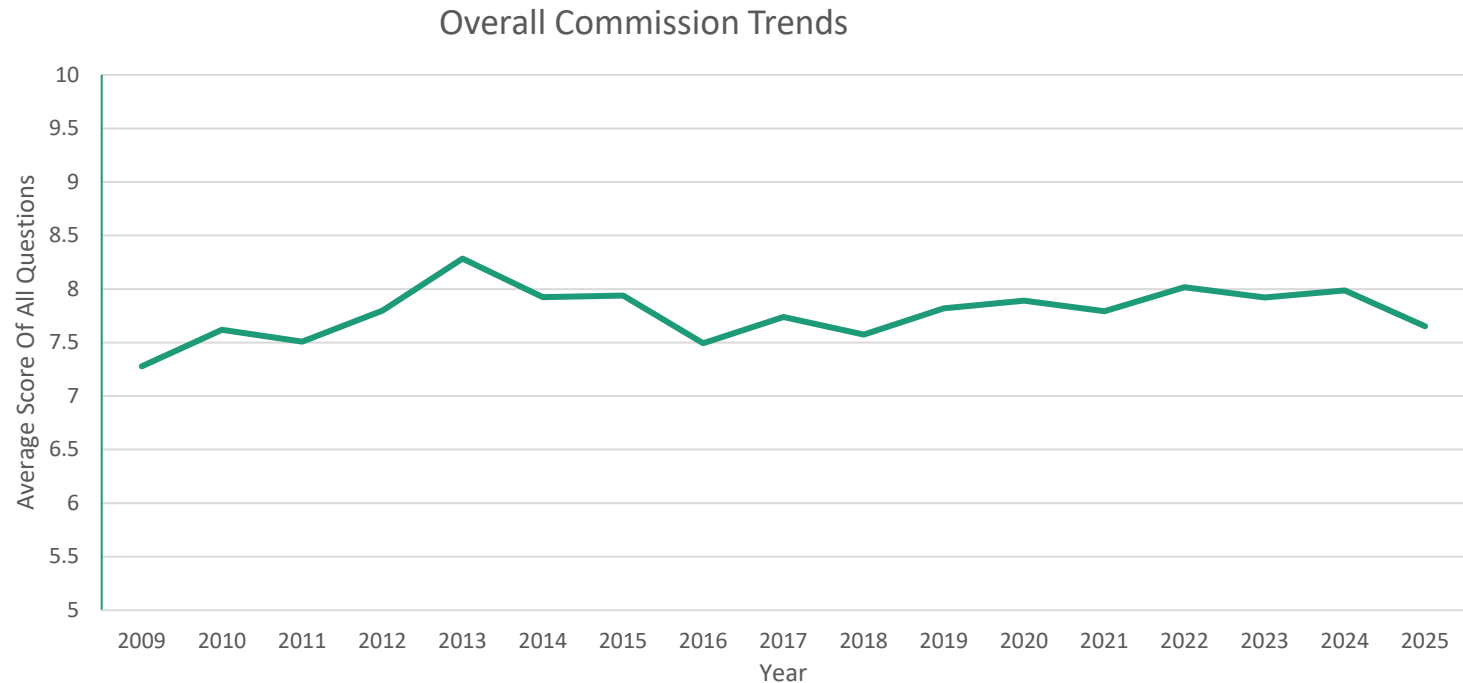




**Atlantic States  
Marine Fisheries  
COMMISSION**

# 2025 Commissioner Survey Results

- 23 Commissioners Completed this year's Commissioner Survey
  - That is the lowest completion rate in the timeseries
  - 2024 had 28 respondents, 2023 had 33 respondents



# 10 Point Questions

- While 13 of the 16 ten-point questions all saw a decrease in the average scores, (Q5) *“How satisfied are you with the Commission's working relationship with our constituent partners (commercial, recreational, and environmental)?”* and (Q7) *“One of the metrics the Commission uses to measure progress is tracking the number of stocks where overfishing is no longer occurring. Is this a clear metric to measure progress?”* saw the largest decreases.
  - Both saw over a full point drop in their average scores from last year.
- (Q4), Cooperation with Federal partners is consistently ranked as our lowest scoring question. Its average score this year, of six points, ranks as our second lowest average score across all years and all questions.
- (Q11), (Q14), (Q15), the questions regarding the utilization of fiscal and human resources, products of the ISFMP department and the products of the Science department, were the only three to see an increase in average scores.

