Atlantic Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Update

Karyl Brewster-Geisz
Highly Migratory Species Management Division

November 2026

This Presentation…

- HMS Priorities Request Regarding EO 14276
- Ongoing Regulatory Actions and Timing
- SEDAR 101 Update
- Shark Depredation Action Plan
- CITES Implementation of Atlantic Smoothhound Sharks



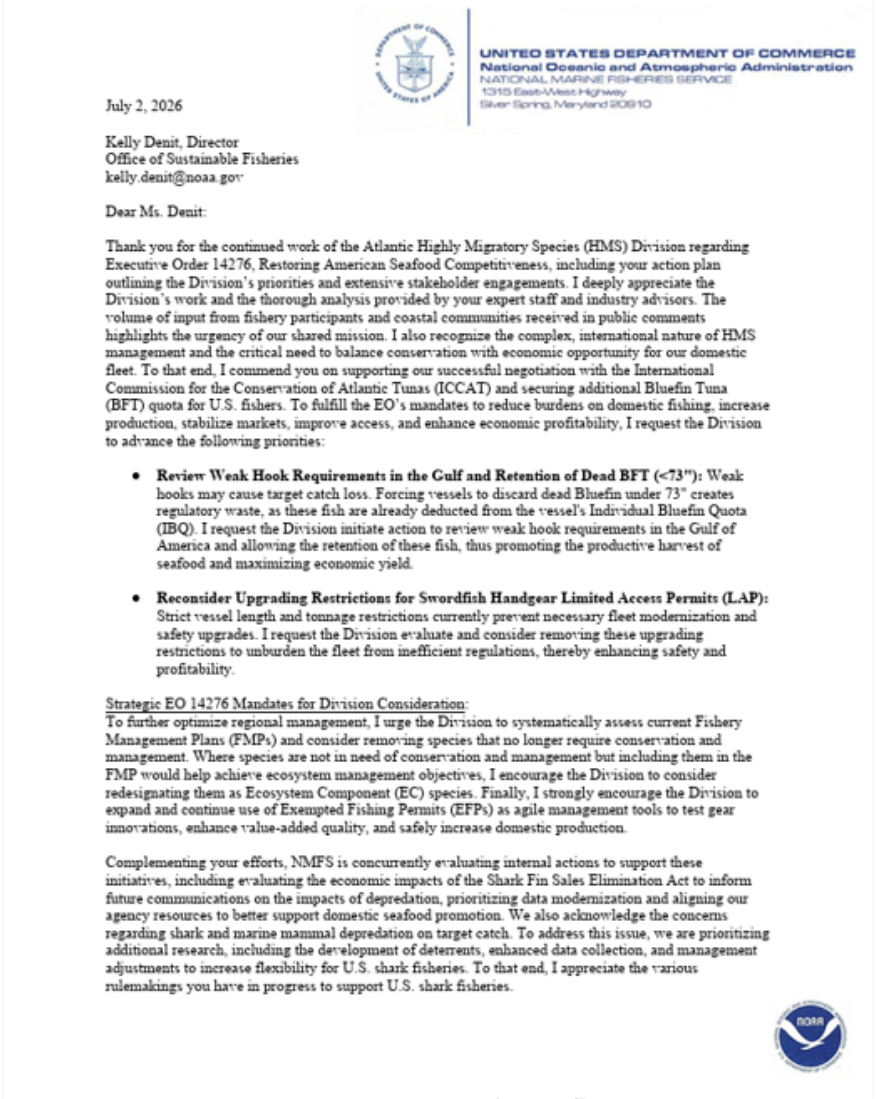




NOAA FISHERIES

HMS Priorities Request Regarding Executive Order 14276

- On July 2, 2026, NOAA Fisheries received a letter from the NOAA Assistant Administrator for Fisheries
- Specific to the HMS Management Division, the letter requested that we advance these priorities:
  - Review weak hook requirements in the Gulf and allow retention of dead bluefin tuna (<73”)
  - Reconsider upgrading restrictions for Swordfish Handgear Limit Access Permits
- Similar to the Council, the letter also requested that we:
  - Systematically assess current FMPs and removing species that no longer require conservation and management and consider redesignating these species as Ecosystem Component Species
  - Expand and continue using exempted fishing permits
- The letter also mentioned NOAA Fisheries actions related to shark depredation and support for the ongoing shark rulemakings



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

July 2, 2026

Kelly Denit, Director
Office of Sustainable Fisheries
kelly.denit@noaa.gov

Dear Ms. Denit:

Thank you for the continued work of the Atlantic Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Division regarding Executive Order 14276, Restoring American Seafood Competitiveness, including your action plan outlining the Division's priorities and extensive stakeholder engagements. I deeply appreciate the Division's work and the thorough analysis provided by your expert staff and industry advisors. The volume of input from fishery participants and coastal communities received in public comments highlights the urgency of our shared mission. I also recognize the complex, international nature of HMS management and the critical need to balance conservation with economic opportunity for our domestic fleet. To that end, I commend you on supporting our successful negotiation with the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) and securing additional Bluefin Tuna (BFT) quota for U.S. fishers. To fulfill the EO's mandates to reduce burdens on domestic fishing, increase production, stabilize markets, improve access, and enhance economic profitability, I request the Division to advance the following priorities:

- **Review Weak Hook Requirements in the Gulf and Retention of Dead BFT (<73"):** Weak hooks may cause target catch loss. Forcing vessels to discard dead Bluefin under 73" creates regulatory waste, as these fish are already deducted from the vessel's Individual Bluefin Quota (IBQ). I request the Division initiate action to review weak hook requirements in the Gulf of America and allowing the retention of these fish, thus promoting the productive harvest of seafood and maximizing economic yield.

- **Reconsider Upgrading Restrictions for Swordfish Handgear Limited Access Permits (LAP):** Strict vessel length and tonnage restrictions currently prevent necessary fleet modernization and safety upgrades. I request the Division evaluate and consider removing these upgrading restrictions to unburden the fleet from inefficient regulations, thereby enhancing safety and profitability.

Strategic EO 14276 Mandates for Division Consideration:
To further optimize regional management, I urge the Division to systematically assess current Fishery Management Plans (FMPs) and consider removing species that no longer require conservation and management. Where species are not in need of conservation and management but including them in the FMP would help achieve ecosystem management objectives, I encourage the Division to consider redesignating them as Ecosystem Component (EC) species. Finally, I strongly encourage the Division to expand and continue use of Exempted Fishing Permits (EFPs) as agile management tools to test gear innovations, enhance value-added quality, and safely increase domestic production.

Complementing your efforts, NMFS is concurrently evaluating internal actions to support these initiatives, including evaluating the economic impacts of the Shark Fin Sales Elimination Act to inform future communications on the impacts of depredation, prioritizing data modernization and aligning our agency resources to better support domestic seafood promotion. We also acknowledge the concerns regarding shark and marine mammal depredation on target catch. To address this issue, we are prioritizing additional research, including the development of deterrents, enhanced data collection, and management adjustments to increase flexibility for U.S. shark fisheries. To that end, I appreciate the various rulemakings you have in progress to support U.S. shark fisheries.

