

INTERSTATE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Spiny Dogfish

Species Range

Labrador, Canada to Florida

Management Unit

Coastwide (Maine through Florida)



Stock Status

The [2023 Management Track Stock Assessment](#) indicates that spiny dogfish are not overfished and overfishing is not occurring. The spawning stock biomass estimate of 191 million pups is slightly above the SSB threshold of 188 million pounds, while the fishing mortality estimate (0.02) is just below the fishing mortality threshold (0.0246).

However, the assessment also found a lower productivity of the stock, requiring reduced quotas to prevent overfishing in the future. The assessment replaced the Stochastic Estimator with Stock Synthesis 3 (SS3) as the primary assessment tool, due to its ability to model sexes separately and accommodate length-based approaches.

Involved States and Jurisdictions

ME, NH, MA, RI, CT, NY, NJ, DE, MD, VA, NC, NMFS

Active Boards/Committees

Spiny Dogfish & Coastal Sharks Management Board, Plan Review Team/Plan Development Team, Technical Committee, Stock Assessment Subcommittee, Advisory Panel

Chairs

Board, Chair – Joe Cimino (10/2025); Vice-Chair – Renee Zobel
Technical Committee, Chair – Vacant, Vice-Chair – Vacant
Advisory Panel, Chair – Vacant

Staff Lead

James Boyle, jboyle@asmfc.org

Management Plan History

[Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Spiny Dogfish \(November 2002\)](#)

The Interstate FMP established an annual quota system that is divided into and allocated across two periods; Period 1 is May to October (57.9%) and Period 2 is November to April (42.1%). The annual quota is set at a level that does not exceed the fishing mortality (F) goal. The FMP also established possession limits to control the rate of catch for each period. Possession limits are set annually and may differ between Period 1 and 2. If a quota is over or under harvested, payback and rollover (up to 5% when the stock has rebuilt) provisions require adjustment of the following year's quota. This plan also allows for a state to issue exemptions from the quota for up to 1,000 fish for biomedical supply.

[Addendum I \(November 2005\)](#)

Addendum I to the Interstate FMP for Spiny Dogfish allows the Board to set the quota and trip limit for up to 5 years. This addendum was developed to provide fishermen with the ability to set long term business plans and goals for their fishery operations. The Board may adjust specifications during a fishing season with a 2/3-majority vote.

[Addendum II \(October 2008\)](#)

Addendum II replaces the seasonal allocation with a regional distribution of the quota. The regional allocation distributes quota with 58% to Maine – Connecticut, 26% to New York – Virginia, and 16% to North Carolina. Paybacks and rollovers are paid back by and rolled over to regions rather than seasons.

[Addendum III \(April 2011\)](#)

Addendum III divides the southern region's annual quota of 42% into state-specific shares (see table below). It also allows for quota transfer between states, rollovers of up to five percent and state-specified possession limits, and includes a three-year reevaluation of the measures. The Addendum's provisions apply only to states in the southern region (New York through North Carolina) and do not modify the northern region allocation. The states of Maine to Connecticut will continue to share 58% of the annual quota as specified in Addendum II.

Southern Region State Shares. Quota allocation differs slightly from specific options presented in the draft addendum and are based on needs of states in the southern region with a consideration of historic landings.

	NY	NJ	DE	MD	VA	NC
Percent of Annual Coastwide Quota	2.707%	7.644%	0.896%	5.920%	10.795%	14.036%

Addendum IV (August 2012)

The Addendum updates the definition of overfishing to be consistent with that of the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council and provides the Board the flexibility to update or modify the management program's overfishing definition through Board action based on the recommendations of its Technical Committee. The prior overfishing definition, adopted in 2002, was based on the number of pups per female that recruit to the stock. The updated definition will now be based on maximum sustainable yield or a reasonable proxy, consistent with the best available science. Although there are no immediate impacts to regulations, the change allows the Commission and Council to work from the same starting point when determining annual specifications. The Board considered modifying the management program's 5% rollover provision to either preclude rollovers entirely without specific Board approval or to allow rollovers beyond the current 5% maximum with Board approval. The Board voted to maintain the 5% maximum rollover. Any rollover is predicated on a rebuilt stock.

Addendum V (October 2014)

Addendum V ensures consistency in spiny dogfish management with the Shark Conservation Act of 2010 by prohibiting processing at-sea, including the removal of fins. Prior to approval, states could process spiny dogfish at-sea, so long as the ratio of fins aboard the vessel did not exceed 5% of the ratio of carcasses aboard the vessel. The Board set an implementation date of May 1, 2015 for states to promulgate this measure.

