Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

Coastal Sharks Management Board

November 9, 2026
1:45 – 3:00 p.m.

Draft Agenda

The times listed are approximate; the order in which these items will be taken is subject to change; other items may be added as necessary

1.	Welcome/Call to Order *(M. Luisi)*	1:45 p.m.
2.	Board Consent • Approval of Agenda • Approval of Proceedings from May 2026	1:45 p.m.
3.	Public Comment	1:50 p.m.
4.	Updates from NOAA Fisheries on Ongoing Management Actions *(K. Brewster-Geisz)*	2:00 p.m.
5.	Set Specifications for the 2027 Fishing Year and Beyond, Up to Five Years *(C. Starks)* **Final Action**	2:10 p.m.
6.	Presentation on Shore-based Fishing in North Carolina *(S. Dowd)*	2:20 p.m.
7.	Discuss Drone Use in Shark Fishing *(E. Burgess)*	2:35 p.m.
8.	Consider Approval of Fishery Management Plan Review and State Compliance for the 2025 Fishing Year *(C. Starks)* **Action**	2:50 p.m.
9.	Other Business/Adjourn	3:00 p.m.

The meeting will be held at Hotel Viking (One Bellevue Avenue, Newport, Rhode Island; 401.847.3300) and via webinar; click here for details.

Sustainable and Cooperative Management of Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

MEETING OVERVIEW

Coastal Sharks Management Board
November 9, 2026
1:45 – 3:00 p.m.

Chair: Mike Luisi (MD) Assumed Chairmanship: 05/25	Technical Committee Chair: Angel Willey (MD)	Law Enforcement Committee Rep: Michael Thomas (SC)
Vice Chair: Ben Dyar (SC)	Advisory Panel Chair: VACANT	Previous Board Meeting: May 5, 2026
Voting Members: MA, RI, CT, NY, NJ, PA, DE, MD, VA, NC, SC, GA, FL, NMFS (13 votes)		

2. Board Consent

- Approval of Agenda
- Approval of Proceedings from May 2026

3. Public Comment – At the beginning of the meeting, public comment will be taken on items not on the agenda. Individuals that wish to speak at this time must sign-in at the beginning of the meeting. For agenda items that have already gone out for public hearing and/or have had a public comment period that has closed, the Board Chair may determine that additional public comment will not provide additional information. In this circumstance, the Chair will not allow additional public comment on an issue. For agenda items that the public has not had a chance to provide input, the Board Chair may allow limited opportunity for comment. The Board Chair has the discretion to limit the number of speakers and/or the length of each comment.

4. Updates from NOAA Fisheries on Ongoing Management Actions (2:00-2:10 p.m.)

Background

- NOAA Fisheries has updates on several issues relating to coastal sharks and the Highly Migratory Species (HMS) FMP:
    - HMS Priorities Request Regarding Executive Order 14276
    - Ongoing Regulatory Actions and Timing
    - SEDAR 101 Progress
    - Shark Depredation Action Plan
    - CITES Implementation for Atlantic Smoothhound Sharks

Presentations

- Update on Ongoing Atlantic HMS Management Actions by K. Brewster-Geisz

5. Set Specifications for the 2027 Fishing Year (2:10-2:20 p.m.)

Background

- 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 Board annually sets coastal shark specifications for state waters and has typically set complementary coastal shark specifications matching the default season start date and retention limits as specified by the NOAA Fisheries **(Briefing Materials)**.

Presentations

- Proposed 2027 Specifications by C. Starks

Board Actions for Consideration at this Meeting

- Set the 2027 coastal shark specifications including commercial opening dates and commercial possession limits by management group.

6. Presentation on Shore-based Fishing in North Carolina (2:20-2:35 p.m.)

Background

- A study led by a PhD candidate at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in which land-based shark fishers were interviewed to characterize the land-based shark fishery in North Carolina, define angler perception of environmental drivers, identify how anglers learn to fish and how they share information, and gather opinions and recommendations on local fisheries management.

Presentations

- Community-driven insights into the dynamics of coastal sharks and a rising land-based recreational fishery by S. Dowd

7. Discuss Drone Use in Shark Fishing (2:35-2:50 p.m.)

Background

- Several Board members have noted an emergence of the use of drones in shark fishing and requested to discuss this topic.

8. Consider Approval of Fishery Management Plan Review and State Compliance for Coastal Sharks for the 2025 Fishing Year (2:50-3:00 p.m.) Action

Background

- State Compliance Reports are due annually on August 1st.
- The Plan Review Team reviewed state reports and compiled the annual FMP Review for the 2025 fishing year.
- Massachusetts has requested continued *de minimis* status.

Presentations

- Overview of the Coastal Sharks FMP Review of the 2025 Fishing Year by C. Starks

Board actions for consideration at this meeting

- Approve 2025 FMP Review and State Compliance Report
- Approve *de minimis* requests from Massachusetts

9. Other Business/Adjourn

DRAFT PROCEEDINGS OF THE

ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION

COASTAL SHARKS MANAGEMENT BOARD

The Westin Crystal City
Arlington, Virginia
Hybrid Meeting

May 5, 2026

These minutes are draft and subject to approval by the Coastal Sharks Management Board.
The Board will review the minutes during its next meeting.

TABLE OF CONTENT

Call to Order 0

Approval of Agenda 0

Approval of Proceedings 0

Public Comment 0

Updates on Highly Migratory Species Federal Rulemaking....0

Updates on Convention on the International Trade of Endangered Species Permitting for Smoothhound Sharks .6

Consider Approval of Fishery Management Plan Review and State Compliance for Coastal Sharks for the 2024 Fishing Year....15

Elect Vice Chair 16

Other Business....16

Shark Fishing From Shore....17

Adjournment 17

INDEX OF MOTIONS

1. **Approval of agenda** by consent (Page 1).

2. **Approval of Proceedings of May 2024** by consent (Page 1).

3. **Move to approve the Fishery Management Plan Review and state compliance for coastal sharks for the 2024 fishing year, and approve *de minimis* status for Massachusetts** (Page 18). Motion by Dan McKiernan; second by Doug Haymans. Motion approved by consent (Page 18).

4. **Move to elect Ben Dyar as Vice Chair of the Coastal Sharks Board** (Page 18). Motion by Chris Batsavage; second by Malcolm Rhodes. Motion approved by consent (Page 18).

5. **Move to adjourn** by consent (Page 19).

ATTENDANCE

Board Members

Dan McKiernan, MA (AA)
Raymond Kane, ME (GA)
Rep. Sarah Peake, MA, proxy for Rep. Armini (LA)
Jason McNamee, RI (AA)
David Borden, RI (GA)
Shanna Madsen, CT (AA)
Bill Hyatt, CT (GA)
Robert LaFrance, CT proxy for Rep. Gresko, CT (LA)
John Maniscalco, NY, proxy for M. Gary (AA)
Emerson Hasbrouck, NY (GA)
Monica Martinez, NY (LA)
Joe Cimino, NJ (AA)
Adam Nowalksy, NJ, proxy for Sen. Gopal (LA)
John Clark, DE (AA)
Roy Miller, DE (GA)
Craig Pugh, DE, proxy for Rep. Carson (LA)
Michael Luisi, MD, proxy for K. Charbonneau (AA)
Russel Dize, MD (GA)
Ethan Simpson, VA, proxy for J. Grist (Acting AA)
Chris Batsavage, NC, proxy for K. Rawls (AA)
Ben Dyar, SC, proxy for B. Keppler (AA)
Malcolm Rhodes, SC (GA)
Chris McDonough, SC, proxy for Sen. Cromer (LA)
Doug Haymans, GA (AA)
Spud Woodward, GA (GA)
Erika Burgess, FL, proxy for J. McCawley (AA)
Gary Jennings, FL (GA)
Karyl Brewster-Geisz, NMFS

(AA = Administrative Appointee; GA = Governor Appointee; LA = Legislative Appointee)

Ex-Officio Members

Staff

Bob Beal
Toni Kerns
Tina Berger
Madeline Musante
Caitlin Starks
Tracey Bauer
James Boyle
Chelsea Tuohy
Katie Drew
Jeff Kipp
Samara Nehemiah
Jainita Patel

The Coastal Sharks Management Board of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission convened in the Jefferson Ballroom of the Westin Crystal City Hotel, Arlington, Virginia, via hybrid meeting, in-person and webinar; Tuesday, May 5, 2026, and was called to order at 2:30 p.m. by Chair Michael Luisi.

CALL TO ORDER

CHAIR MICHAEL LUISI: I would like to take this time to call the Coastal Sharks Management Board to order. My name is Mike Luisi; I am the Administrative Seat for the state of Maryland, and I'll be chairing today's meeting.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

CHAIR LUISI: We have a number of items on our agenda today. First is to start with approval of the agenda. Are there any changes or modifications to the agenda? Chris Batsavage.

MR. CHRIS BATSAVAGE: No changes or modifications, but I would like to during Other Business bring up a future item for the shark board to consider for a future meeting.

CHAIR LUISI: Thanks, Chris, so noted. We'll come to you at the end. Any other items to add to the agenda, modifications to the agenda? Seeing none; we'll consider the agenda approved.

APPROVAL OF PROCEEDINGS

CHAIR LUISI: The next item on the agenda today is the approval of the proceedings from May, 2024. If there is anybody out there that can remember what you said, to correct the record from two years ago, you're a much better person than I am. I'll look around the room, I don't see any hands on changes or modifications to the proceedings, so consider those proceedings approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT

CHAIR LUISI: Next, we will move into our public comment period. Public comment at this time is set aside for items that are not on today's agenda. Is there anyone from the audience that would like to make any public comment? You hold tight; I'm checking online. No one on line at this time. Toni Kerns.

MS. TONI KERNS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just to note the Commissioners that are online. We have John Maniscalco and Monica Martinez from New York, and Adam Nowalsky from New Jersey.

CHAIR LUISI: Okay, thank you for that, Toni. While we get going with the presentations, I'll get the participants list up so I can call on folks after the presentation is done.

UPDATES ON HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES FEDERAL RULEMAKING

CHAIR LUISI: Moving on to our next item on the agenda. We're going to receive Updates on the Highly Migratory Species Federal Rulemaking. Guy DuBeck is with me to my left, with NOAAs HMS program, and I'm going to turn things over to Guy.

MR. GUY DuBECK: Well, thank you very much, so I'm here to talk about the proposed rulemaking to revise the commercial Atlantic blacknose shark and recreational fishery management measures. This is kind of just a quick overview of what we're going to talk about and spend more time on what the action is.

The purpose of this rulemaking is to kind of increase management flexibility to react to the different additional factors affecting the Atlantic shark fisheries. We want to try and optimize the ability of the commercial and recreational fishermen to harvest available quotas to the extent possible. But we're also kind of being responsive to the framework for implementing some of the management measures we established in Amendment 14 a couple years ago.

The findings from our Atlantic shark fishery review or share document, where we did kind of wholeheartedly look of the shark fishery looking at some of the management measures that are working, not working or too restrictive for the

commercial/recreational fishery, looked at the shark depravation issue, and also looked at kind of other factors affecting the shark fishery.

Also, we had public comment for scoping Amendment 16, and then also looking at recent domestic laws and international agreements having direct and indirect effects on the commercial fishery. We'll start with the commercial background. Blacknose sharks we assessed in 2010. The Atlantic stock was determined to be overfished with overfishing occurring, and the Gulf stock is an unknown status.

Based on the stock status results in Amendment 5a, we implemented some management measures. The first was we created regional blacknose and non-blacknose shark quotas, and then also we established regional quota linkages between managed groups. What we mean by quota linkages is that the blacknose and non-blacknose small coastal, they are linked where whether either quota was reached then both quotas were closing down. Fortunately, because the blacknose quota was much smaller than non-blacknose small coastal, that was the one being reached first and closing down the small coastal fishery. Because of that, we then a couple years later in Amendment 6 we made some other management measures for those issues, where we established a management boundary line.

Anyone who caught blacknose sharks north of that line had to discard them, and we created that line because blacknose sharks were not migrating at the time north of that line or rarely interacted with by small coastal fishermen above that line. We prohibited blacknose sharks above that line, so then when the fishery would stay open, the non-blacknose fishery would stay open pretty much year-round.

But then south of that line we kept the quota linkages so when the blacknose quota was reached the non-blacknose quota was also closed down. That continued a couple more years, and then based on public comment we created another rulemaking where we established a smaller retention limit to slow down the harvest of blacknose sharks to ensure that the non-blacknose small coastal quota would stay open year-round.

Then jumping to the recreational fishery, so the '99 FMP we established a recreational minimum size limit for most of the shark species of 54 inches, and that is based on the size at maturity of sandbar sharks. Then we reduced the recreational retention limits for all sharks to be one shark per vessel per trip.

In 2008, Amendment 2, we expanded the sharks that are authorized for recreational retention and modified some of the retention limits, where we allowed 1 sharpnose and 1 bonnethead per person per trip with no minimum size, and also 1 per vessel per-trip for all of the other authorized shark species greater than 54 inches.

Based on the scalloped hammerhead assessment we established a minimum size limit recreationally of 78 inches for all hammerhead species. Then after the smoothhound shark assessment we established that there was no minimum size limit or retention limit for smoothhound sharks. Now we're going to jump into the commercial alternatives.

The first up is a blacknose shark management boundary line. We had besides the status quo alternative, the preferred alternative we just wanted to remove that line. We're noticing now that blacknose sharks are migrating north of that line and fishermen are discarding a good number of blacknose sharks, so we feel that it is not appropriate at this point.

Instead, we are going to allow them to land their blacknose sharks based on the retention limit. Speaking of retention limit, we're looking at revising that too. Besides the status quo alternative, we looked at creating a flexible commercial retention limit, similar to what we have for the large coastal fishery where we have 0 to 65 for the large coastal.

For the blacknose sharks we have a 0 to 60 limit, but with a default of 25 blacknose sharks per vessel per trip. Then the fishing season every year will

start at 25, and then we could adjust that limit up or down, depending on the catch rates, and how the season's gone. Then the other alternative we looked at was to remove the commercial retention limits for blacknose sharks.

Moving on to the recreational. Moving on to kind of repeating what I mentioned earlier, but the current retention minimum size limits for sharks are 54 inches for most of the shark species, 78 inches for the hammerheads, and there are no size limits for Atlantic sharpnose, bonnethead or smoothhound sharks.

We want to show this where these are the 17 authorized shark species. You see here is the female size at maturity. You can see on the table here each shark species size at maturity is very different. Some of them are similar, some are very different. You've got such a large range. You've got the smaller coastals being very small, below the 54 inches that are currently in place. Some that are much higher above the 54 inches that are currently for some of these species.

As I mentioned, some of them are kind of similar and they are together too. For the minimum size limits, we looked at five different alternatives. We looked at the no action, the status quo alternative. Alternative C2 is to establish a recreational minimum size limit for sharks based on female size at maturity. That would be establishing 17 different size limits that fishermen have to remember, based on the table I showed earlier. That was Alternative C2. C3 is to establish the minimum size limits but group the species together, and establish a number based on the female size at maturity. What we looked at was grouping some of the shark species that are either have similar size at maturity. They either look very similar or are misidentified quite often together, or they are caught in similar trips or using similar gear types in areas together.

That was Alternative C3. Alternative C4 the third one is pretty much the same thing, but instead of setting one number we create a flexible number that can be adjusted, not in season, but adjusted based on catch rates from previous years, so the beginning of the fishing season we establish those and have flexibility of moving those if needed.

Then Alternative C5 is to remove all recreational minimum size limits. Also, just want to point out that this action does not consider any regulation changes to prohibited shark species or mako sharks. This slide goes; the table goes in more detail of the preferred alternative C4. As I mentioned, we're looking at grouping the sharks together.

Then on the left-hand side and then you've got the minimum size limits, but we have a range and then default limits. The default limit is what the limit would be for the fishing season. We're not looking at changing it mid-season. It would be kind of set in the beginning of the year and then be set for the whole year kind of thing.

But we grouped some of them together like I mentioned because of different factors, like the sharpnose, bonnethead and smoothhound. There is no size limit for those species, so we group those together. We're defaulting at no size limit for those species, but we did create a range for that species, for that groupage that could be adjusted. But right now, we're staying with no limits.

Blacknose and Finetooth. Again, we're creating a range where you could go up to 54 inches, which is currently what it is right now for those species. But based on the size at maturity for those species together, we're going to lower that down to 38 inches. For spinner/blacktip, we have a little higher range based on the size at maturity for this species, up to 70 inches.

But we're going to default and move those below the 54 inches that is currently for those species to 48 inches. Hammerhead species, again we have a range for that species, because they are much larger and the species is slightly different. But we're going to default and stay consistent with what it currently is now at 78 inches.

For Bull, lemon, nurse and tiger, the other large coastals; again, a high range for those species because of the size of maturity of those. But also,

we're just staying at default of 54 for those. Similar for the other pelagic species authorized in the upper range up to 95, but staying with default at 54 inches. Moving on to the retention limits.

Right now, you can have one shark from the following list, and you can have one sharpnose and one bonnethead per person per trip, and then an unlimited number of smoothhound sharks. If you have two people on the boat fishing, you can keep one blacknose, two sharpnose, two bonnetheads and unlimited number of smoothhounds during the fishing trip.

Under the retention limits we look at three alternatives. The preferred alternative is to create a flexible recreational minimum size limit, retention limit for sharks that I'll go in detail in the next slide. Similar to what we are talking about for the minimum size limits we created one for the retention limits for this and could adjust it based on the harvest levels. Here is the table of what the preferred Alternative is, Alternative D2. This one here we kind of binned them slightly different.

