



# *Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission*

## NEWS RELEASE

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

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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### **ASMFC Releases Draft Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Coastal Sharks for Public Comment**

Washington, D.C. – The Commission’s Spiny Dogfish and Coastal Shark Management Board has approved the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Atlantic Coastal Sharks for public review and comment. Public hearings will be held between February 7 and March 14, 2008. The details of those hearings will be announced once they have been scheduled.

The Draft FMP addresses the management of 39 shark species. It proposes management measures for state recreational and commercial shark fisheries, including permitted species, regions, seasons, quotas, possession limits, size limits, protection of nursing and pupping grounds, authorized gear, dealer reporting, research, display, finning, and bycatch reduction.

Coordinated state management is a vital step towards establishing healthy self-sustaining populations of Atlantic coastal sharks. Many species have been in a depleted state and are 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 Draft FMP proposes to protect depleted shark stocks while they are in these areas during the most vulnerable stages of their life cycles.

Another goal of Draft FMP is to establish complementary state and federal shark management. Currently some states mirror federal regulations for Atlantic sharks while other states have no management (other than spiny dogfish) or have regulations inconsistent with the federal FMP. Coordinating management between state and federal waters will close loopholes between jurisdictions and simplify regulations for law enforcement officials.

Fishermen and other interested groups are encouraged to provide input on the Draft FMP, either by attending public hearings or providing written comments. Copies of the Draft FMP can be obtained via the Commission’s website at [www.asmfc.org](http://www.asmfc.org) under Breaking News or by contacting the Commission at (202) 289-6400. **Public comment will be accepted until 5:00 PM on March 28, 2008**, and should be forwarded to Chris Vonderweidt, Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator, 1444 Eye Street, NW, Sixth Floor, Washington, DC 20005; (202) 289-6051 (FAX) or at [comments@asmfc.org](mailto:comments@asmfc.org) (Subject line: Sharks). For more information, please contact Chris Vonderweidt at (202) 289-6400 or [cvonderweidt@asmfc.org](mailto:cvonderweidt@asmfc.org).

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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.