



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

NEWS RELEASE

Sustainable and Cooperative Management of Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Coastal Sharks Board Sets Possession Limits to Zero for Oceanic Whitetip Sharks

Arlington, VA – The Commission’s Coastal Sharks Management Board established a zero possession limit for oceanic whitetip sharks for recreational and commercial fisheries. States will begin rulemaking to implement the new possession limit, effective immediately.

NOAA Fisheries issued a final rule in January prohibiting the retention and possession of oceanic whitetip sharks in US waters of the Atlantic Ocean, which became effective February 2, 2024. This rule responds to the 2018 determination that oceanic whitetip sharks warranted listing as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act throughout its range, and a 2020 Biological Opinion that encouraged the inclusion of the species on the Highly Migratory Species (HMS) list of prohibited sharks for recreational and commercial HMS fisheries.

The Board action closes a potential loophole allowing take of oceanic whitetip in state waters. The Board also indicated it will consider moving oceanic whitetip sharks from the pelagic species group to the prohibited species group as part of the next addendum or amendment action, as a complementary measure to the NOAA final rule.

For more information, please contact Caitlin Starks, Senior Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at cstarks@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 diadromous species.

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