We have the shark species on the left-hand side and then we have the recreational retention limits. What we are proposing to do is go from for all species to go to number of sharks per vessel per trip, and then we have a range and a default number. For like blacknose, Bull, blue, hammerheads, spinners and those species, we could create a range up to 3 or no limit, but we're going to default at 1 for those species for the fishing season.

For sharpnose we can have a higher range, same with the bonnetheads, wo go from 0 to 4 or no limit, each one defaulted at 1 of those species per vessel per trip. Now blacktip, we have a different hold out, because we have the Atlantic blacktip stock assessment, which is a healthy stock. We created for that species a separate limit, where we can go up to 5 or no limits for that species.

But certainly, at the beginning of the season will default at 1 shark per trip, and then smoothhound we have a range of 0 to 4, or no limit. Currently right now there is no limit on the species so we're defaulting at the current limit. Those are the management measures there. Moving on to the miscellaneous things that we included in this rulemaking.

As I mentioned earlier, we have commercial management group quota linkages. Amendment 14 we analyzed removing those from the fishery, and we finalized that measure to ensure that fishermen fully utilize the quotas. But once the catch limits are reached, we do plan to close down the fishery to prevent overharvest of that stock. Right now, as I mentioned, there are quota linkages for blacknose and non-blacknose small coastal that were proposed to go away with that.

But also, the hammerhead and aggregate large coastal that are landed in the Gulf are liked too, which we are also going to remove. Also, we had some other minor things in here where we kind of clarified some of the regulations referring to thresher sharks, referring to what species we're talking about instead of just calling them thresher sharks.

Also, we plan to update one of our management group names, so we do have this management group called pelagic sharks other than blues and porbeagle. But it's just the two species in there, it's just common thresher and shortfin mako. We're planning to change the management group name to be common thresher and shortfin mako, when authorized, sharks.

Then we removed some references to the oceanic whitetip in the commercial fishery regulations. We released this earlier this year based on comments earlier this year and requests from the Gulf Council and also from Atlantic States Commission. We extended the comment period to the end of May, so we can come here and talk to you guys here again, and also, we're going to be talking, the same rulemaking at our AP meeting next week.

We've got a lot of comments on this rulemaking so far, close to 90 comments. We're still accepting comments until the end of May, hoping to turn this

around by the end of this year. But also, I want to show some of the comments we've gotten to date. We've got a lot of comments; a lot or majority of the comments are just about the recreational fishing changes. But we've gotten a lot of support for the Atlantic blacknose preferred management measures, to kind of help them optimize the quota, but also reduce regulatory dead discards. But for the recreational fishery we got a lot of comments for this one.

General support for creating management flexibility and establishing the size limits based on the size at maturity. But then there is some concern that NOAA fisheries could adjust the minimum size limit and retention limits without prior notification or frequency. Then also there's comments about the concern about states may not have the ability to make parallel changes fast or in a timely manner.

We've got a lot of questions regarding the proposed management groupings, a scientific basis for the proposed changes and also how the proposed changes would work. Then guidance suggestions to keep the per-person retention limit for Atlantic sharpnose and bonnethead retention limits. That is everything I have, and I'll gladly answer any questions and comments you guys would have. Thank you.

CHAIR LUISI: Okay, thank you, Guy, for the presentation. Let me look to members of the Board. I think at this point, questions, comments, whatever you have at this time. We don't need to start with questions and go into comments. John Clark, I saw your hand first.

MR. JOHN CLARK: Thank you for the presentation, Guy. Like one of the comments there, I am confused myself as to how that works, the whole default, the range. I mean, could you give just a concrete example of how you see this working in a season?

MR. DuBECK: Yes, for the recreational fishery we don't plan to change anything in-season. We would evaluate before the fishing season started what the catch was, whether it was too high or too low compared to the ACLs that we have, and then make the appropriate changes before the fishing season occurs.

You would know in advance what the new limits would be, whether it's a size limit or bag limits based on the catch. Like I mentioned, like the Atlantic blacktip, healthy stock, if the ACL is not being reached by the recreational sector, then we could increase the bag limit or decrease the minimum size kind of thing for those species to maximize catch for that species.

MR. CLARK: Right, but that would be done, you wouldn't do any changes in season, it would be before the season. Okay, got it.

MR. DuBECK: Yes, we don't want to confuse people recreationally in season. I know recreationally it is hard, fishermen know what the rules are, changing all the time, especially for sharks. It's not something we would do in season for this fishery.

CHAIR LUISI: Thank you, John, for that question. Guy, I made a note too. I assume that is the same for the size limits as well as the retention limit, so everything would be done prior to the season and then open the season up.

MR. DuBECK: The only caveat would be, say if we had a stock assessment or some sort of scientific advice that may make that change. But we probably would notify people about that kind of thing.

CHAIR LUISI: Okay, Chris Batsavage, and then John Maniscalco, I'll come to you next.

MR. BATSAVAGE: Thanks for the presentation, Guy. I noticed on the list of default in size limits you had the same one for spinner shark and blacktip shark, I think, but you have different default in vessel limits for those species. Trying to understand why there is a difference between having a uniform size limit for this species but different vessel limits, and I may have a follow up comment or question after that, thanks.

MR. DuBECK: Yes, so I mentioned, we have a stock assessment for Atlantic blacktip sharks. We can confidently say that we can maybe increase catch for that species, right. But based on the size at maturity we could lower that size at maturity, because right now it's 54 inches, which is above what the size at maturity is for that species.

Again, we group those together for the size at maturity, because yes, they look the same, right. Between spinner, blacktip, most fishermen can't tell the difference or unseasoned fishermen, I should say. But since we have information about blacktips, that is why we pulled them out and had the separate one that we could potentially allow additional catch for those.

MR. BATSAVAGE: Thanks, Guy. It makes sense from the stock assessment standpoint with a higher vessel limit for blacktip, I don't think that would be appropriate for spinners, although I think there might be some challenges for less knowledgeable anglers to know exactly which species they were harvesting.

I guess one thing to consider, although it would be maybe challenging for identification purposes is, if you had vessel limits for those species, perhaps maybe have different size limits, you know higher size limit for spinner sharks that more closely matches their length at maturity.

CHAIR LUISI: Thanks for that, Chris, thank you for the answers. Any other questions or comments around the Board table? Erika Burgess.

MS. ERIKA BURGESS: Florida appreciates the extension of the comment period, so that we could provide meaningful comments. We will be sending a letter from our state. We appreciate the commercial changes and the intent to liberalize where liberalization is possible. We have concerns, of course, about compliance and enforcement, and the potential to have frequently changing regulations in federal waters, and our ability or interest in matching those in state waters. But we'll be sending a formal comment letter in before the deadline.

CHAIR LUISI: John Maniscalco.

MR. JOHN MANISCALCO: I have a question and a comment. My quick question is, you said any changes would be timed before the fisheries, and I was just wondering if you could be a little bit more definitive about when exactly those kinds of changes, when those rules would be available, so how much time the states have to react to them. My comment is that many of those default size limits are not at all protective of sexually immature animals, and especially for species that don't have assessments, particularly strong assessments. I hope that the Service would be prioritizing size limits that do protect sexually immature animals.

MR. DuBECK: Regarding the timing. I can't state for definitive when the timing would be of a notification. But we would plan to notify the public if any changes would happen in advance. You know one of the thigs we mentioned in our Amendment 14 is doing a three-year-rolling average of numbers to these yields to determine catch. It's something we do during the year and give hopefully, people enough notification. I just can't be definitive of the timing of things, based on current timing of when regulations come out.

CHAIR LUISI: Thank you, Guy, for that. I saw Karyl raised her hand. Karyl.

MS. KARYL BREWSTER-GEISZ: Just reiterating what Guy said. We don't know exactly how much time it would take us. But my question back to the group is, how much time do the individual states need, and when would be most beneficial for you, for us to release the document?

CHAIR LUISI: Erika.

MS. BURGESS: For the state of Florida it would ideally be six months.

CHAIR LUISI: Okay, so Erika kind of set the bar at six months. Is there anyone else that it would take longer to make changes? Seeing no hands; hopefully that helps answer that question, Karyl.

Are there any other questions or comments from Board members regarding the presentation? Seeing none around the table. Since we are here to solicit for comment, is there anyone from the audience that would like to make any public comment? Sonja. You can just recognize yourself before you start.

MS. SONJA FORDHAM: Thank you, Chair. Sonja Fordham, Shark Advocates International. Thank you for the presentation. I do also look forward to submitting written comments and discussing the proposal at the HMS meeting. But I want to just say a couple things. We do certainly appreciate that climate change might result in some management lines, and appreciate the clarification for the pelagic category. That is quite important.

As we had said before, generally my community is very concerned about the relaxation of the safeguards that we have in place, so we'll be watching the actual numbers that are selected closely, and spending a bit more time trying to digest these defaults. I do think there is some benefit in more species-specific size limits, but we share the concerns just expressed about that they might not be sufficiently protective.

We were interested in hearing the comments from the states today, so that has been helpful to guide us. I did want to flag that in particular we're concerned about blacknose shark, given that the assessment is 16 years old. Just to use that to again reiterate and maybe take the opportunity to say this in front of a broader audience, that the environmental community is deeply concerned about the lack of shark stock assessments that we have to work with. If you go with this type of flexible approach, it is going to be crucial that you have reliable information on stock status, obviously. That's all I have for today, look forward to seeing you next week. Thank you.

CHAIR LUISI: Thank you, Sonja. Anyone else from the public, either online or in the crowd? Let me check the web. I don't see any hands. I'll ask Karyl and Guy, is there anything else that you want to bring up or any other questions that you may need some answers from the states on at this time?

Okay, excellent. Thank you very much for your presentation. Moving on.

UPDATES ON CONVENTION ON THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE OF ENDANGERED SPECIES PERMITTING FOR SMOOTHHOUND SHARKS

CHAIR LUISI: We are going to jump into the next item on our agenda. We're going to get an update on the Convention on the International Trade of Endangered Species Permitting for Smoothhound Sharks. I have Michelle Turton with us from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to provide us a presentation. Michelle, when you're ready.

MS. MICHELLE TURTON: Good afternoon, my name is Michelle Turton; I am with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Additionally, my colleagues, Debra Abercrombie from Fish and Wildlife Service Division of Scientific Authority and Daniel Sahakian from our Office of Law Enforcement are joining in today.

I will be talking about CITES implementation for the U.S. Atlantic smoothhound fishery. In order to talk about CITES requirements for the smoothhound, I need to provide a quick overview of what CITES is. CITES is an international agreement aimed at ensuring that international trade does not threaten species survival.

Several shark species are included in CITES, legal, economically, sustainable and traceable international trade practices due the high demand for fins, meat and other traded parts. The structured CITES framework for implementing international trade controls facilitated enforcement and standardization of data collection for traded species, enhancing international cooperation and trade.

How does CITES work? CITES regulates the export, re-export, and import and introduction from the sea of specimens, including live and dead animals and plants and their parts and derivatives of species included in the appendices. It regulates

international trade through a system of permits and certificates that are only issued if certain conditions are met, and must be presented when leaving and entering a country.

Just to refresh folks' memory on the appendices. There are three of them, Appendix I, Appendix II and Appendix III. I'll mostly just be talking about Appendix I and II today, so Appendix I includes all species threatened with extinction, which are or may be affected by trade. Trade in these specimens are subject to particular strict regulation in order not to further endanger their survival.

International trade for primarily commercial purposes is prohibited, with some limited exceptions to that. Appendix II, which will be our main topic today includes species that are not necessarily now threatened with extinction, but may become so unless trade is closely controlled, so commercial and non-commercial international trade is allowed through the issuance of permits and certificates. Prior to issuing permits and certificates for species included in CITES Appendix I and II, CITES authorities of the exporting country must determine that the species were legally acquired, a legal acquisition finding, and that international trade in the species would not be detrimental to its survival in the wild, a nondetrimental finding.

The parties meet every two to three years at the Conference of Parties, also referred to as COP. During this two-week meeting they review and vote on proposed resolutions and decisions to improve the effectiveness of CITES, and also amendments to the CITES Appendix I and Appendix II to either include new species, remove species or to change appendices.

Changes to Appendix I and II must be proposed at a COP and agreed to by two-thirds majority of the parties present and voting. Just a quick mention before we get into the heart of the presentation. Fish and Wildlife Service is the implementing agency for CITES, but we work closely with over 20 different federal agencies, as well as the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, AFWA, to develop U.S. positions for all CITES meetings, along with four COPs we have an extensive public comment period.

At the most recent Conference of the Parties, held in Samarkand Uzbekistan, November 24 through December 5 of 2025. A proposal submitted by Brazil with co-sponsors by Ecuador, the European Union, Panama and Senegal was adopted to include school shark or trope and all species and the genus, I'm very bad at pronouncing things, so please forgive me, for smoothhound in Appendix II with a delayed implementation of 18 months.

The proposal was adopted by consensus, that means that no party intervened to vote against the proposal. As of June 5th of 2027, smoothhound species harvested in U.S. smoothhound fishery will be included in Appendix II of CITES. What does that mean? That means that international trade may be authorized by granting of a CITES export permit, re-export certificate or an introduction from the sea certificate.

It's important to clarify what I mean by introduction by the sea, as its name can be very misleading. Introduction from the sea means transportation into the country of specimens of any species that were taken in the marine environment not under the jurisdiction of any country aka the high seas, as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

I won't be covering introduction from the sea certificates in detail during this presentation, as most smoothhounds are harvested in U.S. waters, but just be aware that if you are harvesting smoothhound in the high seas, you will need to apply for an introduction from the sea certificate. In addition, no import permit is necessary for these species under CITES, though it should be noted that some countries have domestic laws that may require a CITES import permit.

It is the responsibility of the exporter to check with the importing country, to understand the requirements for their specimens. CITES permits and certificates are issued by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. An applicant can visit our e-permits page

to apply online, or you can download an application and mail it in. Application process varies, depending on the species, the level of protection, the complexity of the application and legality of the proposed activity. All applications must be reviewed carefully to ensure that the criteria under federal regulations are being met before issuance. We recommend applying 60 to 90 days prior to needing the permit or certificate. To prevent delays, it's important to fully complete the application to the best of your ability. A common question we get is, can the process or any of the steps in the process be expedited. The short answer is no.

Applications cannot be expedited and are required to meet all the issuance criteria under federal regulations. Applications are processed in the order that they are received. We do take into consideration extraordinary circumstances, but there is no formal mechanism or a fee schedule for expedited review.

It is the applicant's responsibility to apply as soon as possible for the required documents for the proposed activity. Today's presentation will concentrate on CITES export permits, since I think this will be what is most relevant to the group here today. More information on the other types like re-export or introduction from the sea can be found on our website, or you can contact us directly, and we're happy to assist you with the process.

Exports from the United States of smoothhound, whether alive or dead and any parts and derivatives must be accomplished by a CITES export permit starting June 5, 2027. The best application to use for commercial purposes is going to be Application Form 3-200-27. That is the export of wildlife removed from the wild under CITES.

This application can be used for a wide variety of purposes, but if you're trying to export a live or a dead animal, it's parts and products derived from a CITES Listed Appendix II species removed from the wild, this will be the best one. Individuals or businesses can apply. There are also single-use and multiple-use that are referred to as master files. I'll touch on it in a little bit. Some of the information asked in the Application Form 3-200-27 include the following that is on the screen.

I am not going to read through all of them, but I'll highlight a couple of them of like scientific name. It's important the scientific name versus the common name is used. For approximate age it can be simple as immature or adult. Description is very important to include of what is being exported, if it's a whole body, whole body with fins, fillets. Are they frozen, are they fresh. The more detail you provide the easier it is for us to process.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, we have the ability to issue single use export permits or multiple use certificates that are known as master files. Both serve distinct purposes and offer different advantages, depending on the applicant's needs. Master files are a permitting efficiency to streamline the process for businesses or individuals.

Master files are an additional option available to applicants who are conducting the same activity, exporting frequently and need a more efficient way to obtain required CITES permits. Master file applications may take longer to review, but once established applicants may obtain multiple partially completed single use certificates, also known as clones, at a time, allowing for multiple shipments of a preauthorized specimens prior to needing to apply for more. Put more simply, this method can eliminate the need to submit individual applications for each shipment that an applicant may have planned. These files are valid for an authorized period, ranging from 1 year to up to 3 years and they can be customized for where the specimens are being exported to or a quantity being exported or both. For master files an applicant needs to apply prior to master file. Once established, the master file holder will need to apply for the partially completed, single-use certificates or clones.

Clones act the same as a single-use export permit, so each clone can only be used once, and they are valid for 6 months. Additionally, the partially completed means that there is specific information that is already pre filled out on the permit. But

there are blank sections depending on if you want quantity or consign year left open, that needs to be filled out before shipment.

Master file holders are held to certain terms and conditions presented in a letter upon establishment of the file. Master file holders must keep the master file up to date and comply with any changes to CITES regulations or changes to the holders' operations. In many instances we limit the total amount authorized to export under a master file, and also have reporting requirements such as an annual report, which would have to show legal acquisition chain of custody, annual export quantities, et cetera.

For example, if you're an exporter who expects to make multiple shipments over the year of a same type of product such as frozen fish fillets, a master file could be more of an appropriate choice. If you're an exporter who only expects to make one or two large shipments within a year, a single use permit might be the better option. It depends case to case.