NOAA FISHERIES

Ongoing Regulatory Actions and Timing

Action name	Status	Expected Timing**
Indicator Species – Final rule	Underway	Effective early 2027
Swordfish/Shark Limited Access Permits – Final rule	Underway	Effective early 2027
Electronic Reporting – Final rule	Underway	Publish early 2027; effective July 2027
Blacknose and Recreational sharks – Final rule	Underway; determined as Significant under EO 12866*	Effective early/mid 2027
Revisions to Gear Restrictions Regulations – Final rule	Proposed rule published 8/17; comment period ended 10/13	Effective mid/late 2027
Amendment 16 (sandbar and blacktip sharks) – Proposed rule	Underway	Publish early 2027; comment period ends after Spring AP meeting

* A “significant regulatory action” means any regulatory action is likely to result in a rule that may: 1) Have an annual effect on the economy of $100 million or more or adversely affect in a material way the economy, a sector of the economy, productivity, competition, jobs, the environment, public health or safety, or State, local, or tribal governments or communities; 2) Create a serious inconsistency or otherwise interfere with an action taken or planned by another agency; 3) Materially alter the budgetary impact of entitlements, grants, user fees, or loan programs or the rights and obligations of recipients thereof; or 4) Raise novel legal or policy issues arising out of legal mandates, the President’s priorities, or the principles set forth in the Executive Order.

** Expected timing as an estimate and may change

NOAA FISHERIES

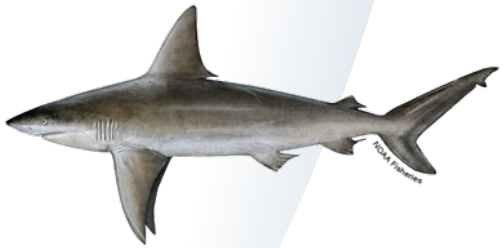
New Regulatory Actions Specific to the Priorities Request

Action name	Status
Gulf of America Weak Hooks	Defining scope
Pelagic longline bluefin tuna dead discard retention and bluefin tuna commercial minimum size	Defining scope
Swordfish Handgear Limited Access Permit Restrictions	Defining scope
Reconsidering Limited Access Permits and Open Access Permits	Defining scope

NOAA FISHERIES

SEDAR 101: Sandbar Shark Stock Assessment Update

- Plan to use a Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE), which is process designed to develop robust management procedures (MPs)
- MSE - Simulation approach to manage a stock based on a model-based or empirical harvest control rule or strategy
- Data workshop report released in August 2026
- Expected completion in mid-2027



NOAA FISHERIES

Shark Depredation Action Plan

- John Carlson, Special Advisor for Shark Depredation to the Deputy Under Secretary for Oceans and Atmosphere
- NOAA's Strategy for Understanding Shark Depredation
- Goals
  - Shark stock assessment and scientific monitoring
  - Establish a scientific framework for characterizing/mitigating shark depredation
  - Advance tech innovations for bycatch mitigation/gear selectivity
  - Optimize sustainable harvest opportunities and management flexibility
  - Engage with US Fish and Wildlife Service on Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)



NOAA FISHERIES

CITES Implementation of Atlantic Smoothhound Sharks

- Listed under Appendix II at the 20th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES (CoP20)
- Smoothhounds (*Mustelus* spp.)
  - Smooth dogfish *(M. canis)*
  - Florida smoothhound (*M. norrisi*)
  - Gulf smoothhound (*M. sinusmexicanus*)
- Implementation Date – **June 5, 2027**

NOAA FISHERIES

For More Information

Subject	Contact Information and HMS AP Presentation
SEDAR 101	Katie Siegfried (Kate.Siegfried@noaa.gov) John Walter (john.f.walter@noaa.gov) https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/s3/2026-09/sedar_101_sandbar_stock_assessment_update.pdf
Shark Depredation Action Plan	John Carlson (john.carlson@noaa.gov) https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/s3/2026-09/shark_dep_action_plan_hms-ap-9-2026.pdf
CITES Implementation of Atlantic Smoothhound Sharks	Division of Management Authority (ManagementAuthority@fws.gov) Division of Scientific Authority (ScientificAuthority@fws.gov) FWS Office of Law Enforcement (LawEnforcement@fws.gov) https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/s3/2026-05/hms-cites-implementation-atlantic-smoothhound-fishery-may-2026.pdf

NOAA FISHERIES

Questions?

Karyl Brewster-Geisz, Karyl.Brewster-Geisz@noaa.gov



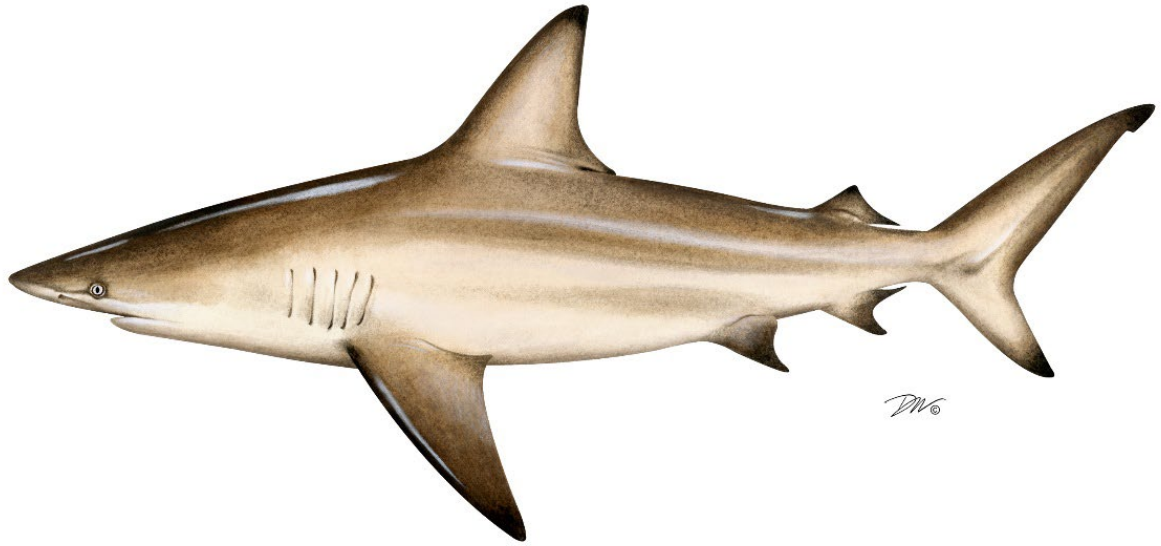
Thank you!

NOAA FISHERIES

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries COMMISSION

Coastal Sharks – Specifications for 2027 (and beyond)

October 2026



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries COMMISSION

Background

- Specifications for the 2027 fishing year based on the default federal regulations for Atlantic coastal shark fisheries.
- Effective January 1, 2024:
  - Commercial shark fisheries will automatically open on January 1 of each year under the base quotas and default retention limits
  - 55 LCS other than sandbar sharks (i.e., aggregated LCS and hammerhead shark management groups) per vessel per trip
  - 8 blacknose sharks per vessel per trip
  - In-season adjustments to the commercial possession limits depending on catch rates.

