



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

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Coastal Sharks Specifications for the 2026 Fishing Year

The Coastal Sharks Management Board adopted coastal shark specifications for the 2026 fishing year based on the default federal regulations for Atlantic coastal shark fisheries. Effective January 1, 2024, NOAA Fisheries changed the federal regulations for Atlantic shark fisheries for the 2024 and future fishing years to automatically open the commercial fishing year on January 1 of each year under the base quotas and default retention limits.

The final rule included the following measures (Table 1):

- The commercial shark fisheries will automatically open on January 1 of each year.
- At the start of each fishing year, the default commercial retention limit is 55 LCS other than sandbar sharks (i.e., aggregated LCS and hammerhead shark management groups) per vessel per trip
- The commercial possession limit at the start of the season will be 8 blacknose sharks per vessel per trip.
- NMFS may consider in-season adjustments to the commercial possession limits depending on catch rates.

More information can be found at:

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2023/11/08/2023-24307/atlantic-highly-migratory-species-2024-atlantic-shark-commercial-fishing-year>
and [https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-50/chapter-VI/part-635#p-635.24\(a\)](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-50/chapter-VI/part-635#p-635.24(a))

The 2026 specifications include the NMFS default season start date and commercial possession limits based. The Coastal Sharks Board does not actively set quotas for any species contained in the non-blacknose, small coastal shark (SCS), blacknose, aggregated LCS, hammerhead or pelagic species groups but will close the fishery for any species in these groups when NMFS closes the fishery in federal waters, as outlined in the FMP.

Table 1. NMFS base quotas and default retention limits for the 2026 coastal shark fishery. Atlantic shark fisheries will automatically open on January 1, 2026 unless adjusted by NMFS.

Region or Sub-region	Management Group	2025 Annual Quota	Quota Linkages	Commercial Retention Limits for Directed Shark Limited Access Permit Holders (in-season adjustments are possible)
Atlantic	Aggregated Large Coastal Sharks	168.9 mt dw (372,552 lb dw)	Linked	55 LCS other than sandbar sharks per vessel per trip. If the quota is landed too quickly, NMFS will consider in-season reduction as needed.
	Hammerhead Sharks	27.1 mt dw (59,736 lb dw)		
	Non-Blacknose Small Coastal Sharks	264.1 mt dw (582,333 lb dw)	Linked (South of 34°N. lat. only)	N/A
	Blacknose Sharks (South of 34° N. lat. only)	17.2 mt dw (37,921 lb dw)		8 blacknose sharks per vessel per trip (applies to directed and incidental permit holders)
	Smoothhound sharks	1,802.6 mt dw (3,973,902 lb dw)	Not Linked	N/A
No regional quotas	Non-Sandbar LCS Research	50.0 mt dw (110,230 lb dw)	Linked	N/A
	Sandbar Shark Research	90.7 mt dw (199,943 lb dw)		
	Blue Sharks	273.0 mt dw (601,856 lb dw)	Not Linked	N/A
	Porbeagle Sharks	1.7 mt dw (3,748 lb dw)		
	Pelagic Sharks Other Than Porbeagle or Blue	488.0 mt dw (1,075,856 lb dw)		

*1 mt dw = 2,204.6 lb dw

Smooth Dogfish State Shares

The base federal coastwide quota for the 2026 Atlantic smooth dogfish fishery is 1,802.6 dressed weight (dw) metric tons, or 3,973,902 dw pounds. State shares are established based on Addendum II to the Interstate Coastal Sharks FMP. Rollover of unused state shares is not permitted because it could result in overages of the federal coastwide quota. The state shares shown in Table 2 reflect the base coastwide quota for 2026. Please note that the state shares in pounds do not add up to 3,973,902 due to a rounding error in converting from metric tons to pounds.

Table 2. State shares¹ of the coastwide smooth dogfish quota based on the base coastwide quota for the 2026 fishing year (January – December).

	State Share Percentages	State Share (dw mt)	State Share (dw lbs)
ME	0.021%	0.4	817
MA	0.433%	7.8	17,195
RI	1.363%	24.6	54,163
CT	0.234%	4.2	9,282
NY	7.953%	143.4	316,037
NJ	18.828%	339.4	748,214
DE	0.339%	6.1	13,464
MD	6.703%	120.8	266,362
VA	34.803%	627.4	1,383,026
NC	28.583%	515.2	1,135,860
SC	0.742%	13.4	29,481
TOTAL	100%	1,802.6	3,973,902

¹ State shares are based on total landings by state from 1998-2010