After the application is submitted you will receive an acknowledgement letter or e-mail. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service reviews the Export Application, which will include making a legal acquisition finding and non-detriment finding. Consulting with NOAA, states and/or tribes as applicable and contacting the applicant if additional information is needed.

Export permit is issued or denied, though if an applicant doesn't respond to a post to be contacted by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for additional information, an application can be abandoned. It's important to make sure that there is accurate contact information on the application and that you respond in a timely manner, even if it's just an acknowledgement of receiving the e-mail or phone call from Fish and Wildlife Service.

If an application is denied a letter is sent, to let the applicant know of the reason for the denial, and there is a reconsideration process for denials as well. Next, I'll talk a little bit more about legal acquisition findings. This means that the shark specimens were sourced in compliance with all relevant regulations ensuring legality, safeguards species, and supports accountability and international trade

Legal acquisition findings assure that specimens for sourced in compliance with all relevant regulations ensuring legality safeguard species and supports accountability in international trade. Legal acquisition findings assure that specimens were sourced in compliance with all national, state, local and international laws. This stuff is critical to prevent illegal trade, safeguard vulnerable species from illegal trade and overexploitation. We conduct a risk assessment to help assess the level of scrutiny and amount of information that a management authority needs to make a legal acquisition finding. This includes the status of the species, origin of the species, range of the species, volume of the illegal trade, type of trade, ability of the species to be bred or propagated in controlled environment and genetic status, which just means is it a hybrid or a purebred species.

Ultimately, we request documentation to establish an unbroken chain of custody with no evidence of illegal transactions involving the specimen. Exporters are required to present licenses and permits confirming that species were legally obtained. Providing proper documentation ensures transparency and supports enforcement of regulations. The types of documents required depends on the type of activity of where the species were harvested, state waters versus federal waters.

Below are some examples of potential, relevant information that may be requested for smoothhounds, such as quotas, the supplier's commercial buyers license, such as NOAAs federal dealer shark permit and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service import/export license, harvest reports, timing and location of catch, transfer of ownership documents such as itemized invoices or receipts from the fisher to the dealer.

Fishing license and permits, such as NOAAs open access smoothhound shark permit for smoothhound harvested in federal waters, fishing

agreements and vessel registration. For an example, if an exporter sources smoothhound from two fishers, one that harvested smoothhound in Connecticut waters and the other from federal waters, when applying for a CITES permit the exporter should provide the period and location of the harvest, a copy of the Connecticut fisher's commercial fishing license valid for the time period of the harvest, the quota for Connecticut if known, a copy of NOAAs Open Access Smoothhound Shark Permit for the fisher in the federal waters, itemized invoices, pound of purchases smoothhound from both fishers, a copy of valid vessel registration from both fishers, a copy of the Fish and Wildlife Service import/export license and a copy of the federal dealer shark permit.

Then we would in turn consult with Connecticut and NOAA and receive any applicable harvest reports or confirmed quotas. Next, I'll go over Non-Detriment Findings. Non-Detriment Findings are scientific assessments ensuring trade does not threaten species survival or ecosystem health.

Non-Detriment Findings are essential for CITES permits to maintain a balance between sustainable trade and species conservation. We have a legal obligation to make a Non-Detriment Finding for proposed export or introduction from the sea of Appendix I, or Appendix II species. A Non-Detrimental Finding can be in written or verbal form, and agreed upon by the Scientific Authority for a specific time period, such as one year or on a case-by-case basis, depending on the permit application and circumstances.

Non-Detrimental Findings are based on scientific review of available information on life history, distribution, population status, trends, harvest and other threats as appropriate, including international trade impacts. Fish and Wildlife Service we often consult with states, tribes, other federal agencies, scientists and range countries for the species during the Non-Detrimental Finding process, particularly with regards to making sure that we have accurate information on management measures and population monitoring that is in place, or is being proposed that address the various threats and ensure harvest for trade is biologically sustainable. In the case of smooth dogfish harvest in state waters, we would consult each state agency that authorizes commercial harvest to ensure all fishing and reporting regulations have been adhered to, and it can be very helpful for us if those regulations are posted online and made publicly available.

We also consider how well the management measures are being implemented and what's happening to the conservation status of the population. It is important to note for migratory species, Non-Detrimental Findings should ensure that harvest anywhere throughout the species range does not negatively impact the species as a whole, which includes jurisdictions outside of the United States.

The Non-Detrimental Finding is essentially a science-based risk assessment for several reasons. Not all CITES permit applications are subject to the same level of scrutiny during the Non-Detrimental Finding process. As mentioned with the legal acquisition finding process, due to the degree of risk involved, some applications are more closely reviewed than others. Some species have high risk factors such as being in Appendix I, wild source specimens, whether the activity is commercial, and then native species receive greater scrutiny than their non-native counterparts.

For the export of specimens of smoothhound sharks harvested in the U.S. smoothhound fishery for commercial purposes. We would consider this low risk, but due to the management measures in place that ensure sustainability such as quotas, reporting requirements and monitoring of the populations. Low risk.

For NDFs for sharks included in Appendix II of CITES based here in the U.S., U.S. fishers and dealers must obtain permits, report catch, as applicable, attend shark identification or handling and release workshops, adhere to science-based quotas, retention, prohibitions, gear restrictions, and land sharks with fins naturally attached for accurate species ID and catch reporting inspections by enforcement, except smooth dog hound which are

excepted from the shark fin elimination act and the shark conservation act. But this doesn't apply to all of the different smoothhound species found here in the Atlantic.

For Non-Detrimental Findings, very similar documents are required such as the legal aquisition fishing finding, ones that I went over. I'll let folks read here on the screen, but you need to see if you have dealer permits and your import/export license from Fish and Wildlife Service and any shark-direct permits issued by NMFS For these species. Now we're getting to the law enforcement part of it, and I think you guys have heard my voice enough, so I'm going to hand it over to my colleague, Daniel over there to finish.

MR. DANIEL SAHAKIAN: Cool, thank you guys, sorry. If you don't mind me sitting over here. I get to see the big screen, so I'll take it. I don't have a name tag so you can blame Michelle for everything I say. But my name is Daniel Sahakian; I am a wildlife inspector. As senior wildlife inspector I sit here in the wilds of northern Virginia. But just to go quickly through the declaration and the port procedures for you all. All wildlife going in and out of the country needs a declaration. That is done under Wildlife Declaration Form 3-177, and I have a wonderful test example up there on the right for you guys. It just has general information about the shipment, where it's going, who it's coming from, where it's going to, the species contained, some like the flight information, for example.

With that declaration we ask that there is like a declaration package. It's all submitted together and that would be invoices, licensing, permits, the CITES permits in this particular case we're discussing now, all be kind of consulted and submit together. I know in this fun post-COVID world no one wants to see each other in person, but we do need physical copies of CITES permits still.

Physical CITES must be delivered to the inspectors at the port when the shipments are going out. Quickly back on the other one. There are import/export licenses. If you are commercially shipping any wildlife, and this goes for sharks as well, unless someone has like an emotional support shark or something. I can't think of why you would not have commercial licenses.

For the purpose of this meeting I am assuming everyone will need a import/export license. That is a license that you apply online with the Fish and Wildlife Service. The licenses are good for one year and that just allows these businesses to operate as an importer or an exporter of wildlife. Where some people get kind of confused is you know the licenses needed for whoever is doing the shipping are not necessarily the fisherman.

If those are going to a third party, the sharks are going to a third party that is consolidating sharks and sending them out. They are the ones responsible for the import/export license and the Declaration in the CITES, it's not necessarily just the fishermen. Just to make that note.

Shipments do need to be moving through designated ports. Most if not all of our big ports in the U.S. are designated wildlife ports, but if for whatever reason here is a port that is not, and that is where a fisherman is located, they can apply for a designated port exception permit, and this would allow them to ship through a non-designated wildlife port.

There are three reasons why you could apply. One is the scientific purposes, one is to mitigate deterioration or loss for a perishable good, which I think would fit in this, and the other one is monetary reasons. I think monetary or deterioration would be the two likely for this group, where port exemption permits could be applied for.

Also, just early notice requirements for live or perishable shipments, which again applies to this situation. At designated ports the officers need 48 hours' notice of a shipment occurring and for non-designated ports that is bumped to 72 hours. These notice requirements are just so we can make sure inspectors are there and ready to work with the shipments at the port.

It seems to make sense and is helpful to everybody. It's helpful to us and it's helpful to those shipping, because it expedites the process. If I had like a big tip, which everyone asks, what can I do to be the best shipper, and it's always just; communicate with the port officers, talk to the inspectors, call the inspectors. I don't clear shipments anymore; I sit in an office all day. But when I was at the port the best thing would be to communicate with the trade. I don't want problems, trade doesn't want problems, nobody wants problems and we solved the problems by talking before we have a problem. That is the number one tip.

Just once we get to the inspection process. You get your license, you declare your shipment, again, we need to see each other face-to-face unfortunately for both of us. I need to sees that physical copy of the CITES permit and stamp and sign the bottom. Don't need to get into the crazy details, but the inspectors are going to review the document package. If they need to do a physical inspection, they will physically inspect the shipment.

That is dependent on the port and the type of trade, if you will, if you're shipping air cargo it is different than a truck cargo, so not to get into the nitty gritty. If the inspectors need to physically look at it, they will, and then they will validate the CITES permit with a signature and with a stamp, and then process the declaration and you'll get a canceled copy of the CITES permit to keep in your records.

You will get the original CITES permit, and that has to go with the shipment on to its destination. You can see more about the import/export regs at 50CFR part 14 import/export. But I am happy to answer any questions you guys all have today. I think I'll jump, Michelle, do you have a slide after this? There you go, hopefully that's not me, so see you guys.

MS. TURTON: We just have some helpful links there on the screen, such as where our website is, overview of CITES, in case you didn't get enough from today. Frequently asked questions concerning certificates needed for CITES listed sharks and rays. A quick note, we have not updated our website yet to include smoothhound, so the information up there talks about requiem sharks.

But the same information for requiem sharks apply to smooth hounds and we'll have the website updated soon. Then the next slide has our contact information for Division of Management Authority, Division of Scientific Authority and the Office of Law Enforcement, depending on your question. With that, thank you.

CHAIR LUISI: Thank you both very much for the presentation and all of the information contained within it. Let's go around the table. Does anybody have any questions, comments, thoughts regarding what you saw or heard? Ben.

MR. BEN DYAR: Thank you for the presentation, they were thorough, thank you. I missed this and if it was said I apologize. I saw the length of declarations 48 hours and 72 hours, but as far as the application for the permit, what kind of timeline does that look like in receiving it and getting it and then being able to start declaring the exports?

MS. TURTON: I mentioned it briefly at the beginning that time varies case-by-case, each a number of different factors on if they are applying for a master file or single-use permit. What products are being shipped out, how many applications that we have ahead of it, since we do process applications as they come in, which is why we do recommend submitting an application 60 to 90 days in advance. Then once it's been issued it is valid for 6 months if it's a single-use permit and for a master file it will specify if it's valid for a year to 3 years, but you then have to apply to get the clones, which are those partially completed single-use permits and each individual permit, like the regular single-use export permits are valid for 6 months.

MR. DYAR: Thank you very much, my apologies.

CHAIR LUISI: Any other questions or comments from the Board? Toni.

MS. KERNS: I think Caitlin and I have been thinking about this a lot, and Michelle met with us a couple

times. Michelle, one thing that we talked about on Friday is, so because these are fisheries and they don't necessarily know how much they are going to catch or where they're going to be catching it.

Are there ways to get around applying for the permits when you don't know that information ahead of time, because they don't know. Because they don't know what state they will necessarily be buying from, because they buy it from fishermen from multiple states and then bring it to one place to process and then export.

MS. TURTON: It's all by a case-by-case basis, so it's hard for me to give exact details without having information in front of me. But that is where supplying as much information as you're able to on the application would help us. If you're applying for a master file, but you haven't already bought the products from the fishers yet, and you're applying.

It is helpful to see what you've done in previous years, so for that estimated total, you know for the last five years or so, what has kind of been the average that you've been exporting out? You can always ask for a little bit more within a reasonable amount to be approved for. Then, what fishers have you bought from in the past, and have them go ahead and give you a copy of whatever applicable fishing license they have, depending on the state or federal waters.

But we definitely have been able to issue established master files without someone having to have the product on hand. But we need more information of just what have they done in previous years, what are they expecting and you know the best reasonable thing of what fishers are they buying for and applicable copies of those licenses. More information is always better in the application, and then we're always happy to work with individual applicants to see what we can do to help them out.

CHAIR LUISI: Thank you for that. Daniel.

MR. SAHAKIAN: Yes, if I could just add as well. From the enforcement perspective and once you're at the port, those CITES permits and the validation that the officers are doing. We're validating up to the amount issued on the permit as well. They don't have to have the exact number that is there, as long as it is under, because the sign says, under this amount is good. The enforcement officers at the port that day will be validating the quantity. As long as it's under, we're all good at the port.

CHAIR LUISI: Any other questions or comments? Caitlin Starks.

MS. CAITLIN STARKS: I guess I just wanted to maybe ask a question that might be helpful for exporters to know the answers to, since all through the course of meeting with Fish and Wildlife Service about this, it's clear that there is a lot of uncertainty about what might be needed just based on a case-by-case basis, and so thank you, Michelle, for going through all of it.

But I think it would be helpful if you could just let us know who or what would be the best contact method for exporters to get directly in touch with you guys and answer questions as they are starting these application processes.

MS. TURTON: The best is to reach out to that Management Authority e-mail. I did not include it on the slide, but we also have a phone number as well. It is in the Stakeholder letter that I provided to the Commission. But either that number or the Management Authority e-mail is the best way to reach us, and that goes directly to our branch of permits who are the application processors, and you'll get an answer within 72 hours or so.

CHAIR LUISI: Thank you for bringing that up, Caitlin, clarifying that. Last call around the table. Yes, Ma'am.

MS. DEBRA ABERCROMBIE: Hi, I'm Debra, Debra Abercrombie.

CHAIR LUISI: Debra, hi, if you want to introduce yourself.

MS. ABERCROMBIE: Debra Abercrombie, Scientific Authority. I work with Michelle and Daniel. I just wanted to indicate, based on the requiem shark applications that we receive, they usually establish a master file, and that means that they provide information that indicates what their intent is for export quantities and things like that, because the smoothhound fishery also has quotas. It's going to be within the quota, obviously.

If they can just provide the information, several orders within the Atlantic smoothhound fishery and state waters from Maine or whatever. The more information, like Michelle mentioned, the better. But especially if they are going through the information and they think they want to establish a master file.

The effective date is June of 2027, that is kind of in the middle of when the fishing season starts. So if they want to submit applications sooner rather than later, in anticipation there will be questions, that would be recommended. Three months would probably be a good thing, and there is also a way to in the e-permitting system online itself is to create a ticket, and that way you're ensured somebody is going to actually contacts you.

There are multiple ways to get into the system. If you're confused about what's online, call or e-mail, but if you are pretty savvy and you can understand going straight to the application form that we gave you, and then just looking for how to apply online and submit the ticket. There is also a help desk way to submit a ticket there. There are multiple ways, but definitely, definitely, definitely reach out if anybody has any questions.

CHAIR LUISI: Okay, so thank you, so we need to reach out if we've got them. Questions and information that we want to run by you guys, that sounds really good. Toni.

MS. KERNS: I don't have another question, I just wanted to say that we really appreciate the states getting back to us on how you collect data, how you do the permitting. We shared those with the Fish and Wildlife Team. I think we collectively think that that information is helpful for them, and that we don't need to be making any changes to how you're doing the permitting or collecting.

Because the way you're doing it now kind of meets what the needs are for the permitting system, as long as the dealer makes sure that they are acquiring a paper trail along the way. It may mean that your fishermen are going to have to provide additional information as they sell product to the dealers, especially those that are state only non-federally permitted fishermen.

They may have to provide some more paperwork then your federally permitted fishermen that are selling to the federal dealers, potentially. But just putting that out there as you talk to your fishermen. I think we talked about this a little bit before, but so far, I've only been able to find two dealers that are exporting. There certainly could be more out there. I don't mean to suggest that that's it, so it is a pretty small number of individuals.

CHAIR LUISI: All right, thanks, Toni. Karyl, did you have something to add? I saw you waving your hand.

MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: I actually had a question. Throughout this presentation you've been very clear it doesn't come into effect until June, 2027, which is a little more than a year away. Do fisherman, exporters, dealers need to do anything now regarding these species, and what happens as we get closer to June?

As Debra indicated, it's in the middle of the fishing season. There is going to be fish collected before June that will be exported after June, but I'm assuming at that point all those fish will need all the appropriate permits. I just want to be very clear about what is needed now, and what is going to be needed come June next year.

MS. TURTON: Currently right now to export smoothhound, you don't need a CITES permit. As soon as it is June 5th of 2027, even if it's smoothhound that was caught prior to that date, it will still require a CITES document. I didn't go over

it in the presentation, but that would be considered pre-convention specimens, and there is a different application for that. But those will be able to go out, but they do need a CITES document with that.

Also, if you have a shipment, if it's going on a large ship but you think even though it might leave the port prior to June, but you don't think it's going to reach the importing country until that date. Contact us and we can make sure that you have the required documents so you are not held up at the importing country, requiring the CITES document. Very good question, thank you.

CHAIR LUISI: Thank you, Karyl, and thanks for the answer. Is there anyone from the audience, either online or in the crowd here today that would like to ask any questions or have anything clarified for them? Seeing no names and no other hands around the table, I want to thank the three of you for being here with us today and providing this information for all of us.