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries COMMISSION

2027 NOAA base quotas and retention limits

Region	Management Group	2025 Annual Quota	Quota Linkages	Commercial Retention Limits
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

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries COMMISSION

2027 NOAA base quotas and retention limits

Region	Management Group	2025 Annual Quota	Quota Linkages	Commercial Retention Limits
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)		

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries COMMISSION

Smooth Dogfish State Shares

	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

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries COMMISSION

Board Action

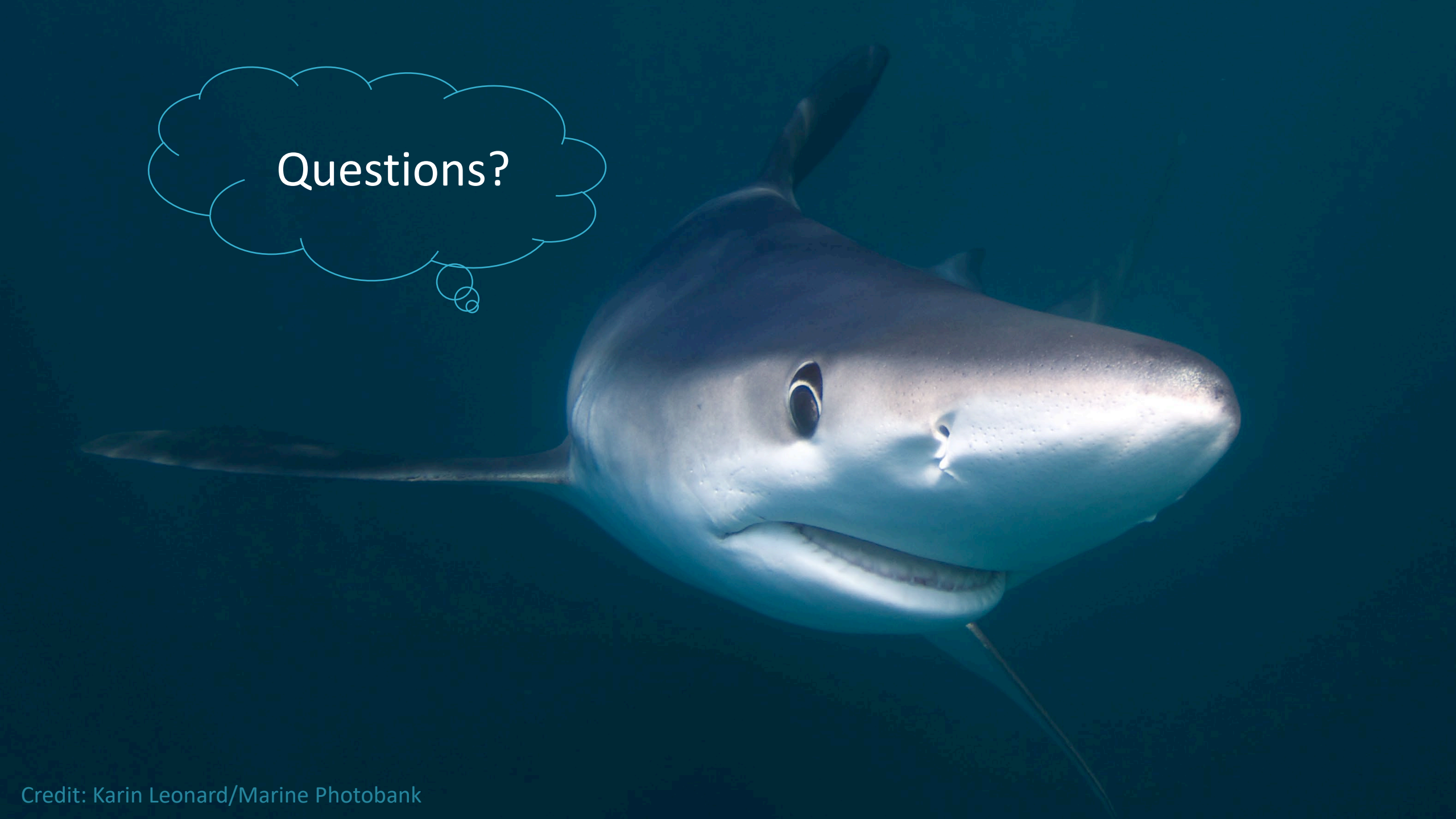
- Under the FMP, the Board has the option to set specifications for up to 5 years
  - Annual review of fishery/stock information and specifications

- NOAA Fisheries now opens shark fisheries January 1 each year with default measures

- Does the Board want to set specifications for multiple years?

