atlantic HMS Charter Headboat category permit. The permit can be purchased online at [www.hmspermits.com](http://www.hmspermits.com) or by calling 888-872-8862. If you have both a Charter Headboat category and a commercial shark permit, you may sell sharks when the season is open. When the commercial

shark season is closed, you may land (but not sell) sharks under the recreational limits if engaged in a for-hire trip. A for-hire trip is defined as a trip carrying a fee-paying passenger; or having more than three persons for a vessel licensed to carry six or fewer; or having more persons aboard than the number of crew specified on the vessel's Certificate of Inspection for U.S. Coast Guard inspected vessels. The number of persons aboard includes the operator and crew, and the retention limits would also apply to the operator and crew.

#### RECREATIONAL PERMITS

If you do not intend to sell sharks, you can take sharks recreationally if you have an HMS Angling category permit. There is a bag limit (1 shark per vessel per trip) and size limit (4.5 ft or 1.37m fork length for authorized shark species, except Atlantic sharpnose and bonnethead which have no size restrictions) for recreationally-caught sharks. HMS Angling permits can be purchased online at [www.hmspermits.gov](http://www.hmspermits.gov) or by calling 888-872-8862.

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact: Karyl Brewster-Geissz or Mike Clark at (301) 713-2347, or Jackie Wilson at (240)338-3936.

If you or your marina or fishing club would like to receive regular shark postings from our Atlantic HMS News email listserv, please subscribe at <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/staf/hms/newslist/>, or contact the HMS Management Division at (301) 713-2347. Alternatively, information about all Federal fisheries, including the shark fishery, can be obtained electronically via FISHNEWS. Please see [www.nmfs.noaa.gov](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov) to sign up for this service.

#### IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

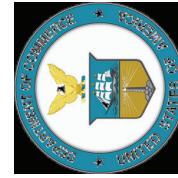
Enforcement Hotline	800-853-1964	Highly Migratory Species Management Division
Southeast HMS Office	727-824-5399	(301) 713-2347
Northeast HMS Office	978-281-9260	NOAA Fisheries Service
HMS Headquarters Office	301-713-2347	1315 East West Highway
HMS Infoline	800-894-5528	Silver Spring, Maryland 20910
Southwest Permits Office	727-824-5326	
HMS Permits Customer Service	888-872-8862	

#### STATE REGULATIONS

HMS permit holders must abide by all applicable Federal regulations, regardless of where fishing occurs, including in state waters. However, when fishing in the waters of a state with more restrictive regulations, vessels must abide by the more restrictive state regulations.

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) is finalizing an Atlantic coast-wide shark Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for state waters. For more information call Chris Vonderheide at (202) 289-6400 or visit their website <http://www.asmfc.org/>.

This pamphlet was prepared in June 2008 to provide interested fishermen a summary of the commercial fishing regulations for Atlantic sharks. A copy of complete fishery regulations that apply to HMS fishermen may be found at 50 CFR part 635 or obtained by calling the Highly Migratory Species Management Division at 301-713-2347. If there is a discrepancy between the regulations in 50 CFR part 635 and this brochure, the regulations take precedence.



## Atlantic Shark Commercial Fishery Regulations

June 2008

### National Marine Fisheries Service

Office of Sustainable Fisheries  
Highly Migratory Species Management Division

NOAA Fisheries Service  
1315 East West Highway  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

## **COMMERCIAL SHARK FISHING PERMITS**

Owners of vessels used to fish commercially for Atlantic sharks or who intend to sell sharks are required to obtain a shark limited access commercial permit from the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). Without this permit, fishermen who fish in Federal waters cannot sell sharks. Under the limited access program, NMFS is no longer issuing new commercial shark permits. To obtain a permit, you must transfer a permit, within the upgrading restrictions, from someone who is leaving the fishery. Prior to renewing or obtaining a shark limited access permit, you must attend a Protected Species Safe Handling and Release workshop, and submit a copy of the workshop certificate with your permit application package. For information on permit renewal and transfers, please contact the Southeast Regional Permit Office at (727) 824-5326. Information on workshops can be found online at <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfah/hms/workshops/index.htm> or by calling (877) 411-4272.

### **REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

Fishermen with a commercial shark permit are required to report fishing activities in an approved logbook. Logbooks must be filled out within 48 hours of fishing or before offloading, whichever is sooner. Logbooks must be submitted to NMFS within 7 days of offloading. Weighted slips for fish sold must accompany the logbook submission. Additionally, selected permit holders are required to submit cost and earnings information within 30 days of offloading. Dealers are required to submit reports so that NMFS receives them no later than 10 days after the end of the reporting period. Please call the HMS Management Division at (301) 713-2347 for details.

### **SELLING SHARKS**

Sharks and shark fins can only be sold to permitted dealers. Dealers can obtain a shark dealer permit by contacting the Southeast Regional Permit Office at (727) 824-5326.

### **FISHING SEASON(S) AND CLOSURE DATE(S)**

There is one fishing season beginning Jan. 1 through Dec. 31. Individual shark seasons will close with a 5 day notice when quota is at 80%. Call the HMS Management Division at (301) 713-2347 or visit <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfah/hms/> for information regarding current openings and closings.