It is going to be important as we move into 2027 and prepare our stakeholders for the challenges that this will likely have for them as they move into this time when these applications need to be filled out and this paperwork needs to be done. Thank you again for being here.

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN REVIEW AND STATE COMPLIANCE FOR COASTAL SHARKS FOR THE 2024 FISHING YEAR

CHAIR LUISI: Next, we are going to the next item on our agenda, which is to Consider the Approval of Fishery Management Plan Review and State Compliance for Coastal Sharks for the 2024 Fishing Year. Caitlin Starks, who is our FMP Coordinator will be providing us that presentation.

MS. STARKS: In this presentation I'll just go over the main parts of the annual FMP review, including the status of the FMP, updates to stock status, recent fishery information. I went backwards, recent fishery information, de minimis requests, implementation of the FMP requirements and PRT recommendations.

The most recent changes that we've had for the sharks management program are the implementation of the zero-retention limit for shortfin mako sharks in 2022, and then in 2024 the implementation of a zero-possession limit for oceanic whitetip sharks for commercial and recreational fisheries.

For updates to stock status there was a research track assessment of the hammerhead complex, which was SEDAR 77, and that was completed in 2024 for scalloped hammerhead, which is now considered a complex that includes scalloped and Carolina hammerheads, SEDAR 77 preliminarily indicates that the scalloped hammerhead shark was not overfished, and overfishing was not occurring in the terminal year, which was 2019.

For smooth hammerhead it suggests that overfishing most likely is not occurring and the stock has been rebuilding since 2000, though this was a data limited assessment. Then for great hammerhead the assessment found the stock was overfished and no overfishing is occurring in the terminal year.

I'll just go over the preliminary fishery landings information for the 2024 fishing year from NOAA Fisheries. This table includes the Atlantic region landings of aggregated large coastal sharks. The hammerhead group, non-blacknose small coastal sharks and blacknose sharks and smoothhound, and there were not quota overages for any of these groups and landings increased for all of them when compared to 2023.

This next table shows the landings for groups with no regional quotas, including the shark research fishery landings of aggregated large coastal sharks, the sandbar research fishery, and then blue, porbeagle and common thresher sharks. Again, there weren't any quota overages for these groups and landings in all of the groups increased compared to 2023. The FMP review also goes over recreational landings information as reported in the state compliance reports. However, most of that data is from MRIP, and there are very high PSEs, so

I'm not going to go over it here but they are in the document. Then under the sharks FMP states can request de minimis status on a case-by-case basis. There are not specific de minimis guidelines that would exempt a state from regulatory requirements contained in this FMP. Massachusetts is the only state that has been granted de minimis status, and they are requesting continuation of that status for aggregated large coastals and the hammerhead species group.

Massachusetts has implemented all of the regulations in the FMP, with the exceptions of the possession limit and closures for aggregated large coastals and hammerhead shark fisheries. Then finally, these are the PRT comments on the FMP review and state compliance. The PRT recommends the Board grant de minimis status to Massachusetts.

Then they noted one inconsistency with the management plan, which is that Georgia's regulations do not establish a zero-retention limit for shortfin mako sharks. Federally permitted harvesters are required to comply with the federal regulations, and that includes the zero-retention limit for shortfin mako, and that is regardless of where they are fishing.

However, the regulations appear to allow harvest of shortfin mako in state waters by non-federally permitted commercial and recreational harvesters. Then the PRT also noted that Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Maryland didn't report the shark landings by month, including a number of trips.

That said, the FMP does not explicitly require that landings and trips by month be reported for the compliance report. I would propose we modify the FMP review language to make it clear that this isn't a compliance issue. Then with the exception of those bullet points there, all of the states have implemented the regulations consistent with the FMP requirements.

To wrap up, the Board's action items for this are to consider approval of the de minimis status for Massachusetts and the approval of the FMP review and state compliance for the 2024 fishing year. I can take any questions.

CHAIR LUISI: Any questions for Caitlin regarding her report? Seeing none; would anyone like to make a motion to approve? Dan McKiernan.

MR. DANIEL McKIERNAN: Make a motion to approve the report and grant Massachusetts de minimis status.

CHAIR LUISI: Would you mind reading what's on the screen, Dan? Sorry, it's getting late, I know.

MR. McKIERNAN: **Motion to approve the Fishery Management Plan Review and State Compliance for coastal sharks for the 2024 fishing year, and approve de minimis status for Massachusetts**.

CHAIR LUISI: Thank you, I've got a second by Doug Haymans. Any discussion on the motion? **Is there any objection to the motion? Seeing none; the motion carries by consent.** I'll just check with Caitlin before we move on. Is that all we need for this item?

ELECT VICE CHAIR

CHAIR LUISI: Moving into the next item on our agenda, we have the election of a Vice-Chair. Would any member of the Board like to make a nomination for Vice-Chair? Chris Batsavage.

MR. BATSAVAGE: I **move to elect Ben Dyar as Vice-Chair of the Coastal Sharks Management Board.** A second, Malcolm Rhodes seconds that motion, is there any discussion on the motion? **Any objection to the motion? Congratulations, Ben**, you are now elected to be the Coastal Sharks Vice-Chair.
If this group meets as often as CITES and as often as it has been meeting, you won't have a Board meeting until 2028. That could be something to look forward to. Okay.

OTHER BUSINESS

CHAIR LUISI: We have one more item on the agenda today, it's new business. Chris Batsavage

asked for time to bring up new business, so I am going to turn to you, Chris, for that.

SHARK FISHING FROM SHORE

MR. BATSAVAGE: Sally Dowd, a PhD student at the University of North Carolina's Institute for Marine Science presented her research on the land-based shark fishery in North Carolina to our staff, I guess last month. We thought that might be something that would interest the Board for her to present that information at a future meeting, especially since several of the states have land-based shark fisheries and are developing and growing recently. Just offering that to see if that would be of interest to the Board for a future meeting.

CHAIR LUISI: All right, Chris, thanks for that. Any thoughts for Chris? Joe.

MR. CIMINO: I know it's getting late, but he said they have a landshark fishery?

CHAIR LUISI: Erika.

MS. BURGESS: I have to say that shore-based shark fishing is a real hot topic right now, and it fills up half my inbox. Florida has regulations specific to shore-based shark fishing, if there is an interest in pairing a presentation on that with the presentation, as well as we've had similar research done in Florida. I would be willing to explore that if there is interest from the Board.

CHAIR LUISI: Okay, Dan McKiernan.

MR. McKIERNAN: In the same vein, Massachusetts has regulated the use of terminal tackle to avoid people from trying to catch white sharks from the beach, as well as the use of devices to launch baits over the horizon. We would be happy to contribute to that discussion.

CHAIR LUISI: Sounds like there is definitely some interest there, Chris. I'll look to staff, maybe we can make that happen in an upcoming meeting, a couple years from now. Hopefully, we'll get another meeting on the books a little sooner than that, I think. Erika.

MS. BURGESS: And just paired with that, Florida in the next year will be considering regulations related to ground fishing, which is directly related to this topic.

CHAIR LUISI: Caitlin, you were leaning into the mic, did you have something you wanted to say? No, okay. Is there any other business to come before the Coastal Sharks Board at this Time. It's almost four o'clock, and it's either time for a party or a nap. I've been watching people yawn all afternoon. With that said, I'm going to go to Bob, to see what he has in store for us.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROBERT E. BEAL: The awards banquet this evening for the Annual Awards of Excellence starts at five o'clock, so you've got an hour to get a nap or since it's Cinco de Mayo, go get a margarita or churro or whatever you want to do. But yes, everybody has about an hour to kill before the beginning of the awards banquet.

MR. McKIERNAN: In light of this time change, maybe people could reach out to like members of the delegation who may not be here, that don't know about that time change.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR BEAL: The five o'clock time? It was mentioned at the end of menhaden, but that would be great if people could.

MR. McKIERNAN: Well, that's true, everybody was here for menhaden.

ADJOURNMENT

CHAIR LUISI: Any other business to come before this Coastal Sharks Board? Seeing none; I'll entertain a motion to adjourn. This meeting is adjourned, thank you.

(Whereupon the meeting adjourned at 3:55 p.m. on Tuesday, May 5, 2026)

Outlook

[New] [External] Sharks and Striped Bass

From Michael Roy <captainmike@reelcastcharters.com>
Date Mon 7/27/2026 8:13 PM
To Caitlin Starks <CStarks@ASMFC.org>

Hi,

I wanted to reach out and share what I'm seeing on the water this season regarding the brown shark population and the impact it is having on our striped bass fishery.

Over the past several years, I have expressed my concern that the rapidly increasing brown shark population was becoming a significant problem. Unfortunately, this season those concerns have become a reality. From what I am seeing on the water every day, the situation has reached a point where it is severely impacting our ability to fish for striped bass during the summer months.

Nearly every area holding striped bass is now holding large numbers of brown sharks. Instead of catching striped bass, we are hooking sharks continuously throughout the day. Even when we do hook a striper, there is a high likelihood that it will be attacked before we can land it. It has become extremely difficult to successfully target striped bass because the sharks are so widespread and aggressive.

As a full-time charter captain, this is more than an inconvenience—it is threatening my livelihood. July and August are typically two of the most important months of my season, yet this year I find myself unable to consistently provide the striped bass trips my clients book.

I'm writing because I believe this issue deserves serious attention. My observations come from being on the water virtually every day throughout the season, and I have never seen anything approaching the shark abundance we are experiencing now. The ecosystem appears to have changed dramatically, and the effects on the striped bass fishery are becoming impossible to ignore.

We desperately need a shark season to target them or we will not have a summer striped bass fishery left!

Captain Mike Roy

Reel Cast Charters

(203) 710-5116

www.reelcastcharters.com

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Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

1050 N. Highland Street • Suite 200A-N • Arlington, VA 22201
703.842.0740 • asmfc.org

MEMORANDUM

TO: **Coastal Sharks Management Board**

FROM: **Caitlin Starks, Senior FMP Coordinator**

DATE: **October 26, 2026**

RE: **2027 Coastal Shark Specifications and Smooth Dogfish State Shares**

This memo contains proposed coastal shark specifications for the 2027 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)

The proposed 2027 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 2027 coastal shark fishery. Atlantic shark fisheries will automatically open on January 1, 2027 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

The following motion is provided for the Board's consideration to set coastal sharks specifications for the 2027 fishing year:

Move to adopt the 2027 coastal shark specifications matching the default season start date and retention limits as specified by the National Marine Fisheries Service final rule published on November 8, 2023 (88 FR 77039). The fishing season will open on January 1, 2027 with a commercial possession limit of 55 large coastal sharks (LCS) other than sandbar sharks per vessel per trip (i.e., aggregated LCS and hammerhead shark management groups) and 8 blacknose sharks per vessel trip. The commercial possession limit is subject to change; states will follow NMFS for in-season changes to the commercial possession limit.

Smooth Dogfish State Shares

If the base federal coastwide quota for the 2027 Atlantic smooth dogfish fishery (1,802.6 dressed weight (dw) metric tons; 3,973,902 dw lbs) is adopted, state shares would be 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 2027. 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 shares[1] of the coastwide smooth dogfish quota based on the base coastwide quota for the 2027 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

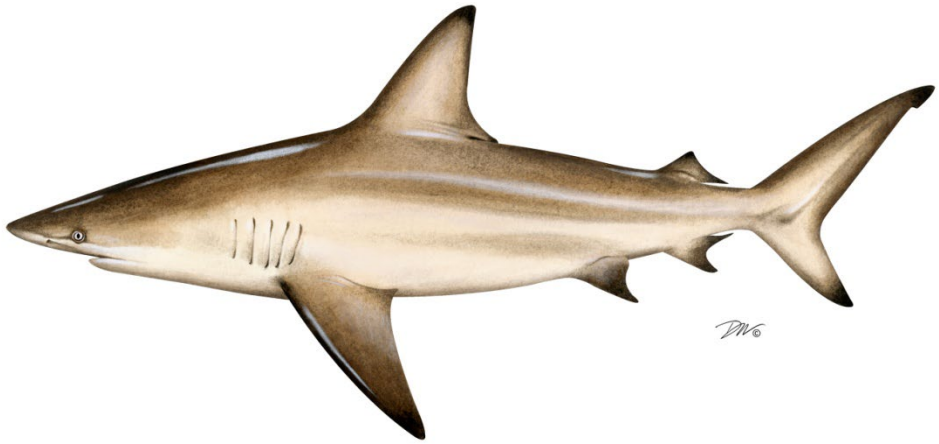
DRAFT FOR BOARD REVIEW

ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION

REVIEW OF THE INTERSTATE FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN

FOR COASTAL SHARKS

2025 FISHING YEAR



Prepared by the Coastal Sharks Plan Review Team

October 2027

Sustainable and Cooperative Management of Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

DRAFT FOR BOARD REVIEW

REVIEW OF THE ASMFC FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN AND STATE COMPLIANCE FOR COASTAL SHARKS FOR THE 2025 FISHERY

Management Summary

Date of FMP Approval:	August 2008
Amendments:	None
Addenda:	Addendum I (September 2009) Addendum II (May 2013) Addendum III (October 2013) Addendum IV (August 2016) Addendum V (October 2018)
Management Unit:	Entire coastwide distribution of the resource from the estuaries eastward to the inshore boundary of the EEZ
States With Declared Interest:	Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida
Active Boards/Committees:	Coastal Shark Management Board, Advisory Panel, Technical Committee, and Plan Review Team

I. Status of the Fishery Management Plan

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC; Commission) adopted its first fishery management plan (FMP) for coastal sharks in 2008. Coastal sharks were initially managed under this plan as six different complexes: prohibited, research, small coastal, non-sandbar large coastal, pelagic and smooth dogfish. The Board does not actively set quotas for any shark species. The Commission follows National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA Fisheries) openings and closures for small coastal sharks, non-sandbar large coastal shark, and pelagic sharks. Species in the prohibited category may not be possessed or taken. Sandbar sharks may only be taken with a shark fishery research permit. All species must be landed with their fins attached to the carcass by natural means. This was adjusted through subsequent addenda listed below. The Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Coastal Sharks (FMP) established the following goals and objectives.

GOAL
The goal of the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Coastal Sharks is "to promote stock rebuilding and management of the coastal shark fishery in a manner that is biologically, economically, socially, and ecologically sound."

OBJECTIVES

In support of this goal, the following objectives for the FMP include:

1. Reduce fishing mortality to rebuild stock biomass, prevent stock collapse, and support a sustainable fishery.
2. Protect essential habitat areas such as nurseries and pupping grounds to protect sharks during particularly vulnerable stages in their life cycle.
3. Coordinate management activities between state and federal waters to promote complementary regulations throughout the species' range.
4. Obtain biological and improved fishery related data to increase understanding of state water shark fisheries.
5. Minimize endangered species bycatch in shark fisheries.

The FMP has been adapted through the following addenda:

Addendum I (September 2009)

Approved in September 2009, Addendum I modified the FMP to allow commercial fishermen to process (remove the fins of) smooth dogfish at sea from March – June of each year, but also requires a 5-95% fin to carcass ratio for all dressed smooth dogfish carcasses. This Addendum also removed recreational smooth dogfish possession limits, as well as the two-hour gill-net check requirement for commercial fishermen, which applied to all shark species.

Addendum II (May 2013)

Approved in May 2013, Addendum II modified Addendum I to allow commercial fishermen to process (remove the fins of) smooth dogfish at sea year-round but requires a 12-88% fin-to-carcass ratio for all dressed smooth dogfish carcasses. This ratio was consistent with the Shark Conservation Act of 2010. Addendum II also allocates state-shares of the upcoming federal smoothhound shark quota based on historical landings from 1998-2010.

Addendum III (October 2013)

Addendum III modifies the species groups to ensure consistency with NOAA Fisheries. It creates two new species groups (Blacknose and Hammerhead Species Groups). The addendum also increases the recreational minimum size limit for all hammerhead species to 78 in fork length (FL).

Addendum IV (August 2016)

Addendum IV allows smooth dogfish carcasses to be landed with corresponding fins removed from the carcass as long as the total retained catch, by weight, is composed of at least 25% smooth dogfish, consistent with federal management measures.

Addendum V (October 2018)

Addendum V allows the Board to respond to changes in the stock status of coastal shark populations and adjust regulations through Board action rather than an addendum, ensuring greater consistency between state and federal shark regulations. Addendum V allows the Board to change a suite of commercial and recreational measures, such as recreational size and possession limits, season length, and area closures (recreational and commercial), in addition to

the current specifications for just the commercial fishery, throughout the year when needed. Under this provision, if the Board chooses to adjust measures through Board action, the public will be able to provide comment prior to Board meetings, as well as at Board meetings at the discretion of the Board Chair. Additionally, the Board can still implement changes in shark regulations through an addendum.

In 2019, in response to measures implemented by NOAA Fisheries through Amendment 11 for Federal Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Permit Holders, the Board approved changes to the recreational size limit for Atlantic shortfin mako sharks in state waters, specifically, a 71 in straight line FL for males and an 83 in straight line FL for females. These measures were implemented in response to the 2017 Atlantic shortfin mako shark stock assessment that found the resource is overfished and experiencing overfishing. The states were required to implement the changes to the recreational minimum size limit for Atlantic shortfin mako sharks by January 1, 2020.

Additionally in 2019, the Board moved to require non-offset circle hooks for the recreational shark fishery in state waters with an implementation date of July 1, 2020. The Board chose to do so after NOAA Fisheries requested that the states implement a circle hook requirement for the recreational fishery consistent with the measures approved in HMS Amendment 11.

