



NMFS Announces a Proposed Rule to Implement the 2011 International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas Recommendation on Silky Sharks

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) proposes to implement the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) recommendation 11-08, which prohibits retaining, transshipping, or landing silky sharks (*Carcharhinus falciformis*) caught in association with ICCAT fisheries. In order to simplify domestic enforcement, NMFS is also proposing to prohibit storing, selling and purchasing the species, consistent with the similar regulations finalized last year regarding oceanic whitetip and most hammerhead sharks. This rule could affect the commercial Atlantic highly migratory species (HMS) pelagic longline fishery for tuna and tuna-like species in the Atlantic Ocean, including the Caribbean Sea and Gulf of Mexico. The rule would not affect recreational fishermen as silky sharks are already prohibited in that fishery.

Specifically, NMFS proposes to prohibit the retention of silky sharks on Atlantic HMS commercially permitted vessels that have pelagic longline gear on board. The proposed action of prohibiting the retention of silky sharks in the commercial pelagic longline fishery for tuna and tuna-like species is likely to have minor, beneficial ecological impacts because of the potential reduction in mortality and minor, adverse socioeconomic impacts because this species constitutes a low percentage of total pelagic longline landings.

The comment period for this proposed rule is open until July 23, 2012. A public hearing via conference call will be held to provide the opportunity for public comment on potential shark management measures. The conference call will be held on July 9, 2012 at 1:00 p.m., and participants should call 800-857-3903 with the code, 6059057.

Written comments, identified by "NOAA-NMFS-2012-0116", 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 generally will be posted to <http://www.regulations.gov> without change. All Personal Identifying Information (for example, 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 Atlantic HMS fishery participants to help keep you informed about the 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, draft EA and Initial Regulatory Flexibility Analysis; contact Sarah de Flesco at 301-427-8503. Copies of the proposed rule and draft EA are available upon request from the Highly Migratory Species



Management Division, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910 (phone: 301-427-8503, fax: 301-713-1917). The information will also be posted on the HMS website at: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/>.

for 
Alan D. Risenhoover,
Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries

JUN 21 2012

Date

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