



NMFS Announces a Regional Non-blacknose Small Coastal Shark Quota Transfer from the Atlantic to the Gulf of Mexico

NMFS is transferring 68 mt dw (149,914 lb dw) of non-blacknose small coastal shark (SCS) quota from the Atlantic to the Gulf of Mexico region at **11:30 pm local time on September 2, 2013**. Based on dealer reports as of August 14, 2013, NMFS estimates that 53.0 metric tons (mt) dressed weight (dw) (116,819 lb dw) or 78 percent of Gulf of Mexico non-blacknose SCS quota has been landed; 0.7 mt dw (1,565 lb dw) or 35 percent of the Gulf of Mexico blacknose quota has been landed; 72.6 mt dw (160,080 lb dw) or 28 percent of the Atlantic non-blacknose SCS quota has been landed; and 11.6 mt dw (25,580 lb dw) or 64 percent of the Atlantic blacknose quota has been landed. According to the regulations at 635.28 (b)(2), NMFS will close the Gulf of Mexico non-blacknose SCS and blacknose management groups once the Gulf of Mexico non-blacknose SCS quota reaches, or is projected to reach, 80 percent of the quota, because the quotas for the Gulf of Mexico non-blacknose SCS and Gulf of Mexico blacknose management groups are linked.

Gulf of Mexico non-blacknose SCS and blacknose sharks are often caught together in the same fisheries, therefore, the quota linkage between these two management groups was created to prevent exceeding the Gulf of Mexico blacknose shark quota through discarded bycatch of blacknose sharks once the Gulf of Mexico blacknose shark landings have reached, or are projected to reach, 80 percent of the quota. The transfer of quota between the Gulf of Mexico non-blacknose SCS and Atlantic non-blacknose SCS management groups is appropriate per § 635.27(b)(2)(iii), because the Gulf of Mexico non-blacknose SCS and Atlantic non-blacknose SCS management groups contain the same species between regions (Atlantic sharpnose, finetooth, and bonnethead sharks) and because the quota is split between the regions for management purposes and not as a result of a stock assessment. Therefore, transferring 68 mt dw of non-blacknose SCS quota from the Atlantic region to the Gulf of Mexico region would provide commercial fishermen additional opportunity to harvest the Gulf of Mexico blacknose quota and not be limited by the Gulf of Mexico non-blacknose SCS quota.

This quota transfer results in an adjusted quota of 135.7 mt dw (299,075 lb dw) for the Gulf of Mexico non-blacknose SCS management group, and an adjusted quota of 193.5 mt dw (426,570 lb dw) for the Atlantic non-blacknose SCS management group. Based on dealer reports as of August 14, 2013, NMFS estimates that 53.0 metric tons (mt) dressed weight (dw) (116,819 lb dw) or 39 percent of this adjusted Gulf of Mexico non-blacknose SCS quota has been landed, and 72.6 mt dw (160,080 lb dw) or 37.5 percent of this adjusted Atlantic non-blacknose SCS quota has been landed.

Projections of dealer data indicate that transferring 68 mt dw non-blacknose SCS quota from the Atlantic region to the Gulf of Mexico region could allow the non-blacknose SCS fisheries in each region to remain open through the end of the 2013 fishing year, if landings and fishing rates do not increase substantially. Depending on future quota availability, we may consider

additional quota transfers to provide fishermen the opportunity to fully harvest available quotas in the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico regions, or close fisheries if quotas are reached, but any such action would occur in another Federal Register notice.

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 quota transfer, contact Karyl Brewster-Geisz or Peter Cooper at 301-427-8503. The information will also be posted on the HMS website at: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/>

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