In May 2022 the Board approved a zero retention limit in state waters for Atlantic shortfin mako sharks for both recreational and commercial fisheries. These measures are consistent with those implemented by NOAA Fisheries for federal HMS permit holders. This action was taken in response to the 2019 Atlantic shortfin mako shark stock assessment update that indicates the resource is overfished and experiencing overfishing, with a rebuild date of 2070.

In May 2024, the Board established a zero possession limit for oceanic whitetip sharks for recreational and commercial fisheries, consistent with the NOAA Fisheries final rule adding oceanic whitetip to the prohibited species list in US waters of the Atlantic Ocean, effective February 2, 2024.

Table 1. List of commercial shark management groups under Commission FMP

Species Group	Species within Group
Prohibited	Sand tiger, bigeye sand tiger, whale, basking, white, dusky, bignose, Galapagos, night, reef, narrowtooth, Caribbean sharpnose, smalltail, Atlantic angel, longfin mako, bigeye thresher, sharpnose sevengill, bluntnose sixgill and bigeye sixgill sharks
Research	Sandbar sharks
Non-Blacknose Small Coastal	Atlantic sharpnose, finetooth, and bonnethead sharks
Blacknose	Blacknose sharks
Aggregated Large Coastal	Silky, tiger, blacktip, spinner, bull, lemon, and nurse sharks
Hammerhead	Scalloped hammerhead, great hammerhead and smooth hammerhead
Pelagic	Shortfin mako*, porbeagle, common thresher, oceanic whitetip*, and blue sharks
Smoothhound	Smooth dogfish and Florida smoothhound sharks

*Zero retention limits are in place for these species

II. Status of the Stocks

Stock status is assessed by species or by species complex if there are not enough data for an individual assessment. Eleven species have been assessed domestically, three species have been assessed internationally, and the rest have not been assessed. Table 2 describes the current stock status of all assessed shark species along with references for the stock assessments. More details on assessments are provided below, beginning with the most recent.

A stock assessment for sandbar sharks (SEDAR 101) is currently ongoing and expected for completion in 2027. A stock assessment for bull sharks is scheduled to begin in 2027.

A research track assessment of the hammerhead complex (SEDAR 77) was completed in 2024. Based on the 2009 stock assessment for the Northwest Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico populations of scalloped hammerhead sharks (*Sphyrna lewini*), which indicated the Northwest Atlantic stock is overfished and experiencing overfishing (Hayes et al. 2009), NOAA Fisheries established a scalloped hammerhead rebuilding plan that ends in 2023. Since the assessment, research has determined that in the U.S. Atlantic, a portion of animals considered scalloped hammerheads are actually a cryptic species, recently named the Carolina hammerhead (*Sphyrna gilberti*; Quattro et al. 2013). Little to no species-specific information exists regarding the distribution, abundance and life history of the two species, therefore for now, both species are currently managed under the name scalloped hammerhead. The SEDAR 77 assessment preliminarily indicates that the scalloped hammerhead shark was not overfished and overfishing was not occurring in the terminal year (2019). For smooth hammerheads it suggests overfishing most likely is not occurring and the stock has been rebuilding since 2000. The assessment found that for the great hammerhead shark the stock is overfished, and no overfishing is occurring in the terminal year.

In December 2020, Southeast Data and Assessment Review SEDAR completed a benchmark assessment of the Atlantic blacktip shark (*Carcharhinus limbatus*) stock (SEDAR 65), which indicates the stock is not overfished and not experiencing overfishing.

In June 2020, the International Commission on the Convention of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT)'s Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS) completed an assessment of Porbeagle sharks (*Lamna nasus*), which indicates the stock is overfished and not experiencing overfishing. As a result of the previous 2009 assessment, NOAA Fisheries established a 100-year rebuilding plan for porbeagle sharks; the expected rebuilding date is 2108.

The 2017 ICCAT assessment of the North Atlantic population of shortfin mako sharks (*Isurus oxyrinchus)* indicates that the stock is overfished and overfishing is occurring. Multiple models were explored and new data sources were integrated. Combined probability of overfishing occurring and the stock being in an overfished state was 90% across all models.

The 2017 stock assessment (SEDAR 54) for sandbar sharks (*Carcharhinus plumbeus*) indicates the stock is overfished and not experiencing overfishing. This assessment used a new approach

(Stock Synthesis) instead of the State Space Age Structure Production Model that was used in the previous assessment (SEDAR 21). A replication analysis conducted using the prior model (updated with data through 2015) resulted in the same stock status as the new model (overfished, no overfishing occurring). The rebuilding date for sandbar sharks is 2070.

The 2016 stock assessment update to SEDAR 21 for Atlantic dusky sharks (*Carcharhinus obscurus*) indicates the stock is overfished and experiencing overfishing. This latest review functioned as an update to the 2011 assessment (SEDAR 21), so no new methodology was introduced. However, all model inputs were updated with more recent data (i.e., 2010-2015 effort, observer, and survey data). The rebuilding date for dusky sharks is 2107.

In 2015, a benchmark stock assessment (SEDAR 39) was conducted for the smoothhound complex, including smooth dogfish (*Mustelus canis*), the only species of smoothhound occurring in the Atlantic. The assessment indicates Atlantic smooth dogfish are not overfished and not experiencing overfishing.

The North Atlantic blue shark (*Prionace glauca*) stock was assessed by ICCAT's SCRS in 2015. Similar to the results of the previous 2008 stock assessment, the assessment indicated the stock is not overfished and not experiencing overfishing. However, scientists acknowledge there is a high level of uncertainty in the data inputs and model structural assumptions; therefore, the assessment results should be interpreted with caution.

SEDAR 34 (2013) assessed the status of Atlantic sharpnose sharks (*Rhizoprionodon terraenovae*) and bonnetheads (*Sphyrna tiburo*). The Atlantic sharpnose shark stock is not overfished and not experiencing overfishing. The stock status of bonnethead stocks (Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico) is considered unknown. Assessment results indicated the stock is not overfished with no overfishing occurring, however all available data pointed towards separate stocks. As the assessment framework would not allow stocks to be split, the assessment continued under a single stock scenario. The results of the assessment were rejected by reviewers noting that the stocks need to be assessed independently. A benchmark assessment is recommended for both stocks of bonnetheads.

A 2011 benchmark assessment (SEDAR 21) of blacknose sharks (*Carcharhinus acrontus*) indicated the stock is overfished and experiencing overfishing. As described in the Magnuson-Stevens Act, NOAA Fisheries must establish a rebuilding plan for an overfished stock. As such, the rebuilding date for blacknose sharks is 2043.

The 2007 SEDAR 13 assessed the SCS complex, finetooth (*Carcharhinus isodon*), Atlantic sharpnose, and bonnethead sharks (SEDAR 2007). The SEDAR 13 peer reviewers considered the data to be the 'best available at the time' and determined the status of the SCS complex to be adequate. Finetooth, Atlantic sharpnose, and bonnethead were all considered to be not overfished and not experiencing overfishing.

Table 2. Stock Status of Atlantic Coastal Shark Species and Species Groups

Species or Complex Name	Stock Status		References/Comments
	Overfished	Overfishing	
Pelagic			
Porbeagle	Yes	No	Porbeagle Stock Assessment, ICCAT Standing Committee on Research and Statistics Report (2020); Rebuilding ends in 2108 (HMS Am. 2)
Blue	No	No	ICCAT Standing Committee on Research and Statistics Report (2015)
Shortfin Mako	Yes	Yes	ICCAT Standing Committee on Research and Statistics Report (2017)
All other pelagic sharks	Unknown	Unknown	
Aggregated Large Coastal Sharks (LCS)			
Atlantic Blacktip	No	No	SEDAR 65 (2020)
Aggregated Large Coastal Sharks - Atlantic Region	Unknown	Unknown	SEDAR 11 (2006); difficult to assess as a species complex due to various life history characteristics/ lack of available data
Non-Blacknose Small Coastal Sharks (SCS)			
Atlantic Sharpnose	No	No	SEDAR 34 (2013)
Bonnethead	Unknown	Unknown	SEDAR 34 (2013)
Finetooth	No	No	SEDAR 13 (2007)
Hammerhead			
Scalloped	No	No	SEDAR 77 (2024) preliminary results
Smooth	Unknown	No	SEDAR 77 (2024) preliminary results; Stock assessment suggests rebuilding has been occurring since 2000.
Great	Yes	No	SEDAR 77 (2024) preliminary results
Blacknose			
Blacknose	Yes	Yes	SEDAR 21 (2010); Rebuilding ends in 2043 (HMS Am. 5a)
Smoothhound			
Atlantic Smooth Dogfish	No	No	SEDAR 39 (2015)
Research			
Sandbar	Yes	No	SEDAR 54 (2017); Rebuilding ends 2070 (HMS Am. 2)
Prohibited			
Dusky	Yes	Yes	SEDAR 21 update (2016); Rebuilding ends in 2108 (HMS Am. 5b)
All other prohibited sharks	Unknown	Unknown	

III. Status of the Fishery

Specifications (Opening, closures, quotas)

NOAA Fisheries sets quotas for coastal sharks through the 2006 Consolidated Atlantic Highly Migratory Species Fishery Management Plan and its amendments. The opening dates, closure dates, and quotas are detailed in Table 3. All non-prohibited coastal shark management groups opened on January 1, 2025. NOAA Fisheries closes commercial shark fisheries when 80% of the available quota is reached. When the fishery closes in federal waters, the Interstate FMP dictates that the fishery also closes in state waters. For 2025, the fishery did not close for any of the species groups before December 31.

Table 3. Commercial quotas for the 2025 shark fishing season. All Atlantic shark fisheries automatically opened on January 1, 2025.

Region or Sub-region	Management Group	2025 Annual Adjusted 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 dressed weight (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

Commercial Landings

Commercial landings data through 2024 are provided in the NOAA Fisheries Stock Assessment and Fisheries Evaluation (SAFE) Report[1] in Tables 4-6. Preliminary commercial landings for the 2025 fishing year are provided in Tables 7-8.

[1] https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/s3/2026-09/safe-report-2024-2025.pdf

Table 4. Commercial Landings (lb dw) of Large Coastal Sharks (LCS) in Atlantic Region, 2020–2024. Source: NOAA HMS SAFE Report, 2024-2025. Note: Blacktip shark landings were mistakenly omitted from the aggregated LCS landings total for 2023 and 2024.

Management Group	LCS	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Aggregated LCS	Blacktip	131,962	106,588	106,092	158,283	150,113
	Bull	17,703	8,745	8,015	5,418	4,381
	Lemon	4,479	4,883	4,333	3,198	3,206
	Nurse	0	0	C	C	C
	Silky	223	C	C	C	C
	Spinner	71,094	63,553	97,997	102,235	51,973
	Tiger	2,232	2,516	1,921	3,565	1,160
	Unclassified, assigned to LCS	90	0	0	0	0
Total aggregated LCS		227,783	<189,000	<220,000	<115,000	<62,000
Hammerhead	Great	27,529	33,621	43,869	48,823	33,784
	Scalloped	12,024	9,947	15,077	3,222	7,700
	Smooth	0	C	C	2,002	C
Total hammerhead		39,553	<44,000	<60,000	54,115	<43,000
Management Group	LCS	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total LCS carcass weight		**267,336**	**229,995**	**278,577**	**327,305**	**253,308**

Management Group	Species	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Sandbar—shark research fishery	Sandbar	49,989	108,197	86,809	49,144	123,059

Table 5. Commercial Landings (lb dw) of Small Coastal Sharks (SCS) in Atlantic Region, 2020-2024. Source: NOAA HMS SAFE Report, 2024-2025.

Management Group	SCS	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Blacknose	Blacknose	10,644	15,056	9,364	13,068	12,221
Non-blacknose	Bonnethead	1,818	4,620	2,844	1,878	776
	Finetooth	7,793	21,575	16,411	21,142	21,416
	Sharpnose, Atlantic	214,303	205,681	126,430	172,738	160,220
Total non-blacknose SCS		**223,913**	**231,873**	**145,708**	**195,758**	**182,412**
Total SCS carcass weight		**234,557**	**246,931**	**155,072**	**208,826**	**194,633**

Table 6. Commercial Landings (lb dw) of U.S. Atlantic Pelagic Sharks, 2020-2024. Source: NOAA HMS SAFE Report, 2024-2025.

Management Group	Pelagic Shark	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Blue sharks	Blue	0	C	C	4,324	C
Porbeagle sharks	Porbeagle	0	C	0	C	962
Other pelagic sharks	Mako, shortfin[1]	36,029	25,942	18,623	441	C
	Oceanic whitetip[2]	0	C	0	0	0
	Thresher	62,485	58,908	39,851	44,323	39,265
Total other pelagic sharks		**98,514**	**84,850**	**58,474**	**44,764**	**39,265**
Unclassified, assigned to pelagic	Unclassified	0	0	0	0	0
Total pelagic carcass weight		**98,514**	**85,177**	**58,474**	**49,088**	**40,227**

Table 7. Preliminary landings estimates in metric tons (mt) and pounds (lb) dressed weight (dw) for the Atlantic shark commercial fisheries, Atlantic Region.

Shark Management Group	2025 Quota (dressed weight, dw)	Estimated Landings through 12/31/2025 (dw)	% of 2025 Quota	2024 Landings through Same Reporting Period (dw)
Aggregated LCS (quota linked to Hammerhead)	168.9 mt (372,552 lb)	61.8 mt (136,208 lb)	37%	84.2 mt (185,731 lb)
Hammerhead (quota linked to Agg. LCS)	27.1 mt (59,736 lb)	20.5 mt (45,162 lb)	76%	17.8 mt (39,191 lb)
Non-Blacknose Small Coastal (quota linked to Blacknose south of 34° N. lat. only)	264.1 mt (582,333 lb)	31.9 mt (70,352 lb)	12%	77.7 mt (171,377 lb)
Blacknose (South of 34° N. lat. only)	17.2 mt (37,921 lb)	2.9 mt (6,471 lb)	17%	5.4 mt (11,852 lb)
Smoothhound	1,802.6 mt (3,973,902 lb)	252.4 mt (556,196 lb)	14%	333.8 mt (735,890 lb)

Table 8. Preliminary landings estimates in metric tons (mt) and pounds (lb) dressed weight (dw) for the Atlantic shark commercial fisheries, No Regional Quotas.

Shark Management Group	2025 Quota (dressed weight, dw)	Estimated Landings through 12/31/2025 (dw)	% of 2025 Quota	2024 Landings through Same Reporting Period (dw)
Shark Research Fishery (Aggregated LCS)	50.0 mt (110,230 lb)	<13 mt (<28,660 lb)	<26%	9.1 mt (20,016 lb)
Shark Research Fishery (Sandbar only)	90.7 mt (199,943 lb)	<56 mt (<123,458 lb)	<62%	56 mt (123,059 lb)
Blue	273.0 mt (601,856 lb)	0 mt (0 lb)	0%	<1 mt (< 2,205 lb)
Porbeagle	1.7 mt (3,748 lb)	<1 mt (2,205 lb)	<59%	<1 mt (<2,205 lb)
Pelagic Sharks other than Porbeagle or Blue ††	488.0 mt (1,075,856 lb)	18.1 mt (39,887 lb)	4%	16.3 mt (35,963 lb)

Recreational Landings

The 2024-2025 NOAA Fisheries SAFE Report includes data for 2020-2024 recreational shark landings (Tables 9-11, Figure 2) . For 2025, recreational data provided in state compliance reports are summarized in Table 12.

Table 9. Estimated Recreational Harvest of Large Coastal Sharks in the U.S. Atlantic Region in Number of Fish. Source: NOAA HMS SAFE Report, 2024-2025.

Species	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Blacktip	1,507	485	1,503	4,292	345
Bull	17	.	1	11	6
Hammerhead, great	5	.	1	.	.
Hammerhead, scalloped	.	.	.	.	.
Hammerhead, smooth	.	.	.	.	.
Hammerhead, unclassified	.	.	.	.	.
Lemon	.	217	11,796	16	.
Nurse	2	1	29,595	36	1,280
Spinner	27	61,228	287	5	865
Tiger	.	1	.	.	.
Requiem shark, unclassified	37,803	241	14,147	10	.
Total	**39,361**	**62,173**	**57,330**	**4,380**	**2,496**

Table 10. Estimated Recreational Harvest of Small Coastal Sharks in the U.S. Atlantic Region in Number of Fish. Source: NOAA HMS SAFE Report, 2024-2025.

Species	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Blacknose	661	1,855	1,105	1,410	880
Bonnethead	28,861	34,840	15,309	18,979	86,238
Finetooth	113	166	1,476	32,382	128
Atlantic sharpnose	34,256	72,251	18,248	24,714	49,219
Total	63,891	110,835	36,138	77,484	136,465

Table 11. Estimated Recreational Harvest of Smoothhound Sharks in the U.S. Atlantic Region in Number of Fish. Source: NOAA HMS SAFE Report, 2024-2025.

