



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**  
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

## **NMFS Announces a Closure of the Commercial Non-Sandbar Large Coastal Shark Fishery in the Gulf of Mexico Region**

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) projects that the landings for the commercial non-sandbar large coastal shark (LCS) fishery in the Gulf of Mexico region will exceed 80 percent of the available quota within the 2009 fishing season. As required by NMFS regulations, NMFS is closing the commercial non-sandbar LCS fishery in the Gulf of Mexico region as of 11:30 p.m. local time **June 6, 2009**. From the effective date and time of the closure until NMFS announces, via a notice in the Federal Register, that additional quota is available and the season is reopened, the fishery for that specific quota is closed, even across fishing years.

On December 24, 2008 (73 FR 79005), NMFS announced that the non-sandbar LCS quota for the Gulf of Mexico region for the 2009 fishing year would be 390.5 metric tons (mt) dressed weight (dw) (860,896 lb dw). Dealer reports through the April 30, 2009, reporting period indicate that 293.8 mt dw or 75 percent of the available quota for non-sandbar LCS has been taken. Dealer reports indicate that 56 percent of the quota was taken from the opening of the fishery on January 23, 2009, through February 28, 2009; 9 percent of the quota was taken in March; and 10 percent was taken in April. Based on dealer reports in March and April, NMFS expects that approximately 10 percent of the quota will also be taken in May. Based on this projection, the fishery could reach 85 percent of the quota, which exceeds the 80 percent limit specified in the regulations. Accordingly, NMFS is closing the commercial non-sandbar large coastal shark fishery in the Gulf of Mexico region.

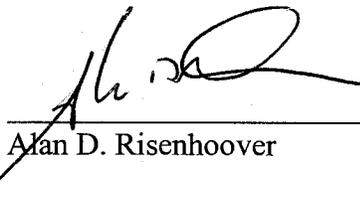
At 50 CFR 635.27(b)(1)(ii), the boundary between the Gulf of Mexico region and the Atlantic region is defined as a line beginning on the east coast of Florida at the mainland at 25°20.4' N. lat, proceeding due east. Any water and land to the south and west of that boundary is considered, for the purposes of quota monitoring and setting of quotas, to be within the Gulf of Mexico region.

During the closure, a fishing vessel, issued an Atlantic Shark LAP pursuant to §635.4, may not possess or sell a non-sandbar LCS in the Gulf of Mexico region, except under the conditions specified in §635.22(a) and (c) or if the vessel possesses a valid shark research permit under §635.32 and a NMFS-approved observer is onboard. A shark dealer, issued a permit pursuant to §635.4, may not purchase or receive non-sandbar LCS in the Gulf of Mexico region from a vessel issued an Atlantic Shark LAP, except that a permitted shark dealer or processor may possess sharks that were harvested, off-loaded, and sold, traded, or bartered, prior to the effective date of the closure and were held in storage. Additionally, a permitted shark dealer or processor may possess non-sandbar sharks that were harvested by a vessel issued a valid shark research permit with a NMFS-approved observer onboard as long as the non-sandbar shark research fishery is open. During this closure, a shark dealer, issued a permit pursuant to §635.4 may, in



accordance with state regulations, purchase or receive non-sandbar LCS in the Gulf of Mexico region if the sharks were harvested, off-loaded, and sold, traded, or bartered from a vessel that fishes only in state waters and that has not been issued a Shark LAP, HMS Angling permit, or HMS Charter/Headboat permit pursuant to §635.4. Additionally, under this closure, a shark dealer, issued a permit pursuant, to §635.4 may purchase or receive non-sandbar LCS if the sharks were harvested, off-loaded, and sold, traded, or bartered from a vessel issued a valid shark research permit (per §635.32) that had a NMFS-approved observer on board during the trip sharks were collected.

This notice is a courtesy to the HMS fishery participants to help keep you informed about your fishery. For further information on this landings update or the closure, contact Karyl Brewster-Geisz at 301-713-2347. The information will also be posted on the HMS website at: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms>.



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Alan D. Risenhoover

JUN 02 2009

Date

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