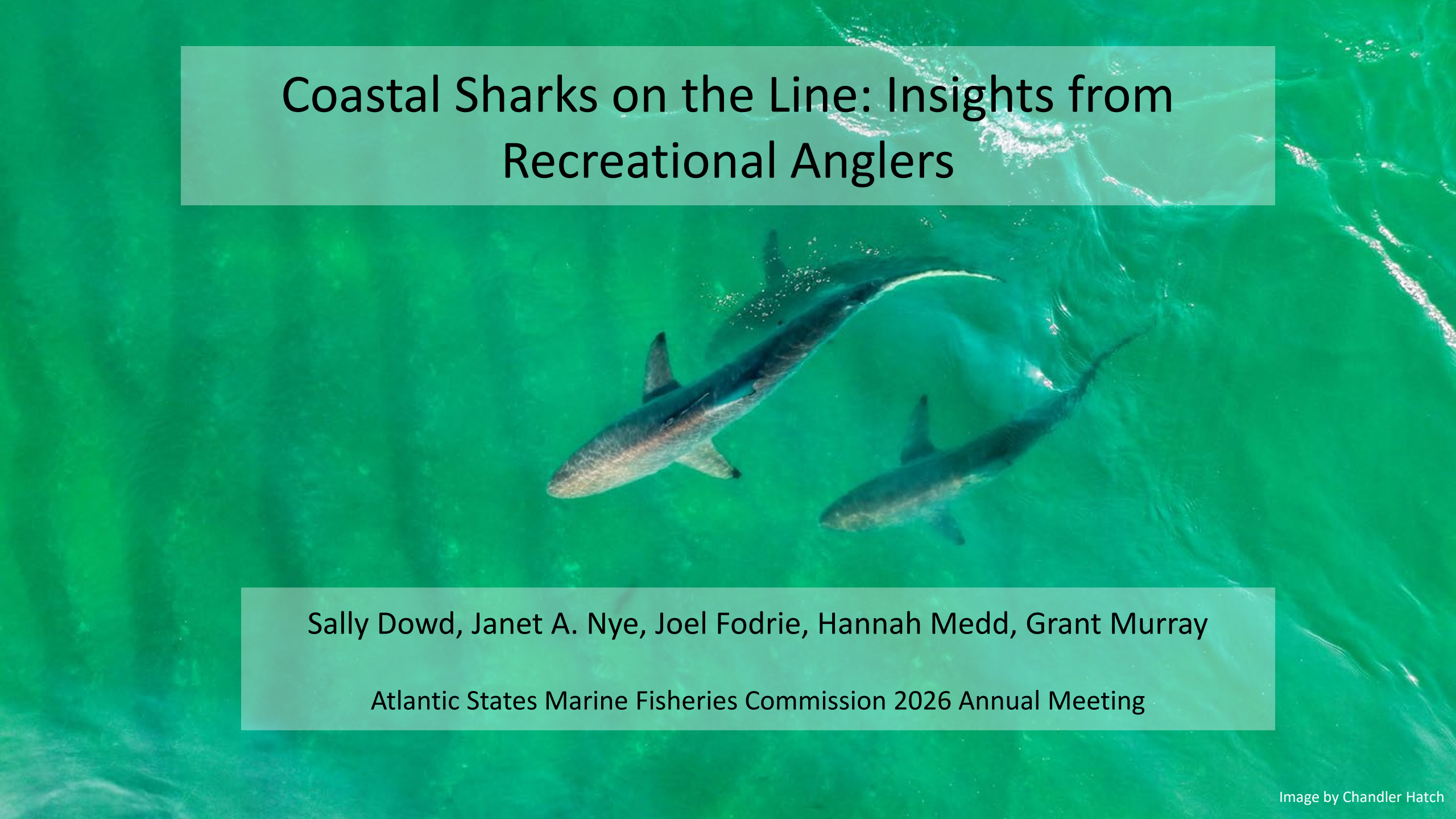
Board Action

- Adopt the coastal shark specifications for 2027-___ 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, 2026 with a commercial possession limit of 55 large coastal sharks (LCS) other than sandbar sharks per vessel per trip 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.



Credit: Karin Leonard/Marine Photobank

Coastal Sharks on the Line: Insights from Recreational Anglers



Sally Dowd, Janet A. Nye, Joel Fodrie, Hannah Medd, Grant Murray

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission 2026 Annual Meeting

Image by Chandler Hatch

Land-based shark fishing is a common way to target shark populations from shore

Bait deployment



Waiting

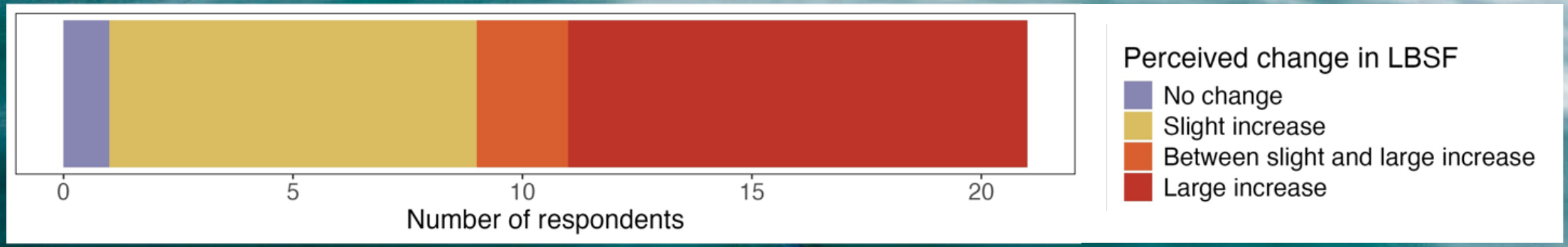


Catch & release



Image by Chandler Hatch

Land-based shark fishing is a common way to target shark populations from shore



Land-based shark fishing is a common way to target shark populations from shore

GREAT WHITE

State Bans All Large-Shark Fishing on Outer Cape

LONG ISLAND / ENVIRONMENT

NYS issues new fishing regulations designed to protect vulnerable shark species

Get your Shore-Based Shark Fishing Permit

After big stir at NC coast, new law bans beach-based shark fishing tournaments during tourist season

World's most popular shark fishing influencer indicted on white shark poaching charges



I interviewed 22 land-based shark fishers to:

1) Characterize the shore shark fishery in North Carolina.

2) Define environmental drivers of large coastal shark catch.

3) Identify how anglers learn and share knowledge in the fishery.

4) Gather anglers' opinions on and recommendations to management.

