



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

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Coastal Sharks Technical Committee Meeting Summary

Conference Call
September 27, 2013

Technical Committee Members: Carolyn Belcher (chair, GA DNR), Holly White (NC DMF), Julie Neer (SEDAR), Greg Skomal (MA DMF), Brent Winner (FL FWC), Eric Schneider (RI DFW), Karyl Brewster-Geisz (NOAA Fisheries)

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The Coastal Sharks Technical Committee (TC) held a conference call to discuss Draft Addendum III to the Coastal Sharks Fishery Management Plan (FMP) and NOAA Fisheries' 2014 coastal shark specifications. The TC also discussed issues with the shark research permits and grouping smooth dogfish in with Florida smoothhound sharks. Below is a summary of their discussions.

Draft Addendum III

Draft Addendum III to the Coastal Sharks FMP proposes new species groupings, quotas and a new recreational size limit based on the Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Amendment 5a. The TC did not see any potential problems with any of the proposed changes, although they did discuss the fact that linked quotas can cause problems by preventing the full harvest of a species group if it is closed due to a linkage. One member pointed out that linked species are usually caught at similar rates and there have not been large issues with early closures so far. The TC agreed that maintaining consistency with the federal plan is one of the main goals of the FMP. Therefore, the **TC recommends that the Board adopt Issue 1, Option B: Measures Consistent with HMS Amendment 5a and Issue 2, Option B: Measures Consistent with HMS Amendment 5a.**

2014 Coastal Shark Specifications

The TC was not able to hold a conference call before the public comment period for the shark specifications closed, but still wished to provide their insight for the 2014 coastal shark specifications. The key aspects of the 2014 shark specifications (attached) deal with addressing overharvest of blacknose sharks and the opening date of the shark fisheries. The TC agreed that spreading the overharvest out over five years is the best option to ensure there is blacknose quota each year. The TC also discussed the opening date of January 1, 2014. NOAA Fisheries has received a large number of comments concerning this issue and noted that it is possible that this date will change. Again, the TC agreed that remaining consistent with the federal plan is important, so **recommends that the Board adopt the same specifications as NOAA Fisheries.**

Other Issues

One member brought up the fact that the shark research and display permit requires annual reports of the animal throughout its life, yet this is difficult to enforce. The TC discussed whether

or not states require this and different techniques that states use to enforce this requirement. For example, Rhode Island has language in their permit that allows them to take away a permit in subsequent years if the reporting requirements are not met.

NOAA Fisheries grouped smooth dogfish and Florida smoothhound sharks into one species group in HMS Amendment 3, noting that they were likely the same species. Consequently, Addendum II to the Coastal Sharks FMP referred to smoothhound sharks and smooth dogfish interchangeably. The TC addressed concern with this due to the fact that these two species are not the same. Despite this, it is extremely difficult to differentiate the two species. Until there is a stock assessment (scheduled for 2014), NOAA Fisheries will continue to treat smooth dogfish and Florida smoothhound sharks as one species, so the Commission will do the same.