



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

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MEMORANDUM

August 11, 2016

To: Coastal Sharks Management Board, Advisory Panel, and Technical Committee

From: Ashton Harp, FMP Coordinator

Subject: NMFS Proposed Rule to Establish a Commercial Retention Limit for Blacknose Sharks South of 34° N. Latitude in the Atlantic Region

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has announced a proposed rule to the Atlantic Highly Migratory Species Fishery Management Plan that would establish a commercial possession limit of eight blacknose sharks per trip. It would apply to federal Atlantic shark limited access permit holders targeting small coastal sharks (SCS) south of 34° N. latitude. If approved, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's Coastal Sharks Management Board could take action to apply this to state licensed fishermen as well.

In 2016, commercial fisheries for both blacknose sharks and SCS south of 34° N. latitude were closed approximately five months after the opening date of May 29, 2016 because the commercial Atlantic blacknose shark landings were projected to have exceeded 80% of the available quota. The blacknose shark and non-blacknose SCS fisheries south of 34° N. latitude are quota-linked under current regulations, meaning if landings from either fishery are projected to exceed 80% of the available commercial quota then the both fisheries will close.

As a result of the early closures, the non-blacknose SCS quota was underutilized in 2016. The purpose of the proposed rule is to maximize the utilization of the non-blacknose SCS quota, while minimizing the mortality and discards of blacknose sharks and other small coastal sharks. Under currently regulations, there is no commercial retention limit for blacknose sharks. The preferred alternative would establish a commercial retention limit of eight blacknose sharks per trip for all federal Atlantic shark limited access permit holders. The full range of alternatives considered can be found in the [Draft Environmental Assessment](#) and/or [proposed rule](#).

The public comment period is open until September 20, 2016. NMFS will hold a public hearing and conference call for the proposed rule (see Table 1). Written comments, identified by "NOAA-NMFS-2016-0095," may be submitted electronically via the Federal eRulemaking Portal <http://www.regulations.gov>.

M16-72

Table 1. Details on the upcoming public hearing and conference call.

Venue	Date/time	Meeting locations	Location contact information
Conference call	August 16, 2016, 2 p.m. - 4 p.m.		To participate in conference call, call: (888) 635-5002 Passcode: 6429428. To participate in webinar, RSVP at: https://noaaevents2.webex.com/noaaevents2/onstage/g.php?MTID=e2a3c0722f8a4bee1c303445a56b6a065 . A confirmation email with webinar log-in information will be sent after RSVP is registered.
Public Hearing	August 24, 2016, 5 p.m. - 8 p.m.	Cocoa Beach, FL	Cocoa Beach Public Library 550 North Brevard Avenue Cocoa Beach, FL 32931 (321) 868-1104

Please contact Ashton Harp, FMP Coordinator, at (703) 842-0740 or aharp@asmfc.org if you have questions.