# Questions 17, 19, and 20

- **Obstacles to the Commission's success in rebuilding stocks (Q17)**
  - Politics getting in the way of recommended management actions was the leading answer, far more than in previous years
  - Climate change
  - MRIP and the need for accurate information
- **Additional products the Commission could provide (Q19)**
  - Socio-economic information/having an economist on staff
  - Plain language materials
  - A white paper on the authorities and scope of the Commission
- **Issues the Commission should focus on more (Q20)**
  - Industry and stakeholder outreach/education
  - A focus on the economics was carried over from Q19

All other answers varied wildly

# Open-ended Questions

“Many of my responses are lower than usual and that is because I have a few recent things on my mind, notably the menhaden/ERP action from the annual meeting, and Striped Bass. There has always been a measure of this in what we do of course, but I think there is an element of politics that is creeping in to levels that we have not seen before, which is having negative repercussions to our making sound, consistent decisions to promote sustainability for our important stocks.”

- **The most useful products produced by the Commission (Q18) include;** FMP reviews (the most common answer), stock assessments, summary documents, the new action tracker on the website.
  - Most ASMFC/ACCSP products were mentioned.
- **Additional comments (Q21)** Many Commissioners declined to respond to this question. Those who did commented on how thankful they are for the staff.

# Declared Interest and Notification of Actions on Agendas

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

Executive Committee

Winer Meeting 2026



# Current Declared Interest Criteria

## **ONE of the 3 Criteria is needed to declare an Interest into a fishery:**

A state shall be deemed to have an interest in a fishery if, according to the latest published statistics or available records of the NMFS or equivalent state statistics, it meets any of the following criteria:

- (a) Such fish are found customarily in its territorial waters;
- (b) Such fish are customarily or periodically in the territorial waters of such state for the purpose of spawning or in transit to and from spawning grounds; or
- (c) The citizens of the state are recorded as having taken 5 percent or more of the total Atlantic coast catch of the species of fish in any of the five preceding years.



# Proposed Declared Interest Criteria

A state shall be deemed to have an interest in a fishery if, according to the latest published statistics or available records of the NMFS or equivalent state statistics, it meets any of the following criteria:

- Such fish are regularly found in its territorial waters meaning at least more than 1 year, as documented with fishery dependent or independent data from state or federal statistics or other credible evidence brought forth by the state (such as data from spawn migrations, peer reviewed publications, eDNA, or other).
- A state fishery's participants are recorded as having taken **1% of commercial or recreational landings over the past 3 of the 5 years** for the total Atlantic coast catch of the species of fish.



# Declared Interest Review Process

## Review Process

- PRT will review as part of FMP review and during a benchmark stock assessment
- **Occur at a minimum of every two years. Any**
- **Changes to Board membership recommended to Policy Board**
- Policy Board would in turn, if a state no longer meets the criteria, issue correspondence to that state. This does not preclude any state from petitioning to be on or taken off at any time, in which it should provide rationale and data for doing so.



# QUESTIONS



# Notification of Actions on Agendas

Agendas currently have the following language:

The agenda is subject to change. The agenda reflects the current estimate of time required for scheduled Board meetings. The Commission may adjust this agenda in accordance with the actual duration of Board meetings. Interested parties should anticipate Boards starting earlier or later than indicated herein.



# Notification of Actions on Agendas

Add the following language to agendas:

At these meetings, action may be taken on any agenda item, including, but not limited to, reports from staff, technical committees, stock assessment committees, peer reviews, Law Enforcement Committee, advisory panels, plan review teams, and plan development teams.



