



NMFS Announces a Final Rule to Establish the Quotas and Opening Dates for the 2012 Atlantic Shark Commercial Fishing Season

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) announces a final rule that establishes quota levels and opening dates for the 2012 Atlantic commercial shark fisheries. Based in part on public comments and implementation of adaptive management measures, NMFS changed the opening date for the non-sandbar large coastal shark fishery in the Gulf of Mexico region from the proposed opening date of March 1, 2012, to February 15, 2012, in the final rule. Other changes from the proposed rule include several quota adjustments to account for additional landings reported as of October 31, 2011. The final opening dates and quotas are:

Species Group	Region	2012 Annual Quota	Season Opening Dates
Non-Sandbar Large Coastal Sharks	Gulf of Mexico	392.8 mt dw (866,063 lb dw)	February 15, 2012*
	Atlantic	183.2 mt dw (403,889 lb dw)	Effective Date for HMS Electronic Dealer Reporting System or July 15, 2012, whichever comes first
Non-Sandbar LCS Research	No regional quotas	37.5 mt dw (82,673 lb dw)	January 24, 2012
Sandbar Shark Research		87.9 mt dw (193,784 lb dw)	
Non-Blacknose Small Coastal Sharks		332.4 mt dw * (732,808 lb dw)	
Blacknose Sharks		19.9 mt dw (43,872 lb dw)	
Blue Sharks		273.0 mt dw (601,856 lb dw)	
Porbeagle Sharks		0.7 mt dw * (1,585 lb dw)	
Pelagic Sharks Other Than Porbeagle or Blue		488.0 mt dw (1,075,856 lb dw)	

*Change from proposed rule

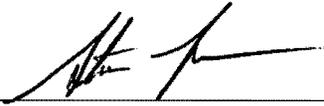
All of the shark fisheries will remain open until December 31, 2012, unless NMFS calculates that the fishing season landings has reached, or is projected to reach, 80 percent of the available

quota. In that case, NMFS will publish a notice in the Federal Register of the closure for that shark species group that will be effective no fewer than 5 days from the date of filing.

This notice is a courtesy to the HMS fishery participants to help keep you informed about the fishery. More details on the reasons regarding the decisions and responses to the public comments received are provided in the final rule for this action. Copies of these documents 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) or on the HMS website at: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/>. For further information on this final rule and its requirements, contact Karyl Brewster-Geisz or Guy DuBeck at 301-427-8503.

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FOR Carrie D. Selberg
Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries

01/24/12
Date