Addendum VI (October 2019)

Addendum VI allows commercial quota to be transferred between all regions and states to enable full utilization of the coastwide commercial quota and avoid quota payback for unintended quota overages. Prior to this addendum, quota transfers were only possible between states with individual state quotas, whereas regions have not been granted the authority to donate or receive quota via transfers. Consequently, regions were unable to share in the benefits of quota transfers. In order for the northern region to participate in quota transfers the Director of each state's marine fisheries agency within the region must agree to the transfer in writing. As with transfers between states, transfers involving regions do not permanently affect the shares of the coastwide quota. Additionally, the Addendum extends the timeframe for when quota transfers can occur up to 45 days after the end of the fishing year to allow for late reporting of landings data.

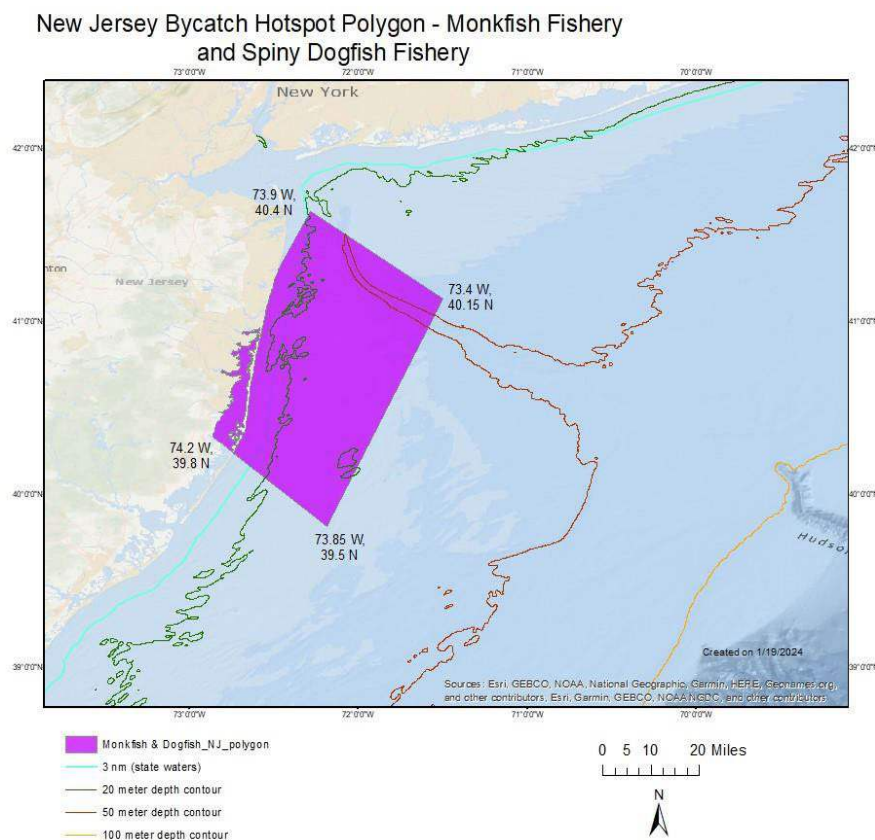
Addendum VII (February 2025)

Addendum VII ensures consistency with the federal FMP in response to [Spiny Dogfish Framework Adjustment 6](#) by prohibiting overnight soaks for state spiny dogfish permit holders on gillnets of 5.25"-10" mesh in November through March in specified areas off of Maryland and Virginia. The Mid-Atlantic and New England Fishery Management Councils developed Spiny Dogfish Framework Adjustment 6 in response to a 2021 Biological Opinion and 2022 Action Plan that called for reducing bycatch of Atlantic sturgeon in spiny dogfish gillnet fisheries. The Framework prohibits overnight soaks for federal spiny dogfish permit holders on gillnets with