Target: Large coastal sharks







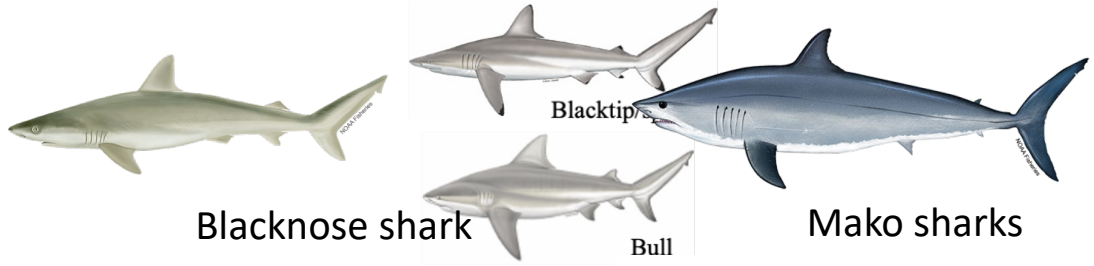


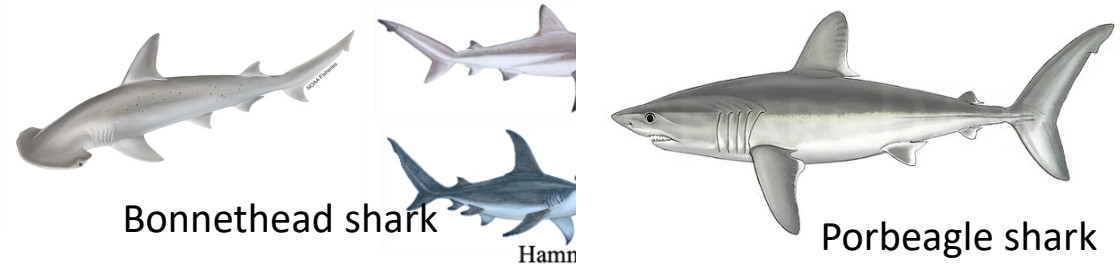


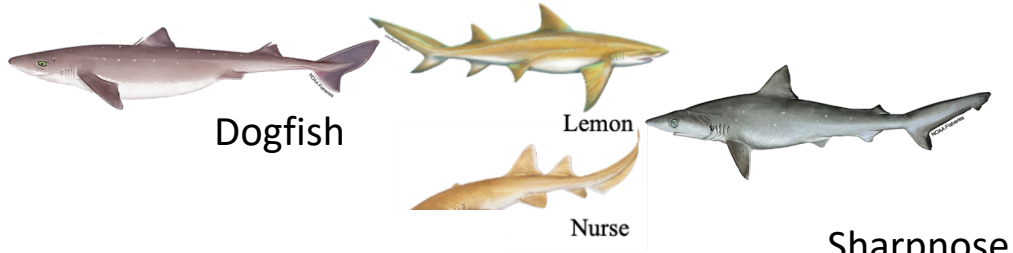


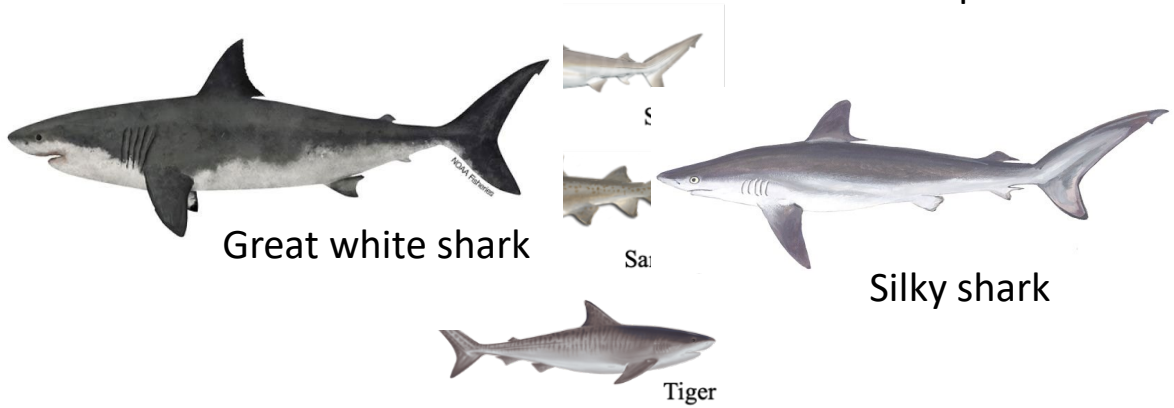