**NOAA**  
**FISHERIES**

# In-Progress and Upcoming Actions for Coastal Sharks

Karyl Brewster-Geisz

Atlantic Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Management Division

February 4, 2026

# This presentation is an update on various actions.....



## In-Progress Regulatory Actions

- Proposed rule to revise commercial Atlantic blacknose shark and recreational Atlantic shark management measures
- Proposed rule to prohibit the retention of mobulid rays in Atlantic highly migratory species (HMS) fisheries

## Other Updates

- Outcomes from the 20th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)
- Ongoing and upcoming shark stock assessments



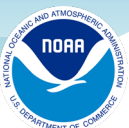
# Proposed Rule: Commercial Atlantic Blacknose Shark & Recreational Atlantic Shark Management Measures

## Purpose of rulemaking:

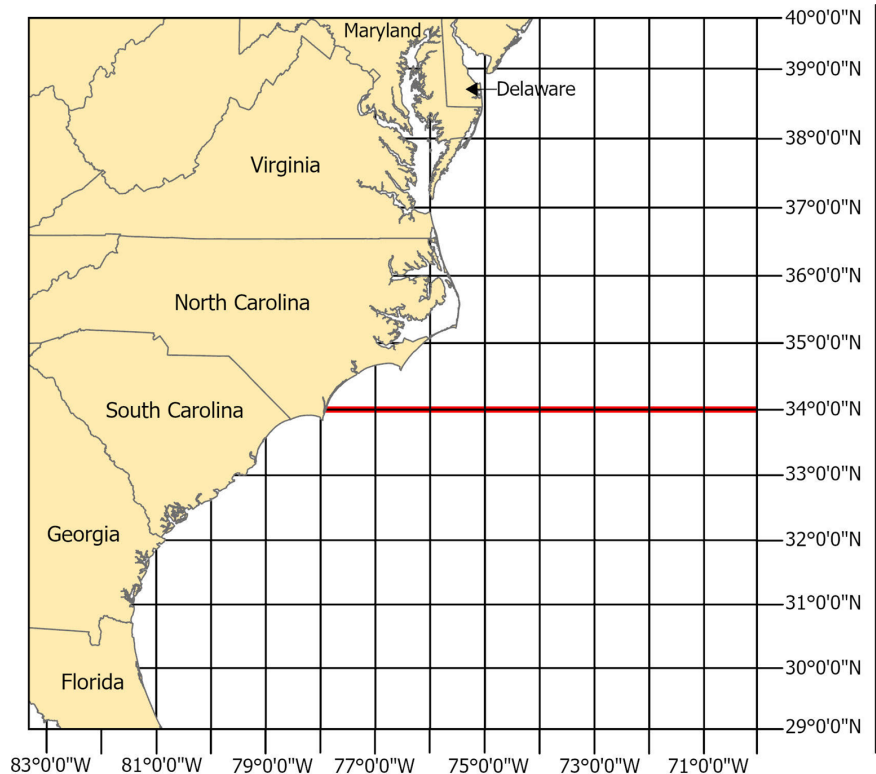
- Increase management flexibility to react to additional factors affecting Atlantic shark fisheries
- Optimize the ability of the commercial and recreational shark fisheries to harvest available quota to the extent practicable

## Need: To be responsive to -

- The framework for implementing management measures established in Amendment 14 to the HMS Fishery Management Plan (FMP)
- Findings from the Atlantic Shark Fishery Review (SHARE) document
- Some of the public comments from scoping for Amendment 16 to the HMS FMP
- Recent domestic laws and international agreements that are having direct and indirect effects on the commercial fishery



# Proposed Rule: Commercial Atlantic Blacknose Shark & Recreational Atlantic Shark Management Measures



## Preferred alternatives in the commercial Atlantic blacknose shark fishery:

- Remove the blacknose shark management boundary (Alternative A2)
- Establish a flexible commercial retention limit of 0 to 60 blacknose sharks with a default limit of 25 blacknose sharks per vessel per trip (Alternative B2)

# Proposed Rule: Commercial Atlantic Blacknose Shark & Recreational Atlantic Shark Management Measures

## Preferred alternatives in the recreational Atlantic shark fishery:

- Establish flexible recreational minimum size limits for shark groups based on grouped species' female sizes at maturity (Alternative C4)