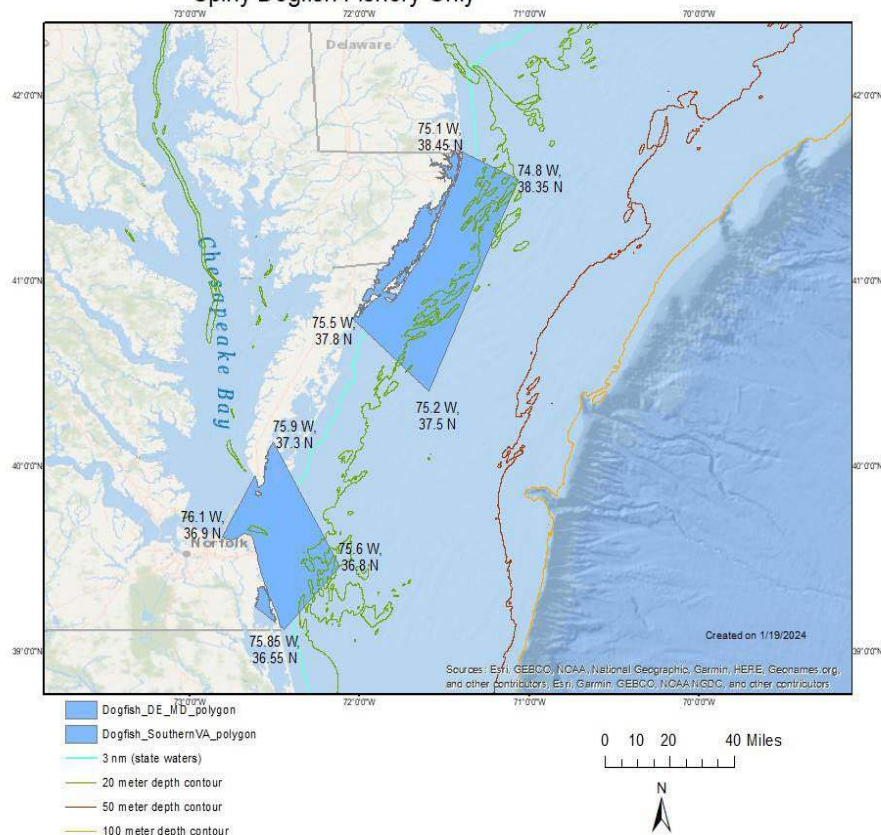
5"-10" mesh in November and May for a certain area of state and federal waters off of New Jersey, as well as for gillnets of 5.25"-10" mesh in November through March in specified areas off of Maryland and Virginia. Addendum VII ensures consistency by applying those overnight soak restrictions for harvesters who have state spiny dogfish permits in Maryland and Virginia but do not possess a federal spiny dogfish permit. New Jersey does not issue permits by species, but due to New Jersey's permitting rules, any person or vessel selling spiny dogfish in the state is required to have a federal permit and follow the regulations in the bycatch reduction area, including state waters of the area. The Addendum's measures are effective May 1, 2025.

Technical Addendum I to Addendum VII (May 2025)

Technical Addendum I to Addendum VII corrects a typo in the longitude of one point in the Delaware and Maryland Bycatch Reduction Area and clarifies the mesh range is "equal to or greater than 5.25 inches (13.3 cm) and less than 10 inches (25.4 cm)" rather than "between 5.25 and 10 inches (13.34 to 25.4 cm)." This change is consistent with the federal action in Spiny Dogfish Framework Adjustment 6 and the intent of Addendum VII as approved by the Board. The Technical Addendum will become effective immediately.



Delaware, Maryland, Virginia Bycatch Hotspot Polygons - Spiny Dogfish Fishery Only



Current Specifications

In October 2021, the Board was presented analysis from Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC) staff on the impact of the federal trip limit on market price. The analysis showed that increasing the trip limit from 6,000 to 7,500 pounds would not have a negative impact on the resource or on market price. Based on these conclusions, MAFMC recommended setting the trip limit at 7,500 pounds. NOAA Fisheries indicated that the regulatory change would be implemented for the 2022 fishing year starting May 1. Based on this information, the Board approved changing the commercial trip limit in state waters for the northern region to 7,500 pounds.

In February 2025, based on a revised recommended quota from the Councils, the Board approved a quota of 9,338,770 pounds for the 2025/2026 fishing year.

In February 2026, the Board approved a coastwide commercial quota for the 2026/2027 and 2027/2028 fishing seasons of 9,197,675 pounds (state-specific allocations are provided in table below), pending approval by NOAA Fisheries. The quota is consistent with the measures recommended to NOAA Fisheries by the Councils. The Board also maintained the commercial trip limit in state waters of 7,500 pounds for the northern region states of Maine through Connecticut.

Table 1. Spiny Dogfish State Allocations (in pounds) for the 2025/2026, 2026/2027, and 2027/2028 Fishing Seasons. *Pending approval by NOAA Fisheries. Note: Any overages in the above quota allocations will be deducted from that region's or state's quota allocation in the subsequent year. Similarly, any eligible rollovers from one season can be applied to that region's or state's quota allocation the following year.

	Northern Region (ME-CT)	NY	NJ	DE	MD	VA	NC
Possession Limit	7,500	To be specified by the individual southern region states					
Allocation	58%	2.71%	7.64%	0.90%	5.92%	10.80%	14.04%
<i>2025-2026</i>	5,416,487	252,875	713,917	83,679	552,858	1,008,140	1,310,815
2026-2027 and 2027/2028*	5,334,652	249,054	703,131	82,415	544,505	992,909	1,291,010

Annual Events

- Compliance Reports due July 1st
- Specification Setting (may include multiple years): November of each year