Region	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Atlantic	61,128	37,535	17,541	30,627	68,524

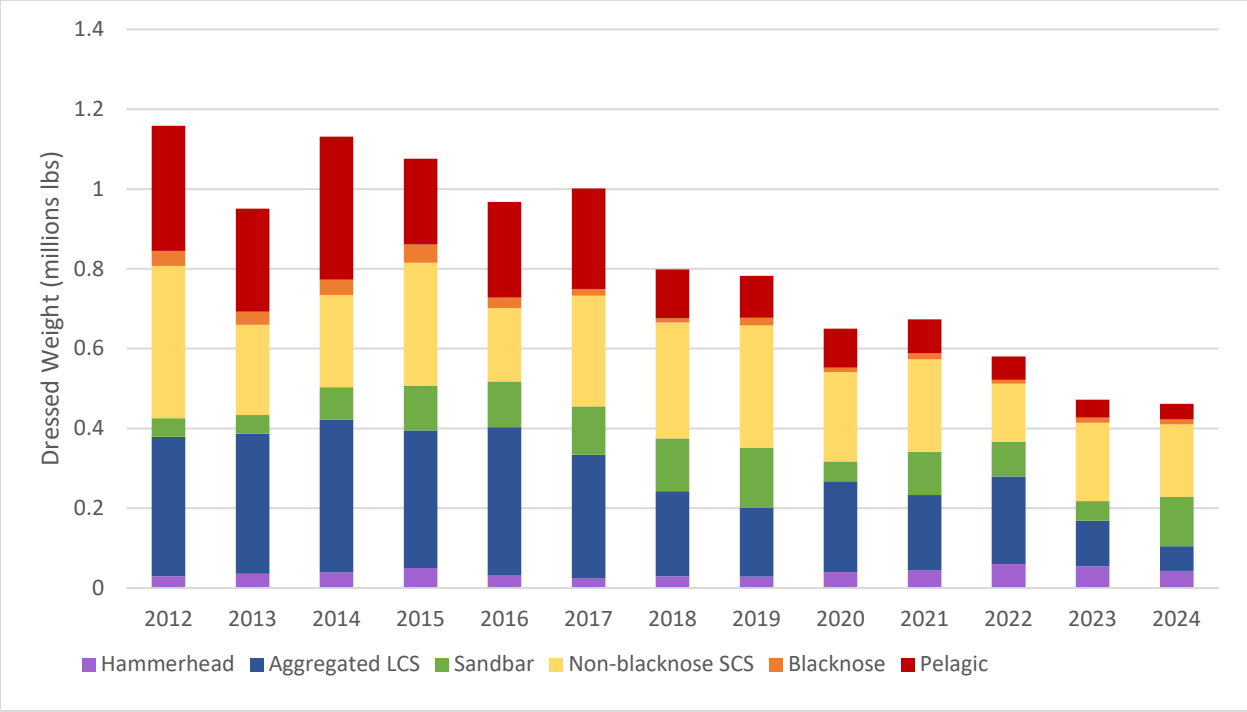


Figure 1. Commercial landings of coastal sharks off the east coast of the United States by species group, 2012-2024. Source: NOAA Fisheries Stock Assessment and Fisheries Evaluation Report, May 2026.

Table 12. Recreational harvest estimates (numbers of sharks or lbs) reported by states in 2025. Most estimates are from the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) and have high percent standard error (PSE). Aggregated LCS and SCS are unspecified species reports.

Species	MA	RI	CT	NY	NJ	DE	MD	VA	NC	SC	GA	FL
Total Hammerhead												
Blacktip										3,113 lbs		
Total Aggregated LCS												56,359 lbs
Blacknose												15,094 lbs
Bonnethead										203,258 lbs	7,249	
Finetooth												
Atl. Sharpnose							6			26,197 lbs		
Spinner		1,640					1			286 lbs		
Thresher							3					
SCS Total									3,061			92,197 lbs
Blue												
Porbeagle	128											
Smooth dogfish	4,537	1,469	13,269	21,557	9,236	1,315		1,179	1,506	5,721 lbs		

IV. Status of Research and Monitoring

Under the Interstate Fishery Management for Coastal Sharks, the states are not required to conduct any fishery-dependent or independent monitoring; however, states are encouraged to submit any information collected while surveying for other species. This section describes the research and monitoring efforts through the 2025 fishing year, where available.

The Cooperative Atlantic States Shark Pupping and Nursery (COASTSPAN) Survey is administered by the NOAA Fisheries Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC) through the Apex Predators Program based at the NEFSC's Narragansett Laboratory in Rhode Island. COASTSPAN has been collecting information on shark nursery areas along the U.S. Atlantic coast since 1998. It involves NOAA Fisheries scientists, along with state and university partners in New Jersey, Delaware, Virginia, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. The survey monitors the presence of young-of-year and juvenile sharks along the east coast. Longline and gillnet sampling, along with mark-recapture techniques are used to determine relative abundance, distribution, and migration of sharks utilizing nursery grounds from Massachusetts to Florida. In 2025, COASTSPAN program participants were the Virginia Institute of Marine Science, South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, and University of North Florida (samples Georgia and north Florida state waters). Standardized indices of abundance from COASTPAN surveys are used in the stock assessments for large and small coastal sharks.

Massachusetts

DMF continued its research on the fine-scale predatory behavior of white sharks off the coast of Massachusetts. In 2025, 22 white sharks were tagged with acoustic, satellite, and/or biologging tags off the coast of Cape Cod. When combined with collaborative tagging efforts off Canada (1), Maine (4), New York (1), New Jersey (1), North Carolina (3), South Carolina (40), and Florida (1), this brings the total to 415 individuals tagged since 2009. These data will be used to examine swimming patterns (e.g., traveling, resting, hunting, foraging, mating), bioenergetics, and, ultimately, provide estimates of the intensity of white shark predation on gray seals.

Rhode Island

The RI Division of Fish & Wildlife, Marine Fisheries Section (RIDEM DMF) has conducted a monthly and seasonal trawl survey since 1979 within Narragansett Bay, Rhode Island Sound and Block Island Sound. Smooth dogfish are the only coastal shark species captured in the trawl survey regularly. The Fall survey catches smooth dogfish most frequently, with indices from the Fall and Monthly surveys greater than the Spring survey in recent years (Figure 2).

RIDEM DMF has been improving Rhode Island's monitoring efforts on coastal sharks in state waters. An acoustic receiver array is now established in RI state waters, which will detect tagged fish within 0.5-1 km of a receiver. The receiver array is traditionally deployed from mid-April through mid-November/early December. To date, the array has detected sand tiger sharks, white sharks, smooth dogfish, blue sharks, shortfin mako sharks, thresher sharks, and sandbar sharks. Additional sampling is also being conducted through a Baited Remote Underwater Video System (BRUVS) survey and shark tagging efforts to understand their

residence time in RI state waters. The BRUVS is intended to monitor various species, including sharks. The tagging is directed at the pelagic shark complex.

In 2022, RIDEM DMF began a state waters observing program with gillnet harvesters. Data are reviewed to assess catch rates for coastal shark species when encountered in commercial gillnets.

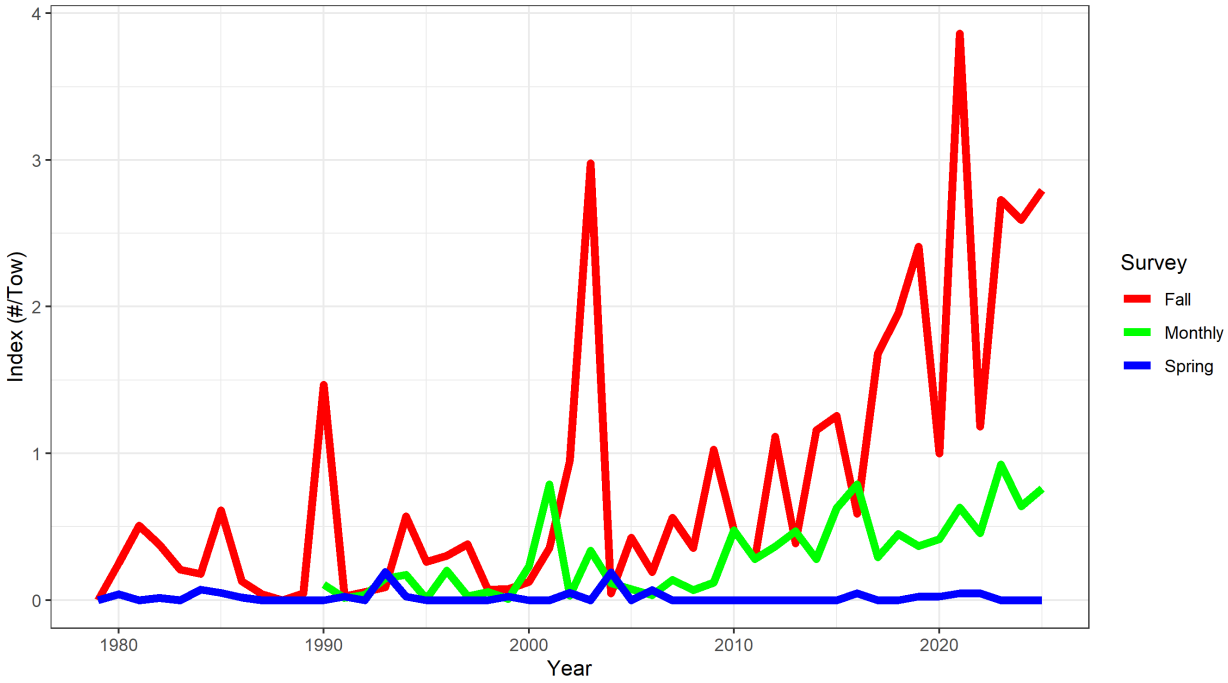


Figure 2. Smooth dogfish (*Mustelus canis*) annual mean number per tow from the RIDEM DMF bottom trawl surveys.

Connecticut

The Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CT DEEP) monitors the abundance of marine resources in nearby coastal waters with the Long Island Sound Trawl Survey. Spring (April, May and June) and fall (September and October) surveys are conducted each year. Other than smooth dogfish, coastal sharks are not typically encountered by the Long Island Sound Trawl Survey (Figure 3). The survey was not conducted in 2025. Additionally, the survey was not conducted in fall 2010 (mechanical issues) or 2020 (COVID-19 pandemic). More information on the Long Island Sound Trawl Survey report can be found here.

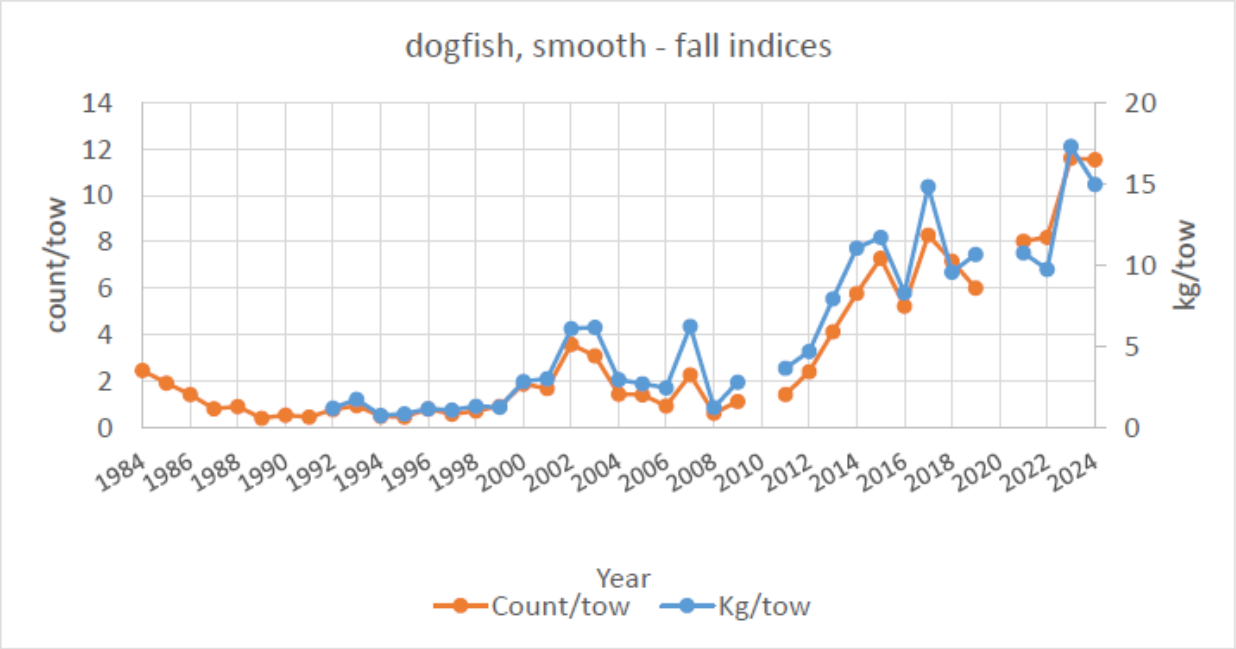


Figure 3. CT DEEP Long Island Sound Trawl Survey Smooth Dogfish Indices

New York

NYSDEC started a near shore multispecies ocean trawl survey fall of 2017. This survey was not completed in 2025 due to vessel issues.

Additionally, In 2025 New York DEC issued six special licenses to shark researchers, and each of these permit holders submitted reports of their sampling activities. Combined, these researchers sampled 11 different shark species from June–October. A total of 155 sharks were sampled and released under the purview of their permits. These researchers collected species, sex, and length information from most of the sharks sampled. Some researchers also collected muscle, fin, blood, or fecal samples as part of their studies. Collectively, these permit holders deployed 81 acoustic tags, 21 mTags, and17 satellite tags on the sharks that they sampled in 2025.

New Jersey

New Jersey does not currently conduct any fishery-independent monitoring programs specifically for Atlantic coastal sharks but does encounter sharks from the state's Ocean Stock Assessment Survey. Prolonged survey vessel maintenance resulted in no sampling for the entire 2025 calendar year.

Sharks sampled by the New Jersey Ocean Stock Assessment Survey are collected by a 30-meter otter trawl every January, April, June, August, and October since 1989. Tows are approximately 1 nautical mile and are performed via a stratified random sampling design. Latitudinal strata are identical to those used by the National Marine Fisheries Service groundfish survey. Longitudinal boundaries are defined by the 18-30, 30-60, and 60-90-foot isobaths. Smooth

Dogfish are cumulatively weighed and measured by total length in centimeters. All other shark species are sorted by gender, weighed individually, and measured by total length in centimeters.

Delaware

Delaware conducts a 30 ft adult trawl survey and a 16 ft juvenile trawl survey in the Delaware Bay. In the adult trawl survey, the smoothhound is the most common shark species caught (Figure 4), with the sand tiger shark (Figure 5) and sandbar shark (Figure 6) taken in low numbers. Thresher, Atlantic angel, Atlantic sharpnose (Figure 7) and Dusky Shark have been rarely caught in the past. Sand tiger and sandbar shark catch per nautical mile increased in 2025 compared to 2024. Smooth dogfish catch per nautical mile decreased in 2025 and remains relatively low compared to the early 2000s. In the juvenile trawl, the species caught include sand tiger sharks (Figure 8), sandbar sharks (Figure 9) and smoothhound (Figure 10). Apart from smoothhound, the capture of coastal sharks in the juvenile trawl is a rare occurrence.

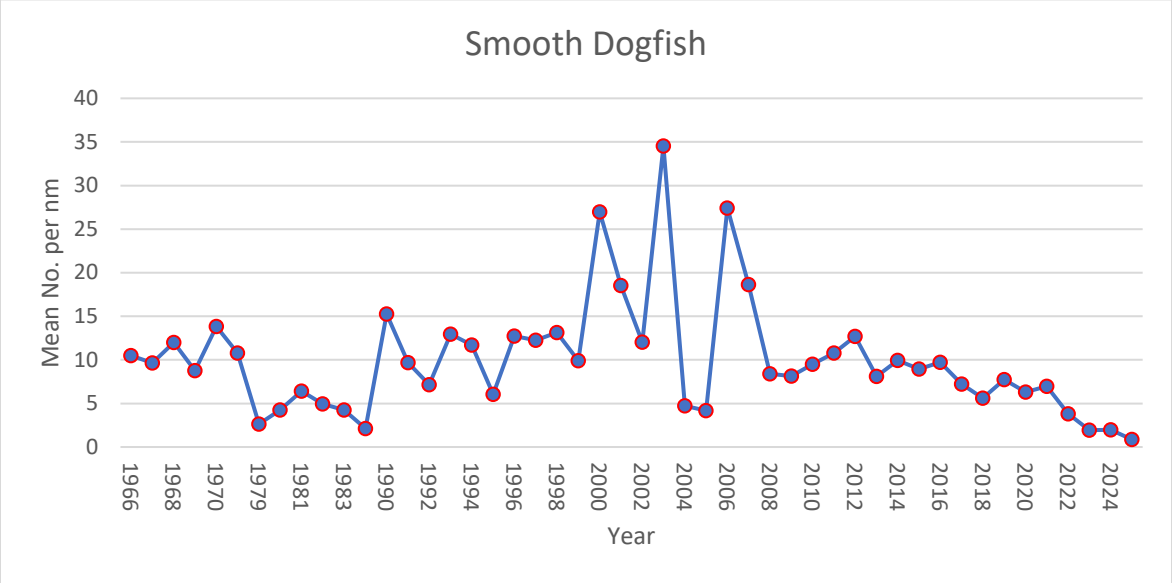


Figure 4. Smooth dogfish relative abundance (mean number per nautical mile), time series (1966 – 2025) as measured in 30-foot trawl sampling in the Delaware Bay.