Catch: Large coastal sharks & other

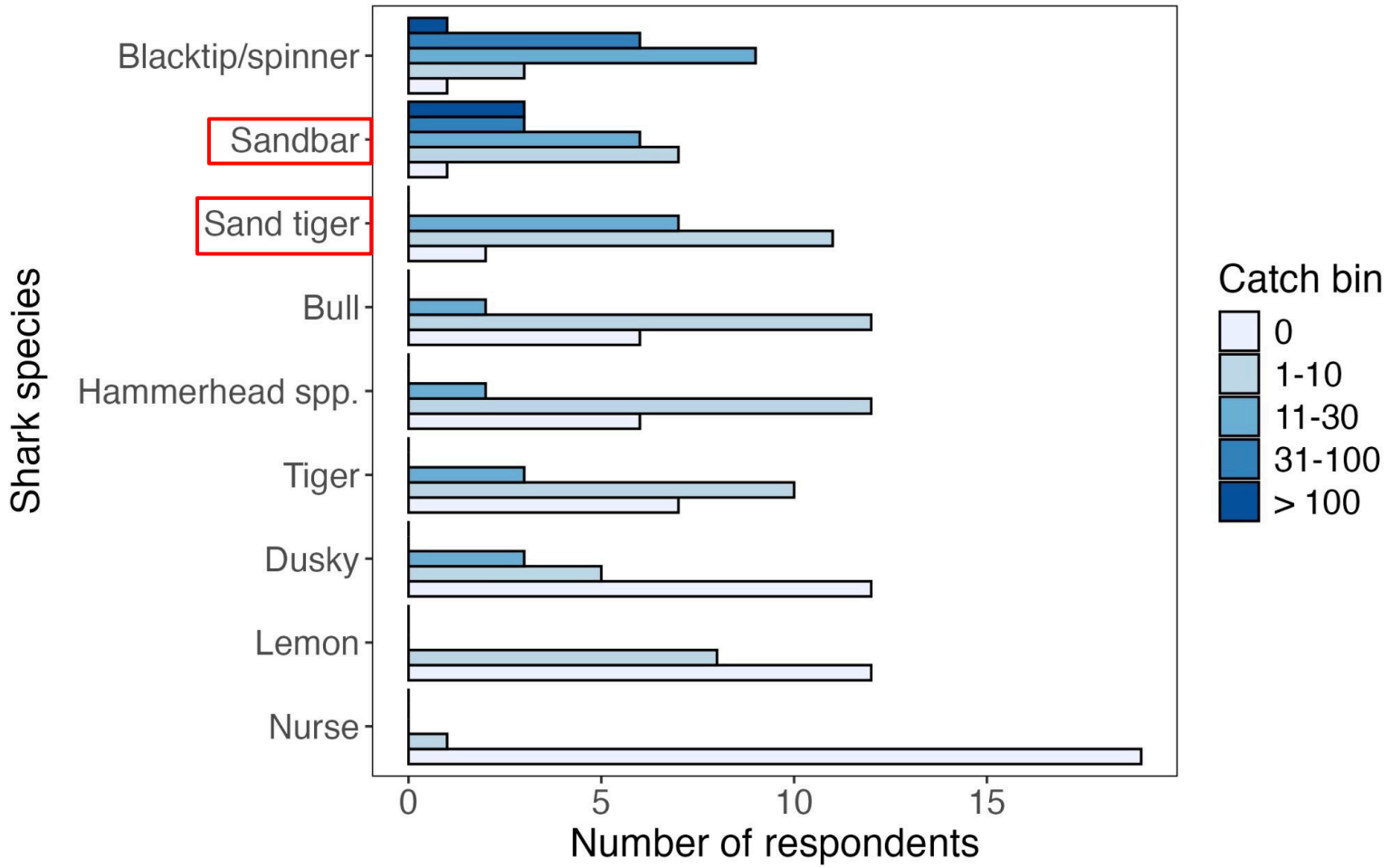




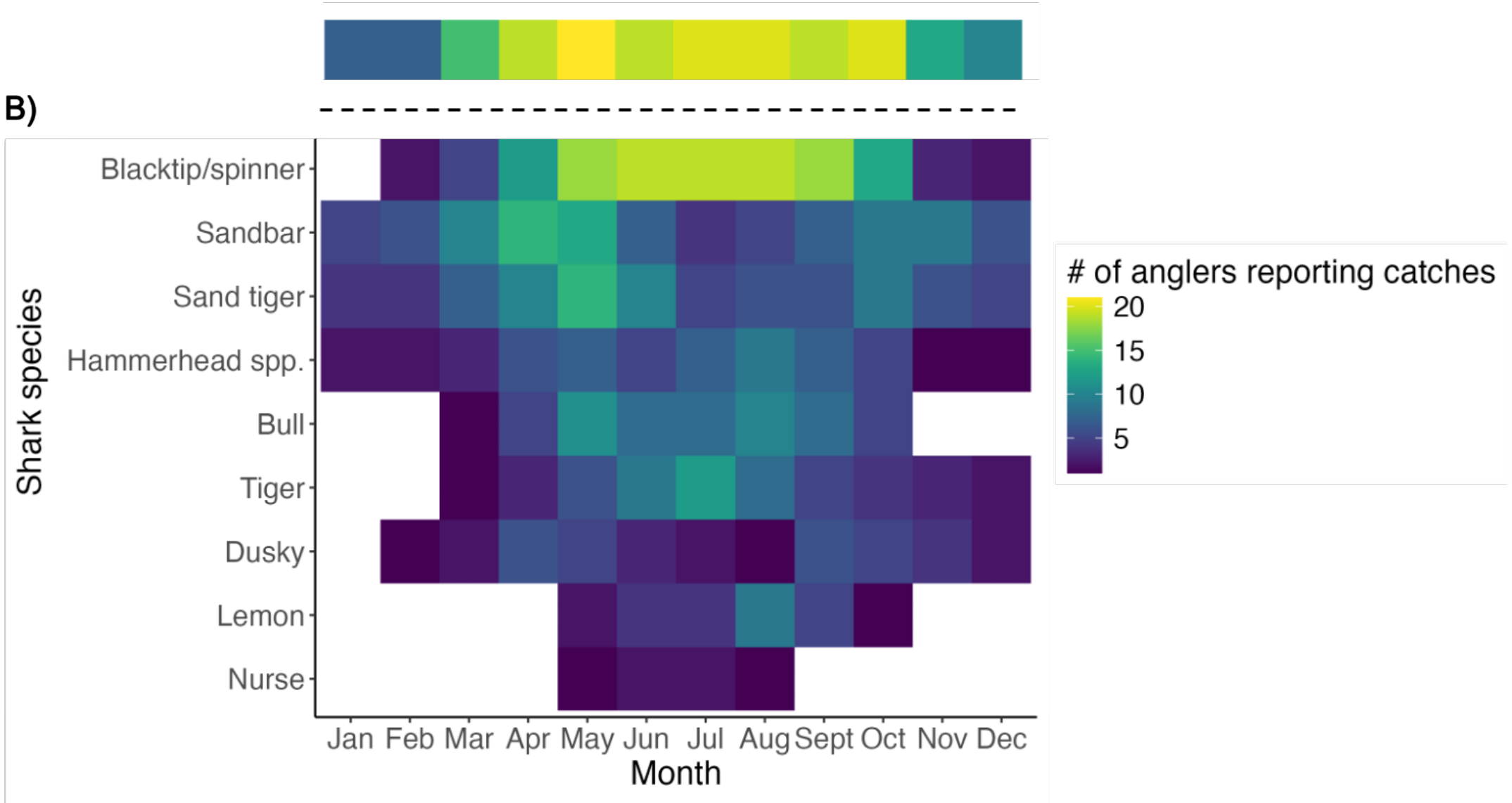




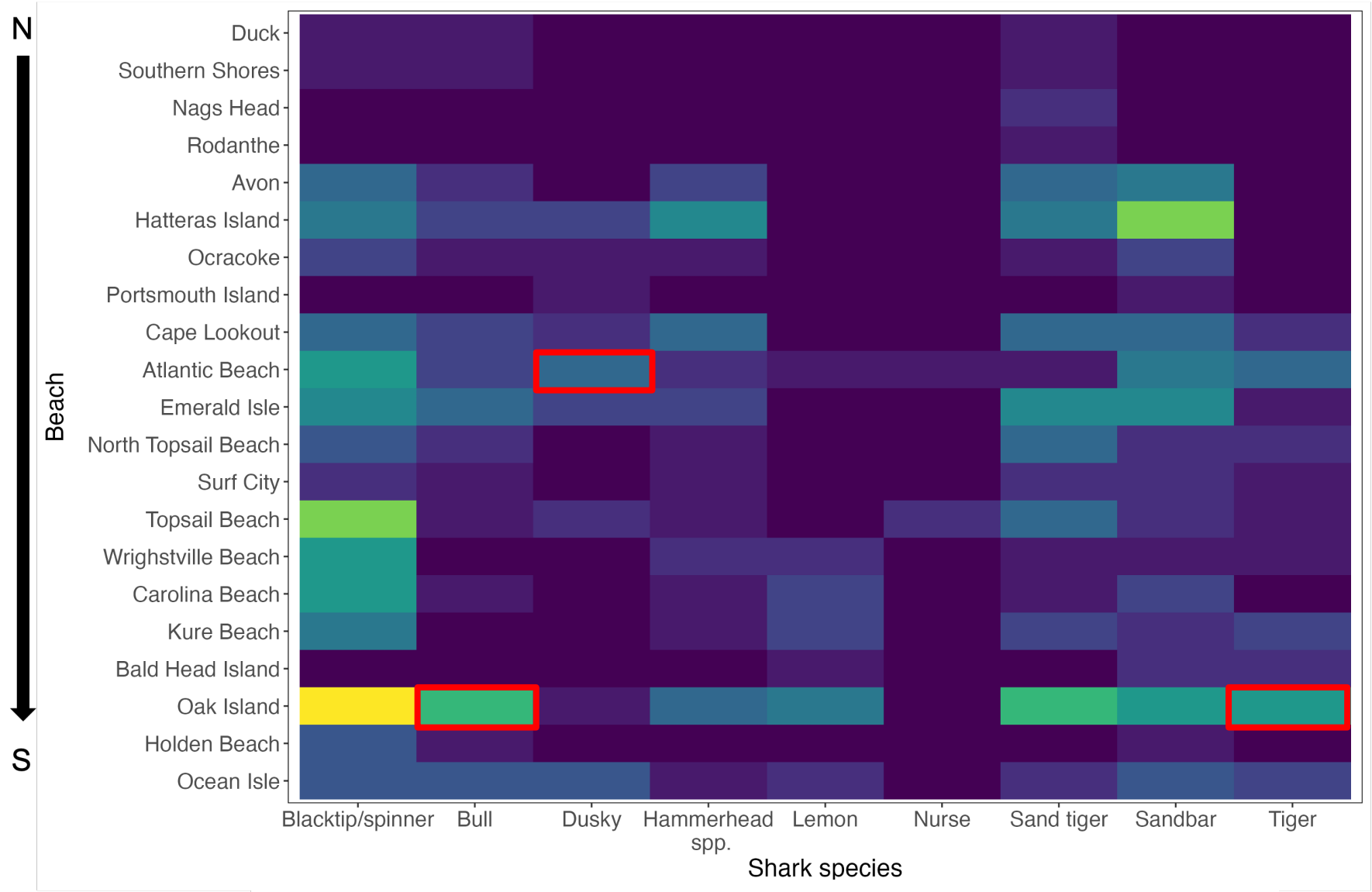
Two prohibited species are in top five species caught in NC



