



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

NEWS RELEASE

*Working towards healthy, self-sustaining populations of all Atlantic coast fish species, or successful restoration
well in progress by the year 2015*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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PRESS CONTACT: Tina Berger
(202) 289-6400

ASMFC Approves Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Coastal Sharks

Alexandria, VA – The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission has approved the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Atlantic Coastal Sharks. The FMP addresses the management of 40 species, including smooth dogfish, and establishes a suite of management measures for recreational and commercial shark fisheries in state waters (0 – 3 miles from shore).

Coordinated state and federal management is essential to establishing healthy self-sustaining populations of Atlantic coastal sharks. Many species are depleted and vulnerable to collapse if fishing pressure continues as it has in recent years. Most of these sharks utilize state water coastal estuaries and bays as pupping grounds and nurseries. The FMP seeks to protect pregnant females when they are concentrated in these areas to give birth.

Prior to the FMP, there was inconsistent application of shark regulations at the state level. Some states mirrored federal regulations while others had less stringent provisions. Implementing the complementary plan will not only help the stocks rebuild by controlling fishing pressure but will also increase enforceability throughout the species management area.

The FMP includes management measures for smooth dogfish and will offer the first coastwide management of that species off the Atlantic coast. Smooth dogfish are not managed in federal waters and the FMP will control harvest through state landing restrictions.

The FMP establishes a seasonal closure to protect pregnant female sharks and a requirement that fins must remain attached through landings; these measures apply to both recreational and commercial fisheries. Recreational management measures include a prohibition on the harvest of severely depleted species, size limits, and authorized gear. Commercial management measures include species groupings (such as prohibited and research only); the opening and closing of fisheries concurrent with federal actions for small coastal, large coastal and pelagic species groups; a smooth dogfish quota; seasons, landings restrictions, possession limits, gear restrictions and bycatch reduction measures; state commercial license/permit requirements; display and research permit exemptions; and federal dealer permit requirements.

The Plan will be available in September and can be obtained via the Commission's website at www.asmfc.org under Breaking News or by contacting the Commission at (202) 289-6400. For more information, please contact Chris Vonderweidt, Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator, at (202) 289-6400 or cvonderweidt@asmfc.org.

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission was formed by the 15 Atlantic coastal states in 1942 for the promotion and protection of coastal fishery resources. The Commission serves as a deliberative body of the Atlantic coastal states, coordinating the conservation and management of nearshore fishery resources, including marine, shell and anadromous species.