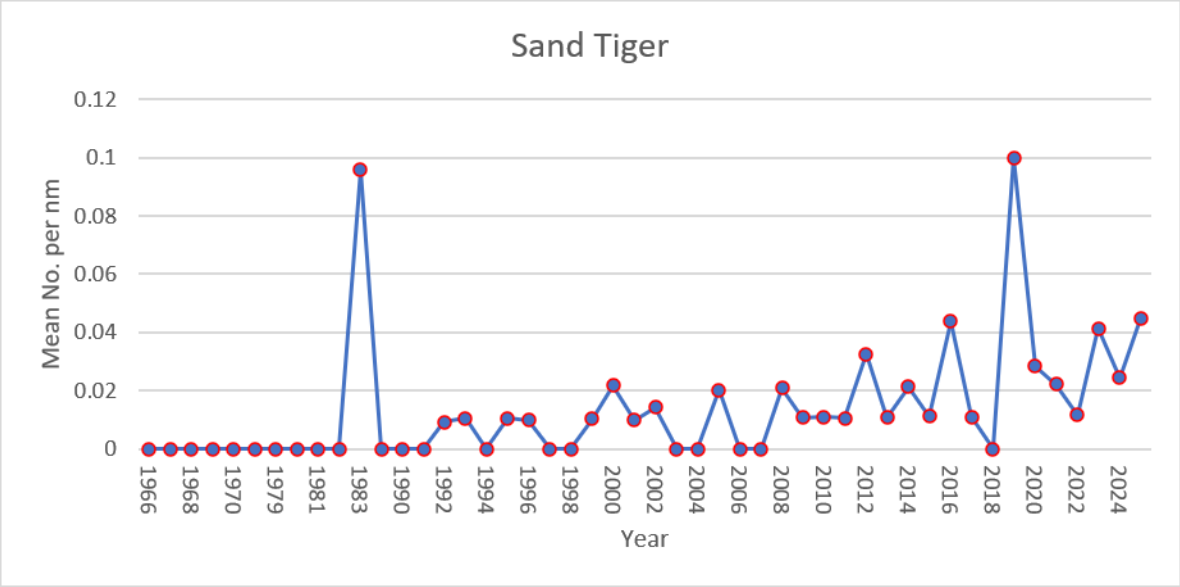


Figure 5. Sand tiger shark relative abundance (mean number per nautical mile), time series (1966 – 2025) as measured in 30-foot trawl sampling in the Delaware Bay.

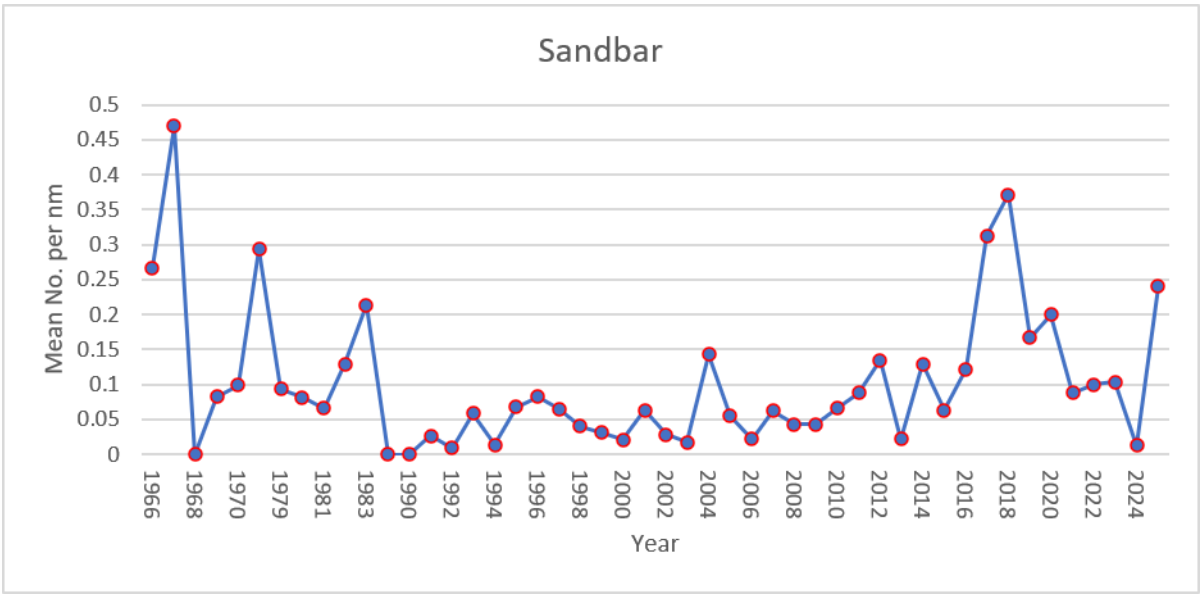


Figure 6. Sandbar shark relative abundance (mean number per nautical mile), time series (1966 – 2025) as measured in 30-foot trawl sampling in the Delaware Bay.

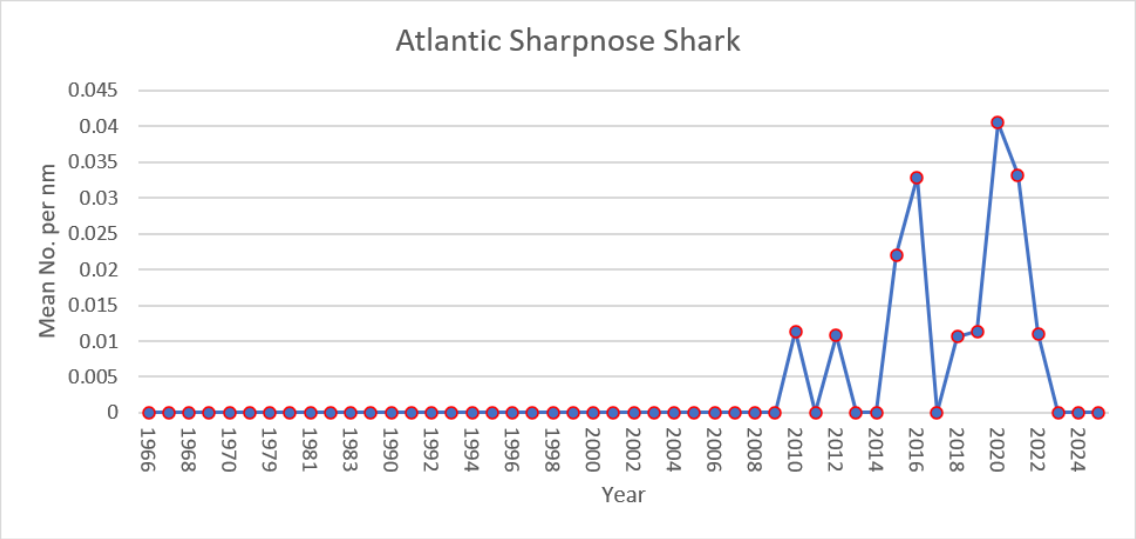


Figure 7. Atlantic sharpnose shark relative abundance (mean number per nautical mile), time series (1966 – 2025) as measured in 30-foot trawl sampling in the Delaware Bay.

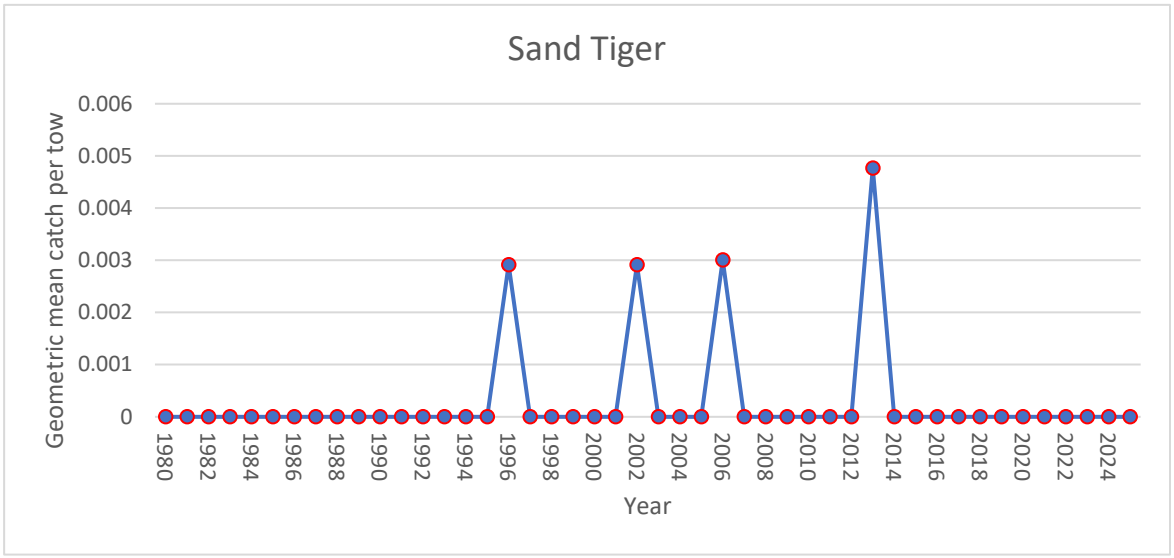


Figure 8. Index of sand tiger shark, time series (1980 – 2025) as measured by 16-foot trawl sampling in the Delaware Estuary.

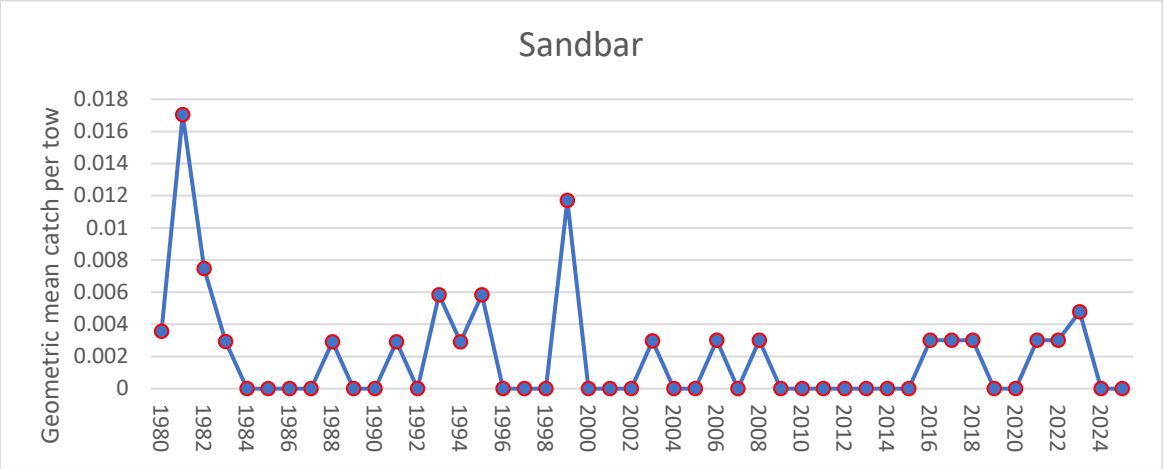


Figure 9. Index of sandbar shark, time series (1980 – 2025) as measured by 16-foot trawl sampling in the Delaware Estuary.

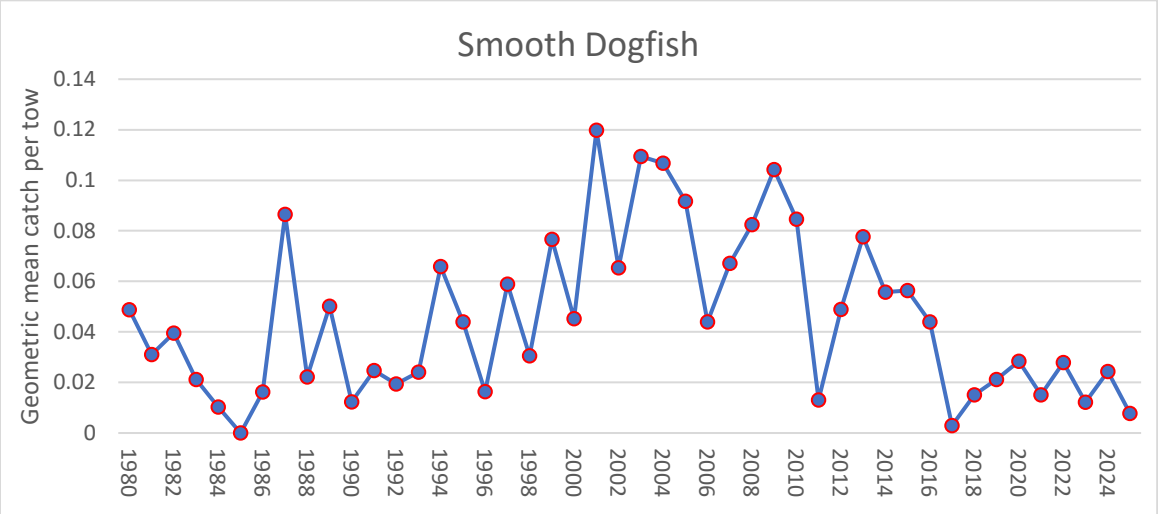


Figure 10. Index of young-of-year smooth dogfish abundance, time series (1980 – 2025) as measured by 16-foot trawl sampling in the Delaware Estuary.

Maryland

No fishery-independent monitoring for Atlantic coastal sharks was conducted in Maryland state waters.

Virginia

The Virginia Institute of Marine Science Shark Research Program began in 1973 and is one of the longest running longline surveys in the world. The program has provided data on habitat utilization, age, growth, reproduction, trophic interactions, basic demographics, and relative abundance for dominant shark species. Cruise times have been variable over the time series, but sampling generally has occurred monthly from May through October. The survey utilizes a

fixed station design with six core sampling locations, although additional auxiliary locations have been sampled frequently over the years.

Beginning in 2012, a separate longline survey conducted by the Virginia Institute of Marine Science designed specifically to target young-of-year sandbar sharks in the lower Chesapeake Bay and Eastern Shore was initiated. The new survey follows a stratified random sampling design, rather than a fixed survey design, and falls under the broader COASTSPAN umbrella survey.

In 2025, Atlantic sharpnose shark was the most commonly encountered species by the offshore survey followed by sandbar shark, spinner shark, sand tiger shark, tiger shark, scalloped hammerhead, blacktip shark, and dusky shark. Seven single blacknose sharks and one bull shark were also collected (Table 13). Seasonal patterns in survey catches were also evident with May and June showing the highest overall catches of sharks, while catches were lower during August and September.

Monthly COASTSPAN catches of neonate sandbar shark (<= 71 cm TL) in the lower Chesapeake Bay were lowest in June and increased during July and August. In the coastal lagoons of the Eastern Shore, peak neonate catch occurred in July (Table 14). As in previous years, neonate total catch in 2025 was higher in the coastal lagoons of the Eastern Shore when compared to that of the lower Chesapeake Bay.

Table 13. Monthly catch summaries for key shark species encountered during offshore longline cruise conducted by VASMAP, 2025 pooled across the standard six sampling sites. Effort is expressed as total longline soak time of 100 hooks.

Month	Effort (hrs)	Sand Tiger	Sandbar	Tiger	Atlantic Sharpnose	Spinner	Blacknose	Blacktip	Bull	Scalloped Hammerhead	Dusky	Silky	Total
May	29.4	10	39	2	0	9	0	5	1	4	7	0	77
Jun	33.4	0	6	6	54	3	7	2	0	1	0	0	79
Aug	28.0	2	5	3	15	4	0	1	0	3	0	0	33
Sep	19.8	0	7	0	0	3	0	1	0	2	2	0	15
Total		12	57	11	69	19	7	9	1	10	9	0	204

Table 14. Neonate catch summaries for each monthly COASTSPAN cruise in 2025, pooled across the sampling sites with the lower Chesapeake Bay and coastal lagoons of the Eastern Shore. Effort is expressed as total longline soak time of 50 hooks.

Lower Chesapeake Bay

Month	Effort (hrs)	Neonate
Jun	10.8	14
Jul	12.7	30
Aug	10.5	36
Total		80

Lagoons, Eastern Shore

Month	Effort (hrs)	Neonate
Jun	7.6	68
Jul	7.5	122
Aug	7.5	42
Total		232

North Carolina

Fishery-Dependent

Fishery-dependent sampling of North Carolina commercial fisheries has been ongoing since 1982 (conducted under Title III of the Interjurisdictional Fisheries Act and funded in part by the U.S. Department of Commerce, National Marine Fisheries Service). Predominate fisheries sampled includes the ocean gill net, estuarine gill net, ocean trawl, long haul seine/swipe net, beach seine, and pound net fisheries. Shark species were sampled from 8 commercial trips in 2025. From these trips, 24 sharks comprising five species were sampled (Table 15).

Table 15. North Carolina 2025 fishery-dependent shark sampling summary by species for total number of individuals and total sampled weight.

Shark Species	#Total Individuals	Weight (kg)
Atlantic Sharpnose	13	22.7
Blacktip	4	44.4
Hammerhead, unidentified	3	69.8
Thresher	3	39.1
Finetooth	1	6.8
Total	24	182.8

Fishery-Independent

The NCDMF has two fishery-independent surveys that collect coastal sharks: A gill net survey (Program 915) and a red drum long line survey (Program 365). Program 915 was initiated in 2001 and aims to provide annual relative abundance indices for key estuarine species in the near shore, Pamlico Sound, Pamlico, Pungo, Neuse, New, and Cape Fear rivers. The survey employs a stratified random sampling design and utilizes multiple mesh gill nets (3.0 in to 6.5 in stretched mesh, by 0.5 in increments). Program 365 was initiated in 2007 for developing an index of abundance for adult red drum, but also allows for capture and tagging of Atlantic coastal sharks in collaboration with the NOAA Fisheries Cooperative Shark Tagging Program.