Shark Group	Minimum Size Limit (FL) (inches (cm))	
	Range	Default
Atlantic sharpnose, bonnethead, and smoothhound	Up to 54 (137.2), or no limit	No limit
Blacknose and finetooth	Up to 54 (137.2), or no limit	38 (96.5)
Blacktip and spinner	Up to 70 (177.8), or no limit	48 (121.9)
Great hammerhead, scalloped hammerhead, and smooth hammerhead	Up to 115 (292.1), or no limit	78 (198.1)
Bull, lemon, nurse, and tiger	Up to 115 (292.1), or no limit	54 (137.2)
Blue, common thresher, and porbeagle	Up to 95 (241.3), or no limit	54 (137.2)

# Proposed Rule: Commercial Atlantic Blacknose Shark & Recreational Atlantic Shark Management Measures

## Preferred alternatives in the recreational Atlantic shark fishery:

- Establish flexible recreational retention limits for sharks (Alternative D2)

Shark Species	Recreational Retention Limit (Sharks/Vessel/Trip)	
	Range	Default
Sharks from the following list: blacknose, blue, bull, common thresher, finetooth, great hammerhead, scalloped hammerhead, smooth hammerhead, lemon, nurse, porbeagle, spinner, and tiger	Up to 3, or no limit	1
Atlantic sharpnose	Up to 4, or no limit	1
Bonnethead	Up to 4, or no limit	1
Blacktip	Up to 5, or no limit	1
Smoothhound	Up to 4, or no limit	No limit

# Proposed Rule: Commercial Atlantic Blacknose Shark & Recreational Atlantic Shark Management Measures



## Miscellaneous regulatory changes:

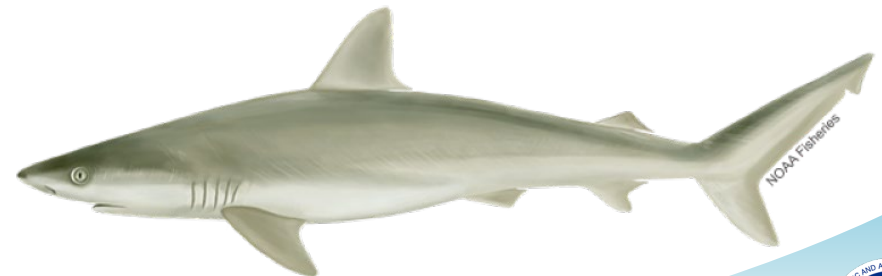
- Remove commercial management group quota linkages, consistent with Amendment 14 to the HMS FMP
- Clarify some of the existing references to thresher shark in the regulations to specify which species of thresher shark (common or bigeye) the regulations apply
- Update the name of the management group “pelagic sharks other than blue or porbeagle” to “common thresher and shortfin mako (when authorized) sharks”
- Remove references to oceanic whitetip sharks in commercial fishery regulations

# Proposed Rule: Commercial Atlantic Blacknose Shark & Recreational Atlantic Shark Management Measures

## Request for Public Comments & Next Steps

- The proposed rule published on January 5, 2026 (91 FR 215)
- Written comment must be received by March 6, 2026
- Submit comments at <https://www.regulations.gov> (search “NOAA-NMFS-2024-0039”)
- The final rule is expected in fall 2026

**For more information:** <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/action/proposed-rule-revisions-commercial-atlantic-blacknose-and-recreational-atlantic-shark>



**NOAA**  
FISHERIES

# Proposed Rule: Prohibit Retention of Mobulid Rays in HMS Fisheries



- **Purpose:** Protect mobulid rays and minimize their bycatch and bycatch mortality to the extent practicable in HMS fisheries, consistent with International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas Recommendation 24-12
- NMFS is proposing to:
  - Prohibit retention of mobulid rays of the family Mobulidae in HMS fisheries;
  - Require mobulid rays to be released unharmed in HMS fisheries; and
  - Implement mobulid ray handling practices for vessels fishing with pelagic longline gear
- The proposed rule published on August 22, 2025 (90 FR 41024) and the public comment period closed on September 22, 2025
- A final rule is expected in summer 2026

**For more information:** <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/action/comments-requested-proposed-rule-prohibit-retention-mobulid-rays-atlantic-highly-migratory>



