



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

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Coastal Sharks Advisory Panel Conference Call

April 7, 2017

10:00 – 11:00 a.m.

Advisory Panel Members: Lewis Gillingham (Chair), Katie Westfall, Mark Sampson, Peter Grimbilas, Charles Witek, Rusty Hudson

ASMFC: Ashton Harp, Roy Miller (Board Chair)

Public: Karyl Brewster-Geisz (NOAA Fisheries), Angel Wiley (MD DNR)

The Coastal Sharks Advisory Panel met via conference call on April 7, 2017 to discuss the final rule for Amendment 5b to the (federal) Highly Migratory Species Fishery Management Plan. New management measures are in response to a 2016 dusky shark stock assessment update that determined dusky sharks are overfished and experiencing overfishing. The commercial and recreational management measures (for HMS permit holders) aim to conserve dusky sharks.

The Federal Register commercial retention limit notification can be found at:

<https://www.federalregister.gov/d/2017-06591>

NOAA Fisheries HMS Summary:

http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/news/news_list/2017/4/a5b_finalrule_040317.html

The AP discussed two recreational measures (see below) that could be adopted in state waters, if requested by the Board at the May 2017 meeting (see below) and the affect it may have on state fishermen.

Amendment 5b Recreational Measures – Both will become effective on January 1, 2018.

- 1. Requires HMS permit holders fishing for sharks recreationally to obtain a shark endorsement, which requires completion of an online shark identification and fishing regulation training course, plus additional recreational fisheries outreach.*
- 2. Require the use of non-offset, non-stainless steel circle hooks by all HMS permit holders with a shark endorsement when fishing for sharks recreationally south of 41° 43' N latitude, except when fishing with flies or artificial lures.*

AP Discussion

1. *Shark Endorsement via an Online Training Course*

NOAA Fisheries clarified that the training course will include a video and questions, but would likely take less than five minutes to complete. It is not pass/fail. It will focus on the basic structure of a shark and how to identify a ridgeback shark (which includes dusky sharks).

Overall the members on the call welcomed shark education opportunities for fishermen. They noted that there is a lot of shark misidentification by recreational fishermen. In some cases, this has deterred anglers from shark fishing in general, in other cases it has led to the mortality of prohibited sharks.

There was opposition to this leading to a separate permit. Multiple participants preferred states consider the following:

- States should require recreational shark anglers, including those participating in tournaments, to take the 5 minute online quiz and video that is being developed by NOAA Fisheries.
 - o Potential Action: This could be included in the ASMFC Coastal Sharks FMP (which would require an addendum) or a mandate put forward by each state
 - o Potential Action: States will develop regulatory language and socialize this mandate with shark anglers
 - o States could ask fishermen to take the quiz when applying for the state saltwater fishing license or an angler could take it mid-year. HMS may modify the quiz annually.
- After an angler completes the quiz, a unique number should be shown on the screen. Anglers will be required to write this number on their state fishing license and show law enforcement upon request.
 - o Potential Action: Commission should work with HMS to have the quiz create a unique number at the end of the quiz; however this is currently not in the scope of work for the online contractor
 - o Potential Action: Ask for law enforcement feedback on enforceability
- The NOAA HMS permit and shark endorsement is vessel based and their quiz is focused on fishing from vessels, but there is a need for the states to take the lead on developing best practices when releasing a shark from the beach, piers or jetties.
 - o Potential Action: On each state website, a shark angler webpage could be developed that would include shore-based best practices for releasing sharks (video or text) and include a link to the HMS video.
 - For example: sharks should be released in the surf, not dragged onto the sand; sharks caught on piers should be released with no more than 3 feet of line.
 - o The outreach material should focus on the positives of having shark education, rather stating it as a mere requirement.

One participant wants the online quiz to be strongly recommended but not required.

2. Non-offset, Non-stainless Steel Circle Hook Requirement below Chatham, MA

There was a lot of discussion about the enforceability of this measure. Concerns included:

- Fishermen that incidentally catch sharks will likely not be aware of this requirement
- It could lead to discarding because anglers not using the correct hook will be prohibited from retaining any sharks
- Enforcement officers are not likely to intercept anglers at the time of harvest, therefore officers will have to take the anglers word that a circle hook was used if intercepted with a shark at the dock.
- Federal anglers are more likely to target sharks and be aware of the regulations involved with shark fishing, whereas state anglers are not as knowledgeable. There will likely be push back if this measure is implemented.
- Shark misidentification is a bigger issue (e.g., issue 1) than using a specific hook.
- Request for LEC feedback on this measure.