Eleven species of shark were encountered in Program 915 in 2025, with Atlantic sharpnose (n=452) representing the highest abundance (Table 16). Twelve sharks representing four species were caught in Program 365 in 2025.

Table 16. Summary of shark captures from NCDMF fishery-independent gill net survey for 2025.

Shark Species	# Measured	Minimum TL (mm)	Maximum TL (mm)	Average TL (mm)
Atlantic Angel Shark	3	883	1,015	951
Atlantic Sharpnose Shark	452	272	1,020	528
Blacknose Shark	2	522	1,013	767
Blacktip Shark	31	659	1,460	1,246
Bonnethead Shark	166	438	1,195	928
Bull Shark	16	742	951	891
Dusky Shark	1	966	966	966
Finetooth Shark	15	610	1,491	1,256
Sandbar Shark	73	663	1,350	968
Smooth Dogfish	3	617	730	672
Spinner Shark	2	940	965	952
Unidentified/Misidentified LCS*	2	740	749	744

*Identified as Dusky Shark but TL below length at birth

South Carolina

Currently, data are collected from estuarine waters by the SCDNR Cooperative Atlantic States Shark Pupping and Nursery Habitat survey (COASTSPAN), the SCDNR trammel net survey, and the Coastal Longline Survey. The COASTSPAN survey monitors the presence and abundance of young-of-year and juvenile sharks in the estuaries and bays of South Carolina from April-September using gillnets, longlines and drumlines to sample index stations (Table 17).

The SCDNR trammel net survey is designed to sample recreationally important species in shallow estuarine waters. Sharks are not a target species, but their abundance as well as length and sex data are recorded (Table 12). Stations selected based on suitable habitats are randomly sampled using a multi-panel net to encircle a section of marsh. Species captured are measured, sexed if possible, and released. In addition, physical and water quality data are recorded for each sample location.

The presence and abundance of juvenile and adult coastal sharks in the bays, sounds and coastal waters of South Carolina are documented by the Coastal Longline Survey using a stratified-random approach to sample for adult red drum and coastal sharks annually from August to December. Species captured are measured, sexed, tagged, and released, and physical and water quality parameters are recorded. The data gathered from these programs are shared with the NMFS Apex Predators Program and are utilized in stock assessments and management decisions in South Carolina.

Table 17. Number of sharks captured and tagged by South Carolina Department of Natural Resources' Cooperative Atlantic States Shark Pupping and Nursery Habitat Survey (COASTSPAN), Trammel Net Survey, and Coastal Longline survey in 2025.

	COASTSPAN		Trammel Net		Coastal Longline Survey	
Shark Species	Captured	Tagged	Captured	Tagged	Captured	Tagged
Atlantic Sharpnose	110	0	42	0	313	0
Blacknose	7	6	2	0	80	77
Blacktip	54	32	12	0	83	69
Bonnethead	209	143	167	0	20	19
Bull	10	10	2	0	4	3
Dusky	0	0	0	0	0	0
Finetooth	229	71	25	0	43	38
Great Hammerhead	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lemon	18	17	12	0	3	1
Nurse	2	0	0	0	2	1
Sand Tiger	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sandbar	244	130	4	0	89	78
Scalloped/Carolina Hammerhead	39	0	1	0	6	6
Smooth Dogfish	0	0	0	0	0	0
Spinner	1	1	0	0	23	22
Tiger	0	0	0	0	0	0

Georgia

Fishery-Dependent

Although a directed fishery for sharks does not exist in Georgia waters, there is a fishery-dependent sampling project conducted by the Coastal Resources Division (CRD) that can result in the incidental capture of coastal sharks. The Marine Sportfish Carcass Recovery Project, a partnership with recreational anglers along the Georgia coast, is used to collect biological data from finfish. In 2025, no coastal shark species were included.

Fishery-Independent

Georgia has several fishery-independent surveys that sample in areas where coastal shark species are encountered and one survey specifically designed to sample sub-adult sharks in Georgia's inshore waters.

- *Coastal Longline Survey (SEAMAP):* The Coastal Longline Survey is designed to sample adult Red Drum and coastal sharks. Sampling occurs in inshore and nearshore waters of southeast Georgia from mid-June through mid-December. Sampling gear consists of a bottom set 926 m, 600 lb test monofilament mainline configured with 60, 0.5 m gangions made of 200 lb test monofilament. Each gangion consists of a longline snap and a 15/0 circle hook. Soak time for each set is 30 minutes. During 2025, CRD staff deployed 140 sets consisting of 8,400 hooks and 70 hours of soak time. A total of 225 sharks were captured, representing 11 species (Table 18).

- *Shark Nursery Survey (COASTSPAN):* The University of North Florida assumed field operations for this survey in 2016. Data for the complete time series are maintained by the NMFS Apex Predators Program in Narragansett, RI (contact: Cami McCandless).
- *Ecological Monitoring Trawl Survey (EMTS):* The EMTS is designed to sample penaeid shrimp, blue crab, and other marine organisms typically encountered in the trawl for management and monitoring purposes. Each month, a 40 ft flat otter trawl with neither a turtle excluder device nor bycatch reduction device is deployed at 36 stations across six estuaries. At each station, a standard 15-minute tow is made. During 2025, 432 tows/observations were conducted, totaling 106.68 hours of tow time. A total of 172 sharks, representing 4 species, were captured during 2025 (Table 18).
- *Marine Sportfish Population Health Survey (MSPHS)*: The MSPHS is a multi-faceted ongoing survey used to collect information on the biology and population dynamics of recreationally important finfish. Sampling is ongoing in three Georgia estuaries: the Altamaha River System, St. Andrew, and Wassaw. During the June to August period, young-of-the-year Red Drum in the three estuaries are collected using gillnets to gather data on relative abundance and location of occurrence. Between September and November, fish populations in the Altamaha River System and Wassaw Estuary are monitored using trammel nets to gather data on relative abundance and size composition. In 2025, a total of 324 gillnet and 225 trammel net sets were made, resulting in the capture of 207 sharks representing 8 species (Table 18).

Table 18. Numbers of coastal sharks captured in Georgia fishery-independent surveys in 2021 by species and by survey.

	CLS	EMTS	MSPHS
SHARK, ATLANTIC SHARPNOSE	96	23	2
SHARK, BLACKNOSE	54	---	---
SHARK, BLACKTIP	15	2	3
SHARK, BONNETHEAD	15	146	185
SHARK, BULL	1	---	1
SHARK, FINETOOTH	12	--	3
SHARK, LEMON	---	---	12
SHARK, NURSE	2	---	---
SHARK, SANDBAR	17	--	---
SHARK, SCALLOPED HAMMERHEAD	3	1	---
SHARK, SPINNER	5	---	1
SHARK, TIGER	5	---	---
ALL SPECIES COMBINED	225	172	207

Florida

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission had no fisheries-independent monitoring programs for coastal sharks during the 2025 calendar year.

V. Status of Management Measures and Issues

Coastal Sharks are managed under the Interstate FMP for Coastal Sharks, which was adopted in August 2008 and effective in January 1, 2009, Addendum I (2009), Addendum II (2013),

Addendum III (2013), Addendum IV (2016), and Addendum V (2018). The FMP addresses the management of 41 species and establishes a suite of management measures for recreational and commercial shark fisheries in state waters (0 – 3 miles from shore). Addendum V provided the Board the ability to respond to changes in the stock status of coastal shark populations and adjust regulations through Board action rather than an addendum, ensuring greater consistency between state and federal shark regulations.

ASMFC will continue to respond to changes in the Atlantic Highly Migratory Species FMP and make changes as necessary to the interstate FMP.

VI. Implementation of FMP Compliance Requirements for 2025

Addendum III to the Coastal Sharks FMP was implemented in March 2014, which modified the recreational minimum size limits and the commercial species groupings in the FMP. The Board annually sets specifications, generally maintaining complimentary management with federal waters measures.

In 2019, the Board approved the requirement for non-offset, corrodible, non-stainless steel circle hooks, except when fishing with flies or artificial lures. In 2022, the Board adopted a zero retention limit for Atlantic shortfin mako sharks for recreational and commercial state waters fisheries. In May 2024 the Board also established a zero-possession limit for oceanic whitetip sharks for recreational and commercial fisheries.

Appendix 1 provides an overview of required coastal shark fishery regulations. All states must demonstrate through the inclusion of regulatory language that these recreational and commercial management measures were implemented.

Recreational Size Limits

Table 19. Recreational minimum size limits, 2025.

No Minimum Size	Minimum Fork Length 54 inches		Minimum Fork Length 78 inches
Smoothhound	Tiger	Nurse	Great hammerhead
Atlantic sharpnose	Blacktip	Porbeagle	Scalloped hammerhead
Bonnethead	Spinner	Thresher	Smooth hammerhead
	Bull	Oceanic whitetip	
	Lemon	Blue	
	Blacknose	Finetooth	

Commercial Species Groupings

This FMP establishes eight commercial 'species groups' for management (Table 1): Prohibited, Research, Smoothhound, Non-Blacknose Small Coastal, Blacknose, Aggregated Large Coastal, Hammerhead, and Pelagic. These groupings apply to all commercial shark fisheries in state waters.

VII. PRT Recommendations

State Compliance

The PRT noted one inconsistency with the coastal sharks FMP:

- Delaware's regulations regarding the circle hook requirement states "It is unlawful to use any hook other than a non-offset, corrodible circle hook when recreationally fishing for the sharks specified in this regulation, excluding smoothhound, except when fishing with artificial lures or flies." The exemption of smoothhound from the circle hook requirement is inconsistent with the Board action.

The PRT determined that all other states have fully implemented regulations consistent with the FMP requirements.

De Minimis Status

The Coastal Sharks FMP does not establish specific *de minimis* guidelines that would exempt a state from regulatory requirements contained in this plan. *De minimis* shall be determined on a case-by case basis. *De minimis* often exempts states from monitoring requirements in other fisheries but this plan does not contain any monitoring requirements.

De minimis guidelines are established in other fisheries when implementation and enforcement of a regulation is deemed unnecessary for attainment of the fishery management plan's objectives and conservation of the resource. Due to the unique characteristics of the coastal shark fishery, namely the large size of sharks compared to relatively small quotas, the taking of a single shark could contribute to overfishing of a shark species or group. Therefore, exempting a state from any of the regulatory requirements contained in this plan could threaten attainment of this plans' goals and objectives.

Massachusetts is the only state that has been granted *de minimis* status. Massachusetts can continue to have *de minimis* status until their landings patterns change or they request a discontinuation. In some cases, it is unnecessary for states with *de minimis* status to implement all regulatory requirements in the FMP. Massachusetts has implemented all regulations with two exceptions: it is exempt from the possession limit and closures of the aggregated large coastal and hammerhead shark fisheries.

VIII. Research Recommendations

Research recommendations were identified in 2018 in the Commission's Fisheries Research Priorities document (p. 42).

APPENDIX 1. OVERVIEW OF COASTAL SHARK REGULATIONS

Coastal Sharks FMP Regulatory Requirements

1. Recreational seasonal closure (Section 4.2.1)
    a. Recreational anglers are prohibited from possessing silky, tiger, blacktip, spinner, bull, lemon, nurse, scalloped hammerhead, great hammerhead, and smooth hammerhead in the state waters of Virginia, Maryland, Delaware and New Jersey from May 15 through July 15—regardless of where the shark was caught.
    b. Recreational fishermen who catch any of these species in federal waters may not transport them through the state waters of VA, MD, DE, and NJ during the seasonal closure.
2. Recreationally permitted species (Section 4.2.2)
    a. Recreational anglers are allowed to possess aggregated large coastal sharks, hammerheads, tiger sharks, SCS, and pelagic sharks. Authorized shark species include: aggregated LCS (blacktip, bull, spinner, lemon, and nurse); hammerhead (great hammerhead, smooth hammerhead, scalloped hammerhead); tiger sharks; SCS (blacknose, finetooth, Atlantic sharpnose, and bonnethead sharks); and, pelagic sharks (blue, common thresher, and porbeagle). Sandbar sharks and silky sharks (and all prohibited species of sharks) are not authorized for harvest by recreational anglers.
3. Landings Requirements (Section 4.2.3)
    a. All sharks (with exception) caught by recreational fishermen must have heads, tails, and fins attached naturally to the carcass. Anglers may still gut and bleed the carcass by making an incision at the base of the caudal peduncle as long as the tail is not removed. Filleting sharks at sea is prohibited.
    b. All sharks (with exception) harvested by commercial fishermen within state boundaries must have the tails and fins attached naturally to the carcass through landing. Fins may be cut as long as they remain attached to the carcass (by natural means) with at least a small portion of uncut skin. Sharks may be eviscerated and have the heads removed. Sharks may not be filleted or cut into pieces at sea.
    c. Exception: Fishermen holding a valid state commercial permit may process smooth dogfish sharks at sea out to 50 miles from shore, as long as the total weight of smooth dogfish shark fins landed or found on board a vessel does not exceed 12 percent of the total weight of smooth dogfish shark carcasses landed or found on board.
4. Recreational Minimum Size Limits (Section 4.2.4)
    a. Sharks caught in the recreational fishery must have a fork length of at least 4.5 feet (54 inches) with the exception of Atlantic sharpnose, bonnethead, and

smoothhound which have no minimum size. Hammerhead species must have a fork length (FL) of 6.5 feet (78 inches).

5. Authorized Recreational Gear (Section 4.2.5)
    a. Recreational anglers may catch sharks only using a handline or rod & reel. Handlines are defined as a mainline to which no more than two gangions or hooks are attached. A handline must be retrieved by hand, not by mechanical means.
    b. Non-offset, corrodible, non-stainless steel circle hooks are required when fishing for sharks recreationally, in state waters. The only exception is when fishing with flies or artificial lures.
6. Possession limits in one twenty-four hour period (Section 4.2.7 and 4.3.6)
    a. Recreational and commercial possession limits as specified in Table 18.
    b. Smooth dogfish harvest is not limited in state waters and recreational shore-anglers may harvest an unlimited amount of smooth dogfish.
7. Commercial Seasonal Closure (Section 4.3.2)
    a. All commercial fishermen are prohibited from possessing silky, tiger, blacktip, spinner, bull, lemon, nurse, scalloped hammerhead, great hammerhead, and smooth hammerhead in the state waters of Virginia, Maryland, Delaware and New Jersey from May 15 through July 15. Fishermen who catch any of the above species in a legal manner in federal waters may transit through the state waters listed above if all gear is stowed.
8. Quota Specification (Section 4.3.4)
    a. When NOAA Fisheries closes the fishery for any species, the commercial landing, harvest, and possession of that species will be prohibited in state waters until NOAA Fisheries reopens the fishery.
9. Permit requirements (Section 4.3.8)
    a. State: Commercial shark fishermen must hold a state commercial license or permit in order to commercially catch and sell sharks in state waters.
    b. Federal: A federal Commercial Shark Dealer Permit is required to buy and sell any shark caught in state waters.
    c. Display and research permit is required to be exempt from seasonal closure, quota, possession limit, size limit, gear, and prohibited species restrictions. States are required to include annual information for all sharks taken for display throughout the life of the shark.
10. Authorized commercial gear (Section 4.3.8.3)
    a. Commercial fishermen can only use one of the following gear types (and are prohibited from using any gear type not listed below) to catch sharks in state waters.

i. **Rod & reel.**
ii. **Handlines.** Handlines are defined as a mainline to which no more than two gangions or hooks are attached. A handline is retrieved by hand, not by mechanical means, and must be attached to, or in contact with, a vessel.
iii. **Small Mesh Gillnets.** Defined as having a stretch mesh size smaller than 5 inches.
iv. **Large Mesh Gillnets.** Defined as having a stretch mesh size equal to or greater than 5 inches.
v. **Trawl nets.**
vi. **Shortlines.** Shortlines are defined as fishing lines containing 50 or fewer hooks and measuring less than 500 yards in length. A maximum of 2 shortlines are allowed per vessel.
vii. **Pounds nets/fish traps.**
viii. **Weirs.**

11. Bycatch Reduction Measures (Section 4.3.10)

    a. Any vessel using a shortline must use corrodible circle hooks. All shortline vessels must practice the protocols and possess the recently updated federally required release equipment for pelagic and bottom longlines for the safe handling, release, and disentanglement of sea turtles and other non-target species, all captains and vessel owners must be certified in using handling and release equipment.

12. Smooth Dogfish

    a. Each state must identify their percentage of the overall quota (Addendum II, 3.1)

    b. Smooth dogfish must make up at least 25%, by weight, of total catch on board at time of landing. Trips that do not meet the 25% catch composition requirement can land smooth dogfish, but fins must remain naturally attached to the carcass (Addendum IV, 3.0; modifies Addendum II Section 3.5).

Table 20. Possession/retention limits for shark species in state waters

Recreational	*Shore-angler*	1 shark (of any species except prohibited) per person per day; plus one Atlantic sharpnose, and one bonnethead. No limit on smoothhound.
	Vessel-fishing	1 shark (of any species except prohibited) per vessel per trip; plus one Atlantic sharpnose, and one bonnethead per person per vessel. No limit on smoothhound.
Commercial	*Directed permit*	Variable possession limit for aggregated large coastal sharks (LCS) and hammerhead shark management groups. The Commission will follow NMFS for in-season changes to the possession limit. The possession limit range for LCS is 0-55, the default is 55 sharks per trip. 8 blacknose sharks per trip. No limit for SCS or pelagic sharks.
	Incidental permit	3 aggregated LCS per vessel per trip and 16 pelagic or SCS (combined) per vessel per trip