



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

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Coastal Sharks Technical Committee Meeting Summary

Conference Call
June 5, 2013

Technical Committee Members: Greg Skomal (MA DMF, Chair), Holly White (NC DMF), Julie Neer (SEDAR), Carolyn Belcher (GA DNR), Brent Winner (FL FWC), Bryan Frazier (SC DNR), Angel Willey (MD DNR), Eric Schneider (RI DFW), Wilson Laney (USFWS)

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The Coastal Sharks Technical Committee (TC) held a conference call to discuss possible impacts to state fisheries if dusky sharks and/or great hammerhead sharks are listed under the Endangered Species Act. The TC also reviewed the recent North Carolina study concerning smoothhound fin-to-carcass ratios. Finally, the TC thanked Dr. Greg Skomal for his four years as TC chair, welcomed Carolyn Belcher as the new TC chair, and elected Holly White as the new TC vice-chair. Below is a summary of their discussions.

Endangered Species Act Listing

Without knowing whether or not the two shark species will be listed as endangered or threatened, the TC was unable to pinpoint specific impacts to the state fisheries. The TC agreed that if either or both species is listed, any fishery that interacts with the species in question will have limitations placed on it. The TC also agreed that listing either species would complicate management of the species and place a financial burden on some state agencies to come into compliance with the law. Of the fisheries along the Atlantic coast, the swordfish fishery would likely experience the largest detriment if either species is listed.

The TC also discussed the fact that both dusky sharks and hammerhead sharks are being addressed under Amendment 5a and 5b to the NOAA Fisheries Highly Migratory Species plan. The measures contained in Amendment 5a and 5b aim to limit harvest of dusky sharks and hammerhead sharks. Since the status review will consider previous management of the species, these new measures are important for NOAA Fisheries to consider when making the status review decision.

Smoothhound Fin-to-Carcass Ratios

The TC agreed that the NC and NJ fin-to-carcass ratio studies are the best available data they have to provide guidance to the Spiny Dogfish and Coastal Shark Management Board (Board). The TC would feel more comfortable with the studies if there were a larger sample size and a broader range of sizes of sharks used in the study. There is concern that the ratios can change depending on the fin set used, and if the caudal fin is not kept, 12% is not the correct ratio which creates a potential loophole. The TC, excluding the North Carolina representative, maintains that a fins-naturally-attached option is the best management tool to close loopholes and prevent illegal finning of sharks.