# Stock Assessments

## Hammerhead Sharks



- SEDAR completed the SEDAR 77 hammerhead shark research track stock assessment report in January 2024
- We are figuring out next steps to update the biomass status and/or overfishing status

## Sandbar Shark



- SEDAR has initiated the SEDAR 101 sandbar shark stock assessment
- The data workshop is planned for April 2026
- Completion is expected in April 2027



# Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora(CITES)



- The 20th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES took place November 24 - December 5, 2025 in Samarkand, Uzbekistan
- Oceanic whitetip shark, mobulid rays, and whale shark were transferred from Appendix II to Appendix I, effective March 5, 2026
- Smoothhound sharks (*Mustelus spp.*) were added to Appendix II with an 18-month delayed implementation, effective June 5, 2027

# Questions?

**HMS Management Division - Rulemaking Branch**  
(301) 427-8503

Branch Chief: Karyl Brewster-Geisz, [karyl.brewster-geisz@noaa.gov](mailto:karyl.brewster-geisz@noaa.gov)

Sharks:

- Guy DuBeck, [guy.dubeck@noaa.gov](mailto:guy.dubeck@noaa.gov)
- Ann Williamson, [ann.williamson@noaa.gov](mailto:ann.williamson@noaa.gov)

Mobulid Rays:

- Carrie Soltanoff, [carrie.soltanoff@noaa.gov](mailto:carrie.soltanoff@noaa.gov)

For CITES-related questions, contact the FWS Division of Management Authority by email at [managementauthority@fws.org](mailto:managementauthority@fws.org) or by phone at (703) 358-2095

Habitat Committee

# Report to the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission ISFMP Policy Board

February 5, 2026

Simen Kaalstad



Habitat Management Series  
**Atlantic States Shell Recycling**

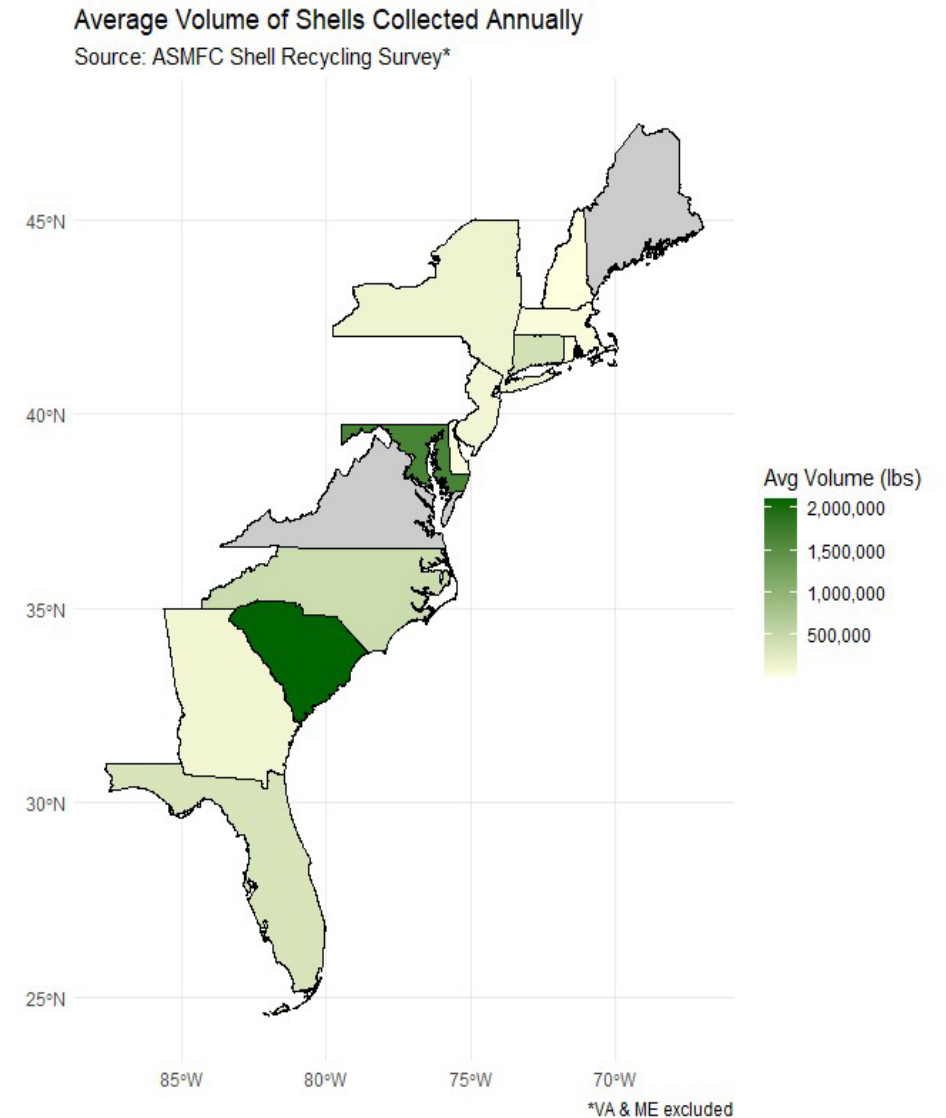
*A practitioner's guide to oyster shell recycling along the U.S. Atlantic coast*



