



## **NMFS Announces a Closure of the Commercial Non-Sandbar Large Coastal Shark Research Fishery**

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) projects that the landings for the commercial Atlantic non-sandbar large coastal shark (LCS) shark research fishery have exceeded 80 percent of the available quota. As required by NMFS regulations, 50 CFR 635.28(b)(2), NMFS is closing the commercial non-sandbar LCS shark research fishery as of 11:30 p.m. local time **July 26, 2011**. From the effective date and time of the closure until and if 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 8, 2010 (75 FR 76302), NMFS announced that the shark research fishery for the 2011 fishing year was open and the available shark research fishery quota for non-sandbar LCS was 37.5 metric tons (mt) dressed weight (dw) (82,673 lb dw). Dealer and observer reports received through July 14, 2011, indicate that 31.3 mt dw or 83 percent of the available shark research fishery quota for non-sandbar LCS has been landed. Because this exceeds the 80 percent limit specified in the regulations, NMFS is closing the commercial non-sandbar LCS research fishery as of 11:30 p.m. local time 5 days after the date of filing notice with the Office of the Federal Register.

During the closure, persons engaged in a shark research fishery trip aboard vessels issued a shark research permit under 50 CFR 635.32(f) with a NMFS-approved observer onboard, may not retain non-sandbar LCS. Vessels issued a shark research permit that are engaged in a fishing trip outside of the shark research fishery may retain Atlantic non-sandbar LCS caught in the Atlantic region, which, as of July 15, 2011, is open for commercial harvest of non-sandbar LCS by Atlantic shark limited access permit holders. A shark dealer issued a permit pursuant to § 635.4 may not purchase or receive Atlantic non-sandbar LCS from a vessel issued a shark research permit returning from a shark research fishery trip with a NMFS-approved observer on board. Permitted shark dealers or processors may possess non-sandbar LCS that were harvested during a shark research fishery trip, as long as the non-sandbar LCS was off-loaded, and sold, traded, or bartered, prior to the effective date of the closure and were held in storage.

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 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>.

**JUL 22 2011**

*Emily Menashes*

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Date

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