



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

NEWS RELEASE

*Working towards healthy, self-sustaining populations for 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 Spiny Dogfish and Coastal Shark Board Approves Addendum I to the Interstate Shark FMP

Alexandria, VA – The Spiny Dogfish and Coastal Sharks Management Board approved Addendum I to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Atlantic Coastal Sharks. Addendum I modifies the finning and identification provision for the commercial smooth dogfish fishery and removes both the smooth dogfish recreational possession limits and 2-hour net check requirement for commercial large mesh gillnet.

The FMP originally required that the fins of all sharks harvested in the commercial fishery have fins attached naturally to the carcass through landing. The commercial smooth dogfish fishery is high volume, labor intensive, and requires an extremely fresh product in relation to other commercial shark fisheries. Requiring commercial fishermen to partially cut the fins at sea (necessary to properly bleed each fish) and then finish processing them back at the dock was considered unnecessary and overly burdensome. To address this, Addendum I allows commercial fishermen to remove all fins, with a fin to carcass ratio of 5% to 95%, from March through June. Fishermen are required to leave the dorsal fins attached to smooth dogfish carcasses through landing from July through February. This seasonal exemption is likely to minimize interactions between smooth dogfish and depleted shark species based on an analysis conducted by North Carolina Department of Environmental and Natural Resources. The analysis showed that the majority of smooth dogfish landings usually occur from March through June while the majority of sandbars are landed from July through February. The Board required that dorsal fins must remain attached from July through February to make identification easier during the seasons when smooth dogfish and sandbar are found in the same areas.

Addendum I removes smooth dogfish recreational possession limits because there is no evidence that possession limits are necessary for a sustainable fishery. The two-hour net check requirement for large mesh gillnets was removed following recommendations of the Law Enforcement Committee that such a measure is unenforceable and also concern that the requirement would impact several state water gillnet fisheries.

Copies of the Addendum I will be available by early September via the Commission's website at www.asmfc.org under Breaking News. For more information, please contact Christopher Vonderweidt, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at cvonderweidt@asmfc.org or (202) 289-6400. PR09-27

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.

1444 Eye Street, N.W. -- Sixth Floor -- Washington, D.C. 20005
(202) 289-6400 (phone) (202) 289-6051 (fax) www.asmfc.org