



NMFS Announces Scoping Workshops and Comment Period Extension for Amendment 6 (Catch Shares)

On September 16, 2011 (76 FR 57709), National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) published a Notice of Intent (NOI) that announced NMFS' intent to prepare an EIS and FMP Amendment that would consider catch shares for the Atlantic shark fisheries. The NOI also established a control date for eligibility to participate in an Atlantic shark catch share program, announced the availability of a white paper describing design elements of catch share programs in general and issues specific to the Atlantic shark fisheries, and requested public comment on the implementation of catch shares in the Atlantic shark fisheries.

NMFS is holding five workshops (see Table 1 for meeting dates, times, and locations) to provide the opportunity for public comment on potential catch share design elements for the Atlantic shark fisheries. NMFS will use these comments to assist in the development of Amendment 6 to the 2006 Consolidated HMS FMP. NMFS is interested in obtaining feedback on issues, including, but not limited to: eligibility (directed and/or incidental permit holders), specification of the resource unit (species and regions to include), initial allocation (based on catch history and/or other means), and catch share management. NMFS has prepared a white paper that provides more detail concerning some of the potential design elements for catch share programs and provides the public with additional information regarding issues in the Atlantic shark fisheries. Information related to catch shares for the Atlantic shark fisheries is available on the HMS Management Division website (<http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/sharks/catchshares.htm>).

Table 1. Dates, times, and locations of the five scoping workshops.

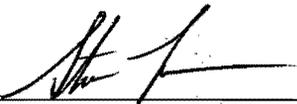
Date	Time	Meeting Locations	Address
December 6, 2011	5:00-8:00 p.m.	Cocoa Beach Library	550 N. Brevard Ave Cocoa Beach, FL 32931
December 13, 2011	5:00-8:00 p.m.	Gulf Beaches Public Library	200 Municipal Dr. Madeira Beach, FL 33708
January 12, 2012	6:00-9:00 p.m.	Barneгат Branch Library	112 Burr St Barneгат, NJ 08005
January 31, 2012	6:00-9:00 p.m.	Belle Chasse Auditorium	8398 Highway 23 Belle Chasse, LA 70037
February 16, 2012	5:00-8:00 p.m.	Manteo Town Hall	407 Budleigh St Manteo, NC 27954



In addition to the five scoping workshops, NMFS has requested time on the agendas of the upcoming Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, New England, Mid-Atlantic, and South Atlantic Fishery Management Councils as well as the Atlantic and Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commissions during the public comment period. NMFS also expects to share the comments received to date regarding catch shares for the Atlantic shark fisheries at the March 2012 HMS Advisory Panel meeting. The dates and location of the AP meeting will be announced in a future Federal Register notice.

The comment period for the NOI has been extended to **5 p.m. on March 31, 2012**. NMFS is extending the comment period to provide additional opportunity for the five Fishery Management Councils, the Atlantic and Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commissions, and other interested parties to comment on the NOI. Written public comments can be submitted via electronically or mail. Submit all electronic public comments via the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. To submit comments via the e-Rulemaking Portal, first click the "submit a comment" icon, then enter NOAA-NMFS-2010-0188 in the keyword search. Locate the document you wish to comment on from the resulting list and click on the "Submit a Comment" icon on the right of that line.

This notice is a courtesy to the HMS fishery participants to help keep you informed about the fishery. For further information on this landings update or the closure, contact Karyl Brewster-Geisz, LeAnn Southward Hogan, or Guý DuBeck at 301-427-8503. The information will also be posted on the HMS website at: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms>.



FOR
Alan Risenhoover
Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries

NOV 23 2011

Date

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