## **FISHING REGIONS**

The non-sandbar large coastal shark (LCS) commercial quotas are split between two regions, the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic. 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. lat, proceeding due east. Gulf of Mexico: Any water and land to the south and west of 25°20.4' N. lat. Atlantic: Any water and land to the north and east of that 25°20.4' N. lat. There is one region for sandbar shark, small coastal shark (SCS), and pelagic shark commercial quotas. When a region is closed for a particular species group, fishermen in that region cannot fish for species in that group and dealers in that region cannot buy species in that group from Federally permitted fishermen.

### **ANNUAL QUOTAS**

NMFS is establishing a small research fishery that would harvest the entire available sandbar quota on an annual basis. No sandbar sharks may be landed outside of the research fishery. Please call the HMS Management Division at (301) 713-2347 for details on the shark research fishery. Quotas may be adjusted in the future to account for yearly over- and underharvests.

### **Shark Research Fishery**

Sandbar: Base quota for 2008-2012: 87.9 mt dw or 193,786.3 lbs dw.  
Non-Sandbar Large Coastal: Base quota for 2008-2012: 37.5 mt dw or 82,673.3 lbs dw.

### **Outside Research Fishery**

Sandbar: Prohibited  
Non-Sandbar Large Coastal: Base quota for 2008-2012: GOM = 390.5 mt dw or 860,905.1 lbs dw; ATL = 187.8 mt dw or 414,028.1 lbs dw.  
**All Commercial Shark Permit Holders (Base quotas)**  
Small Coastal: 454 mt dw or 1,000,888.4 lbs dw.  
Blue: 273 mt dw or 601,855.8 lbs dw  
Porbeagle: 1.7 mt dw or 3,747.8 lbs dw  
Pelagic sharks (other than Blue and Porbeagle Sharks): 488 mt dw or 1,075,844.8 lbs dw

## **SPECIES THAT MAY BE KEPT**

Non-sandbar LCS: Blacktip, Bull, Lemon, Nurse, Spinner, Silky, Tiger, Great hammerhead, Smooth hammerhead, and Scalloped hammerhead.  
Small Coastal Sharks: Atlantic sharpnose, Fineooth, Blacknose, and Bonnethead.  
Pelagic Sharks: Shortfin mako, Common thresher, Porbeagle, Oceanic whitetip, Blue

### **SPECIES THAT MUST BE RELEASED\***

Prohibited species: Atlantic angel, Basking, Bigeye sand tiger, Bigeye sixgill, Bigeye thresher, Bignose, Caribbean reef, Caribbean sharpnose, Dusky, Galapagos, Longfin mako, Narrowtooth, Night, Sand tiger, Sandbar (outside of shark research fishery), Sevengill, Sixgill, Smalltail, Whale, and White.

\*Prohibited species must be released immediately with minimum injury and without removing them from the water. If you are unsure of the species and whether you may keep it, release it.

## **RETENTION LIMITS**

Directed Shark Permits: Retention limits for 2008-2012 for directed shark permit holders are 33 non-sandbar large coastal sharks per vessel per trip. There are no retention limits for pelagic or small coastal sharks.  
Incidental Shark Permits: Retention limits for 2008-2012 for incidental shark permit holders are 3 large coastal sharks per vessel per trip and 16 pelagic or small coastal sharks (all species combined) per vessel per trip.

## **LANDING RESTRICTIONS**

All sharks must have their fins naturally attached through offloading. Fins may be cut as long as they remain attached to the carcass (by natural means) with at least a small portion of uncut skin. Sharks may be eviscerated and have the heads removed. Sharks harvested from the management unit cannot be filleted or cut into pieces at sea.

## **AUTHORIZED GEARS**

Authorized gears include: pelagic or bottom longline, gillnet, rod and reel, handline, or bandit gear. Time-area closures and other gear-specific regulations may apply. Handlines must remain attached to, or in contact with, the fishing vessel. Please call the HMS Management Division at (301) 713-2347 for more information.

## **BOTTOM LONGLINE GEAR RESTRICTIONS**

- Dehooking and Disentanglement Requirements:
  - Bottom longline (BLL) vessel operators must possess, maintain, and utilize the same sea turtle de-hooking and disentanglement equipment, and follow the same protocols as required in the pelagic longline fishery.
  - Bottom longline vessels must post sea turtle handling and release guidelines in their wheelhouse. Guidelines can be found on the HMS webpage or by calling (301) 713-2347.
  - BLL vessels must have corrodible non-stainless steel hooks; have and use line cutters and dipnets; and move 1 nmi after an interaction with a protected species.
  - An area between Oregon Inlet and Cape Fear, North Carolina is closed to directed shark vessels with BLL gear on board from January through July of each year. The ratio of demersal to pelagic indicator species onboard the vessel and landed can be used by enforcement to distinguish between gear types.

## **GILLNET GEAR RESTRICTIONS**

- Directed shark gillnet vessels are required to have 100% observer coverage during the Right Whale Calving Season (Nov. 15 to Mar. 31) and ~50% observer coverage the rest of the year. Selected vessels will be notified. If you are not sure if you need an observer, call John Carlson at (850) 234-6541 x 221.
  - If a whale is sighted while fishing with a gillnet, the vessel operator must call the Southeast Fisheries Science Center at (305) 862-2850 and cease fishing immediately. Gillnet vessels must conduct net checks every 2 hours to look for, and remove, any protected species. This is the only time that the gillnet is allowed to be detached from the vessel while fishing.