



NMFS ANNOUNCES THE AVAILABILITY OF THE DRAFT AMENDMENT 2 TO THE CONSOLIDATED HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN AND ITS PROPOSED RULE FOR MANAGEMENT OF ATLANTIC SHARK FISHERIES

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is currently amending the Consolidated Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Fishery Management Plan (FMP) and proposing a range of management measures that will affect commercial and recreational shark fishermen and dealers. Recent (2005-2006) stock assessments determined sandbar and dusky sharks to be overfished with overfishing occurring and porbeagle sharks to be overfished. This current rulemaking would rebuild overfished shark stocks and stop overfishing. ****UPDATE: The proposed rule for this action published in the Federal Register on July 27, 2007 (72 FR 41392), and is on the HMS Management Division's webpage at <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms>.****

NMFS will hold numerous public hearings for this rulemaking along the Atlantic Coast, including the Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico regions, in August through October 2007. During these hearings, NMFS will receive public feedback on the proposed management measures. The management measures include, but are not limited to:

- Initiating rebuilding plans for sandbar, dusky, and porbeagle sharks;
- Removing seasonal trimesters and regions;
- Prohibiting retention of porbeagle sharks by commercial and recreational fishermen;
- Implementing eight marine protected areas as requested by the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council;
- Reducing quotas and retention limits consistent with the stock assessments;
- Establishing a shark research fishery that would meet the research objectives of the Agency and allow data collection programs;
- Allowing limited landings of sandbar sharks within a shark research fishery and landings of other shark species both inside and outside a shark research fishery; and
- Modifying recreational measures so that recreational fishermen can only land shark species that are easy to identify, therefore, reducing fishing mortality of sharks under rebuilding plans

The locations of public hearings are listed in the Table 1. NMFS will also be presenting Amendment 2 to the Consolidated HMS FMP at five Fishery Management Councils and Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission summer meetings.



Table 1. Public hearing schedule for Draft Amendment 2 to the Consolidated HMS FMP

Date	Time	Hearing Location	Hearing Address
Wednesday, August 8, 2007	6:00 - 8:50 p.m.	Manahawkin Public Library	129 North Main Street, Manahawkin, NJ 08050
Wednesday, August 8, 2007	6:00 - 9:00 p.m.	SEFSC, Panama City Laboratory	3500 Delwood Beach Drive, Panama City, FL 32408
Tuesday, August 14, 2007	6:00 - 9:00 p.m.	Bayou Black Recreational Center	3688 Southdown Mandalay Road, Houma, LA 70360
Wednesday, August 22, 2007	6:30 - 9:30 p.m.	City of Madeira Beach	300 Municipal Drive, Madeira Beach, FL 33708
Thursday, August 23, 2007	5:30 - 8:30 p.m.	Fort Pierce Library	101 Melody Lane, Fort Pierce, FL 34950
Wednesday, August 29, 2007	6:00 - 9:00 p.m.	Ocean Pines Public Library	11107 Cathell Road, Berlin, MD 21811
Wednesday, September 5, 2007	6:00 - 9:00 p.m.	University of Texas, Marine Science Institute	Visitor's Center, 750 Channel View Drive, Port Aransas, TX 78373
Thursday, September 6, 2007	5:00 - 8:00 p.m.	Islamorada Public Library	81500 Overseas Highway, Islamorada, FL 33036
Monday, September 10, 2007	6:00 - 9:00 p.m.	Manteo Town Hall	407 Budleigh Street, Manteo, NC 27954
Monday, September 17, 2007	5:30 - 8:30 p.m.	Portsmouth Public Library	175 Parrott Avenue, Portsmouth, NH 03801

Comments can be submitted to Michael Clark, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910 by **5 p.m. on October 10, 2007**. Please mark the outside of the envelope "Comments on Amendment 2 to HMS FMP." Comments can also be submitted via e-mail at SHKA2@noaa.gov, or via FAX at (301) 713-1917. A proposed rule published in the Federal Register on July 27, 2007 (72 FR 41392).

This notice is a courtesy to Atlantic Shark Fisheries interests to keep you informed about your fishery. Official notice of Federal fishery actions is made through filing such notice with the Office of the Federal Register. For **further** information, contact Michael Clark, at (301) 713-2347, or Jackie Wilson at (404) 806-7622.



 Alan Risenhoover
 Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries

JUL 19 2007

 Date