



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

NMFS ANNOUNCES THE AVAILABILITY OF THE DRAFT AMENDMENT 3 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 2006 Consolidated Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Fishery Management Plan (FMP) and proposing a range of management measures that would affect commercial and recreational shark fishermen and dealers. Recent (2007 and 2008) stock assessments determined that blacknose sharks are overfished and experiencing overfishing, and shortfin mako sharks are experiencing overfishing. This current rulemaking proposes measures to rebuild overfished blacknose shark stocks and end overfishing of both blacknose and shortfin mako sharks.

NMFS will hold numerous public hearings for this rulemaking and FMP amendment, draft Environmental Impact Statement and implementing regulations, along the Atlantic Coast, including the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean Sea, in August and September 2009 (See Table 1). During these hearings, NMFS will receive public feedback on the proposed management measures. The proposed management measures include, but are not limited to:

- Initiating a rebuilding plan for blacknose sharks;
- Removing blacknose sharks from the SCS quota and creating a blacknose shark-specific quota and a separate "non-blacknose SCS" quota;
- Prohibiting incidental limited access permit holders from retaining blacknose sharks;
- Prohibiting gillnet gear for all shark species from South Carolina south, including the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea;
- Prohibiting retention of blacknose sharks by recreational fishermen;
- Take action at the international level through international and regional fisheries organizations to end overfishing of shortfin mako sharks;
- Promoting the live release of shortfin mako sharks in the commercial and recreational fisheries;
- Adding smooth dogfish under federal HMS management;
- Implementing a federal permit requirement for smooth dogfish and a commercial quota; and
- Implementing a separate research quota for smooth dogfish
- Establishing in the FMP, a mechanism for specifying Annual Catch Limits and Accountability Measures for Atlantic sharks.

The locations of public hearings are listed in the Table 1. NMFS will also be presenting Amendment 3 to the 2006 Consolidated HMS FMP at five Fishery Management Council meetings and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission summer meeting.



Table 1. Public hearing schedule for Amendment 3 to the Consolidated HMS FMP

Date	Time	Hearing Location	Hearing Address
August 11, 2009	5:00 – 8:00 p.m.	Thomas B. Norton Library	221 West 19 th Avenue Gulf Shores, AL 36542
August 17, 2009	5:00 – 8:00 p.m.	Manteo Town Hall	407 Budleigh Street Manteo, NC 27954
August 20, 2009	5:00 – 8:00 p.m.	Lower Cape Library	2600 Bayshore Road Villas, NJ 08251
August 31, 2009	3:00 – 6:00 p.m.	Gulf Beaches Public Library	200 Municipal Drive Madeira Beach, FL 33708
September 1, 2009	5:00 – 8:00 p.m.	Fort Pierce Library	101 Melody Lane Fort Pierce, FL 34950
September 9, 2009	2:30 – 5:00 p.m.	HMS Advisory Panel Meeting	8777 Georgia Avenue Silver Spring, MD 20910
September 16, 2009	6:00 – 9:00 p.m.	Charleston Main Library	68 Callhoun Street Charleston, SC 29401
September 22, 2009	6:00 – 9:00 p.m.	Belle Chasse Auditorium	8398 Highway 23 Belle Chasse, LA 70037
September 22, 2009	5:00 – 8:00 p.m.	Portsmouth Public Library	175 Parrott Avenue Portsmouth, NH 03801

The comment period for the proposed rule is open until 5:00 p.m. on September 25, 2009. Written comments, identified by “0648-AW65”, may be submitted electronically via the Federal eRulemaking Portal <http://www.regulations.gov>, or sent by fax or mail to the contact information included below. All comments received are a part of the public record and will generally be posted to <http://www.regulations.gov> without change. All Personal Identifying Information (*e.g.*, name, address, etc.) voluntarily submitted by the commenter may be publicly accessible. Do not submit Confidential Business Information or otherwise sensitive or protected information. NMFS will accept anonymous comments (enter N/A in the required fields, if you wish to remain anonymous). You may submit attachments to electronic comments in Microsoft Word, Excel, WordPerfect, or Adobe PDF file formats only.

This notice is a courtesy to the HMS fishery participants to help keep you informed about your fishery. Official notice of Federal actions is made through filing such notice with the Office of Federal Register. For further information on this proposed rule, contact LeAnn Hogan or Karyl Brewster-Geisz at 301-713-2347, or Jackie Wilson at 240-338-3936. Copies of the proposed rule and supporting documents are available upon request from the Highly Migratory Species Management Division, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910 (phone: 301-713-2347, fax: 301-713-1917). The information will also be posted on the HMS website at: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/>.


 Alan Risenhoover
 Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries

JUL 24 2009

 Date