Land-based shark fishing occurs year-around with hotspots of catch in time



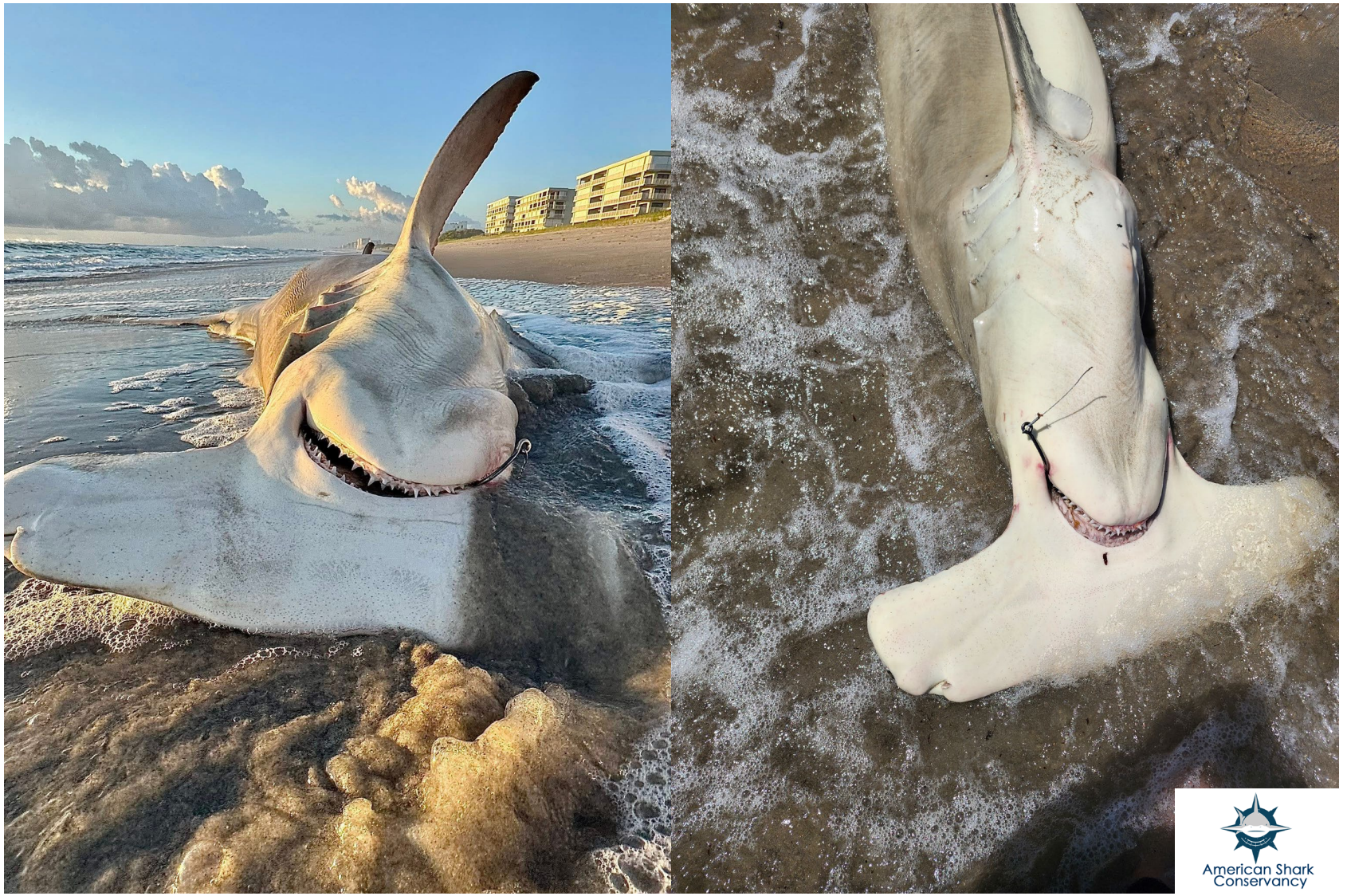
There are also hotspots in space



Anglers want to be involved in science and management and recognize LBSF issues, providing suggestions to mitigate them

> “The people making the rules and regulations in Raleigh don't know at all what they're talking about. They need to be consulting people on the ground in these places and saying, ‘Hey, we are conducting surveys to determine next year's regulations, quotas, that kind of thing. What have you seen from your time on the water?’ ... Data is great in everything, but it doesn't always get the full picture.” *-LBSF angler*

Anglers want to be involved in science and management and recognize LBSF issues, providing suggestions to mitigate them

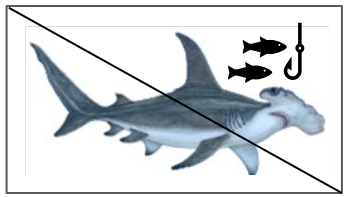


American Shark Conservancy

Anglers want to be involved in science and management and recognize LBSF issues, <u>providing suggestions to mitigate them</u>

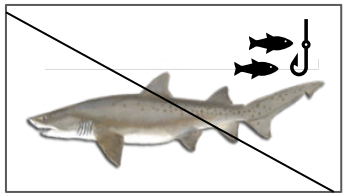
Species avoidance

5 anglers



To avoid catching hammerhead sharks, anglers recommended to deploy bait closer to shore and to not use stingray only “bloody baits”

10 anglers



To not catch or to avoid gut hooking in sand tigers:

-Use bite blocker
-Don’t fish when water is cold
-Do not fish March-May
-Avoid baits they like
-Fish with stingray
-Use a float rig

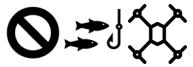
Anglers want to be involved in science and management and recognize LBSF issues, <u>providing suggestions to mitigate them</u>



Many respondents reactively positively to the idea of an online educational permit course



4 anglers mentioned wanting minimum gear requirements for LBSF specifically, with three stating to mandate or promote barbless hooks



