



# Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

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## MEMORANDUM

April 11, 2017

**TO: Coastal Sharks Management Board, Advisory Panel and Technical Committee**

**FROM: Ashton Harp, FMP Coordinator**

**RE: Retention Limit of Aggregated Large Coastal Shark and Hammerhead Shark Management Groups Reduced to 3 Sharks per Trip**

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has reduced the retention limit for the commercial aggregated large coastal shark and hammerhead shark management groups (Appendix 1) for directed shark limited access permit holders in the Atlantic region from 25 to 3 sharks per vessel per trip effective 11:30 p.m. April 15, 2017. The revised retention limit will remain in effect for the rest of the 2017 fishing season or until NMFS announces another adjustment to the retention limit, which is expected around July 15<sup>th</sup>.

NMFS takes this action because 19.5% or 32.9 mt dressed weight of the available quota for the aggregated large coastal shark fishery has been harvested. The adjusted retention limit is intended to promote equitable fishing opportunities throughout the Atlantic region.

As agreed upon by the Commission's Coastal Sharks Management Board (in December 2015), the Commission will follow NMFS for in-season changes to the commercial retention limit, therefore, no more than 3 sharks per vessel per trip may be retained from the aggregated large coastal and hammerhead management groups by **a state licensed fishermen** effective 11:30 p.m. April 15, 2017.

The Federal Register commercial retention limit notification will be published on April 13 at <https://www.federalregister.gov/d/2017-07495>. Shark landings can be found at: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/species/sharks/Landings/index.html>.

Please contact Ashton Harp, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at (703) 842-0740 or [aharp@asmfc.org](mailto:aharp@asmfc.org) if you have questions.

M17-36

## Appendix 1

The list of the species within the aggregated large coastal shark and hammerhead management groups.

<b>Aggregated Large Coastal</b>	
Silky	<i>Carcharhinus falciformis</i>
Tiger	<i>Galeocerdo cuvier</i>
Blacktip	<i>Carcharhinus limbatus</i>
Spinner	<i>Carcharhinus brevipinna</i>
Bull	<i>Carcharhinus leucas</i>
Lemon	<i>Negaprion brevirostris</i>
Nurse	<i>Ginglymostoma cirratum</i>
<b>Hammerhead</b>	
Scalloped hammerhead	<i>Sphyrna lewini</i>
Great hammerhead	<i>Sphyrna mokarran</i>
Smooth hammerhead	<i>Sphyrna zygaena</i>



## Retention Limit of Commercial Aggregated Large Coastal Shark and Hammerhead Shark Management Groups: Atlantic Region Reduced to 3 Sharks per Trip

NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) is reducing the retention limit for the commercial aggregated large coastal shark (LCS) and hammerhead shark management groups for directed shark limited access permit holders in the Atlantic region from 25 to 3 LCS other than sandbar sharks per vessel per trip as of 11:30 p.m. local time **April 15, 2017**. This adjustment is intended to promote equitable fishing opportunities in the Atlantic region, while still allowing the majority of quota to be harvested later in the year. All other retention limits and shark fisheries remain unchanged in the Atlantic region.

NOAA Fisheries takes this action after considering the regulatory criteria at 50 CFR 635.24(a)(8) and other relevant factors. On November 23, 2016 (81 FR 84491), NOAA Fisheries announced that the aggregated LCS and hammerhead shark management groups for the Atlantic region would open on January 1 with a quota of 168.9 metric tons (mt) dressed weight (dw) (372,552 lb dw) and 27.1 mt dw (59,736 lb dw), respectively. Dealer reports through April 6, 2017, indicate that 32.9 mt dw or 19.5 percent of the available quota for the aggregated LCS has been harvested. If the average catch rate continues, the landings would reach 80 percent of the quota by the beginning of July. Once the landings reach 80 percent of the quota, consistent with § 635.28(b)(3), NOAA Fisheries would close any species and/or management group of a linked group. Closure at that time would not allow fishermen throughout the Atlantic region an opportunity to fish for sharks for the rest of the year. Accordingly, as of 11:30 p.m. local time **April 15, 2017**, NOAA Fisheries is reducing the retention limit for the commercial aggregated LCS and hammerhead shark management groups in the Atlantic region for directed shark limited access permit holders from 25 LCS other than sandbar sharks per vessel per trip to 3 LCS other than sandbar sharks per vessel per trip. As noted in the November 23, 2016 final rule (81 FR 74999), NOAA Fisheries intends to increase the commercial retention limit around July 15, 2017, as this was the date used for recent prior season opening dates. However, any future change in the retention limit will not be made unless deemed appropriate after considering the inseason trip limit adjustment criteria (§ 635.24(a)(8)).

This notice is a courtesy to the HMS fishery participants to help keep you informed about the fishery. For further information on this retention limit adjustment, contact Lauren Latchford, Guý DuBeck or Karyl Brewster-Geisz 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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