# Why Shell Recycling Matters

## Shell Recycling Supports Oyster Habitat & Coastal Resilience

- Oyster reefs improve water quality, support fisheries, and protect shorelines.
- Natural shell is now a limiting resource for restoration.
- Recycling programs recover shell from restaurants and communities.
- Recycled shell returns critical habitat material to coastal waters.



# How Shell Recycling Programs Work

Restaurant



Collection



Curing



Storage



Deployment



Monitoring

## From Restaurant Waste to Restoration Resource

- Shell collected from restaurants & events
- Shell transported to curing sites
- Shell cured  $\geq 6$ –12 months
- Clean shell deployed for restoration

### Key operational needs

- Collection routes & containers
- Curing sites with drainage & odor control
- Equipment matched to program scale
- Data tracking & logistics management

# Best Practices For Shell Curing

## Proper Curing Ensures Safe Reuse

- Removes organics & neutralizes pathogens
- Reduces odor, pests, and contamination risks
- Protects water quality and groundwater

## Common standards:

- $\geq 6$  months curing (often 12 months in cooler climates)
- Open-air curing with airflow & drainage
- Shell stored on pallets, gravel, or pads
- Batch tracking supports quality control



Credit: Oyster Recovery Partnership

# Permitting & Coordination

## Permitting Is Essential for Program Success

Programs typically involve:

- Local zoning & sanitation approvals for curing sites
- State shellfish & environmental agency coordination
- Federal review for in-water placement

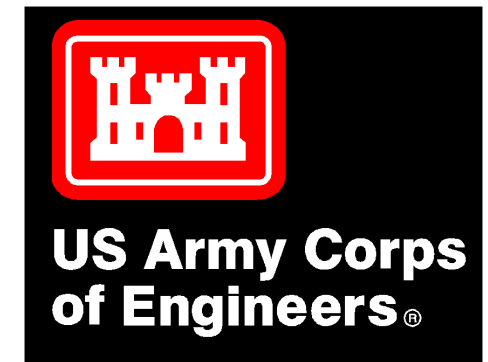
Permit complexity increases when shell is deployed for restoration.

Best practice: **engage regulators early** to avoid delays.



*State DEPs or DNRs*

*Fisheries or Marine  
Resources Divisions*



**NOAA FISHERIES**

## Tracking Program & Restoration Outcomes

### Programs commonly track:

- Shell volume collected
- Donor participation & retention
- Volunteer & staff effort
- Cost per bushel deployed

### Restoration success measured through:

- Oyster recruitment & reef stability
- Habitat & shoreline benefits



Credit: South Carolina Department of Natural Resources

Standardized data collection improves comparability across programs and projects.

## Expanding Impact Through Partnerships

### Priorities moving forward:

- Expand restaurant & community participation
- Improve curing capacity & logistics
- Strengthen funding & partnerships
- Explore alternative substrates where needed
- Continue regional collaboration



Credit: Partnership for the Delaware Estuary

Shell recycling remains a critical tool for coastal resilience and habitat recovery.



**Atlantic States  
Marine Fisheries**  
COMMISSION

**THANK YOU!**

Questions?