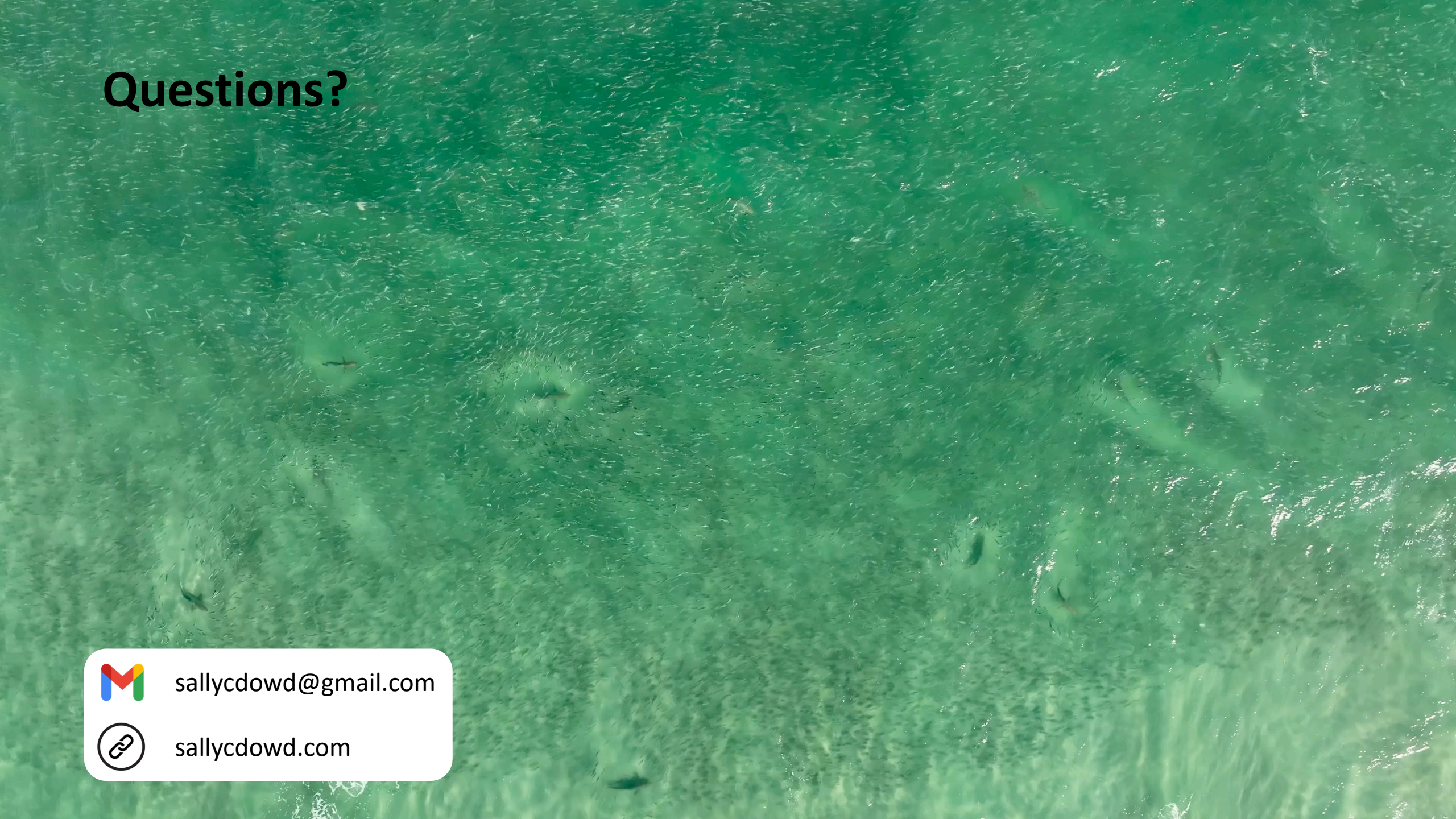
3 anglers recommended banning drones

5 anglers in this study used drones



2 anglers recommended restricting fishing hours during tourist season to be outside of 9 am to 4 pm

Questions?



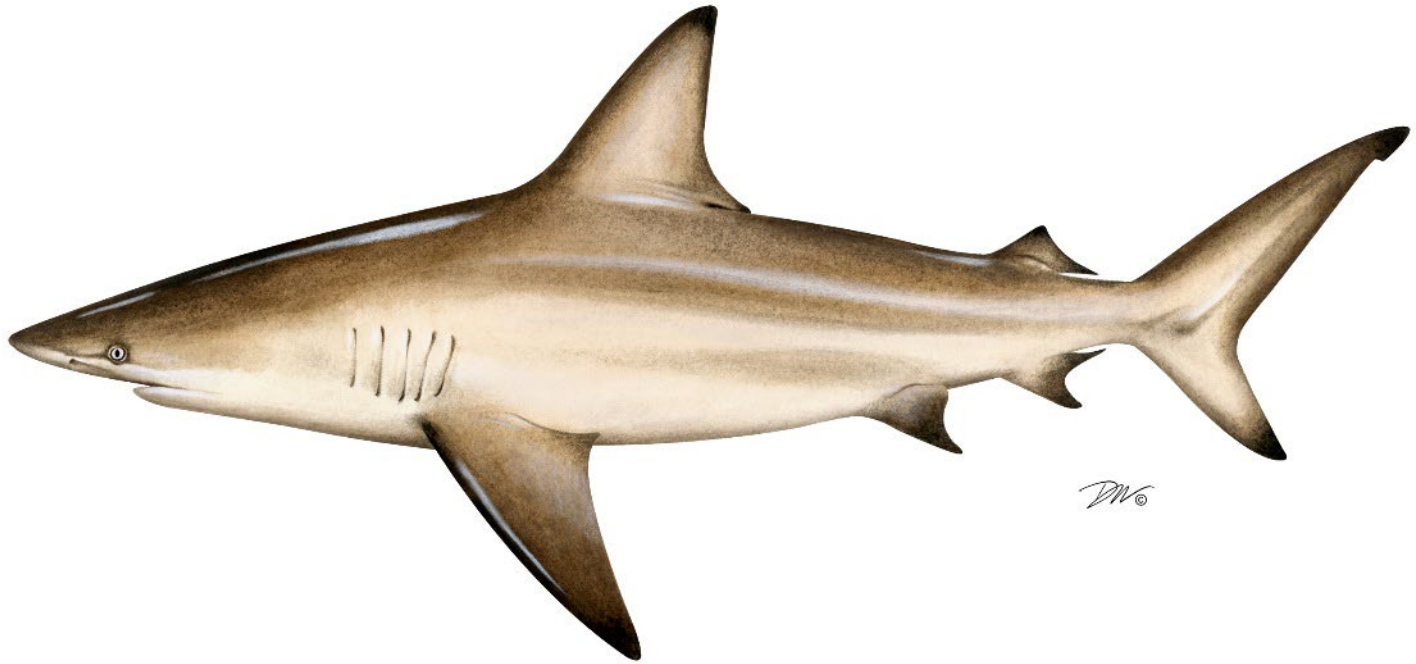
sallycdowd@gmail.com

sallycdowd.com

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries COMMISSION

FMP Review of the 2025 Fishing Year for Coastal Sharks

November 2026



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries COMMISSION

FMP Review Outline

- Status of FMP
- Status of Stocks
- Status of the Fishery
- Status of Research and Monitoring
- *De Minimis* Requests
- Implementation of FMP Requirements
- PRT Recommendations

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries COMMISSION

Status of the FMP

- Recent changes
  - 2022: Zero retention in state waters for shortfin mako sharks
  - 2024: Zero possession limit for oceanic whitetip sharks for commercial/recreational fisheries

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries COMMISSION

Status of the Stocks

- Research track assessment of the hammerhead complex (SEDAR 77) completed in 2024
- Sandbar sharks stock assessment (SEDAR 101) is currently ongoing and expected for completion in 2027
- A stock assessment for bull sharks is scheduled to begin in 2027

Species	SEDAR 77 Overfished/Overfishing Status in Terminal Year (2019)
Scalloped hammerhead	Not overfished /not experiencing overfishing
Smooth hammerhead*	Unknown, rebuilding since 2000 / overfishing most likely not occurring*
Great hammerhead	Overfished / not experiencing overfishing

*Data limited assessment

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries COMMISSION

Status of the Fisheries

Preliminary 2025 commercial shark landings, Atlantic Region (Source: NOAA HMS)

Shark Management Group	2025 Quota (dw)	Estimated Landings (dw)	% of Quota	2024 Landings (dw)
Aggregated LCS	168.9 mt (372,552 lb)	61.8 mt (136,208 lb)	37%	84.2 mt (185,731 lb)
Hammerhead	27.1 mt (59,736 lb)	20.5 mt (45,162 lb)	76%	17.8 mt (39,191 lb)
Non-Blacknose SCS	264.1 mt (582,333 lb)	31.9 mt (70,352 lb)	12%	77.7 mt (171,377 lb)
Blacknose	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)	254.4 mt (556,196 lb)	14%	333.8 mt (735,890 lb)

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries COMMISSION

Status of the Fisheries

Preliminary 2025 commercial shark landings, No Regional Quotas (Source: NOAA HMS)

Shark Management Group	2024 Quota (dw)	Estimated Landings (dw)	% of Quota	2024 Landings (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 (<123,059 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)
Common Thresher	488.0 mt (1,075,856 lb)	18.1 mt (39,887 lb)	4%	16.3 mt (35,963 lb)

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries COMMISSION

Recreational Fisheries

- States provided recreational landings estimates for 2025

- Most estimates are from MRIP with high PSE values

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries COMMISSION

De Minimis Status

- States can request *de minimis* status on a case-by-case basis.

- Massachusetts is requesting continuation of *de minimis* status for the Aggregated Large Coastal species group and the Hammerhead species group

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries COMMISSION

PRT Comments

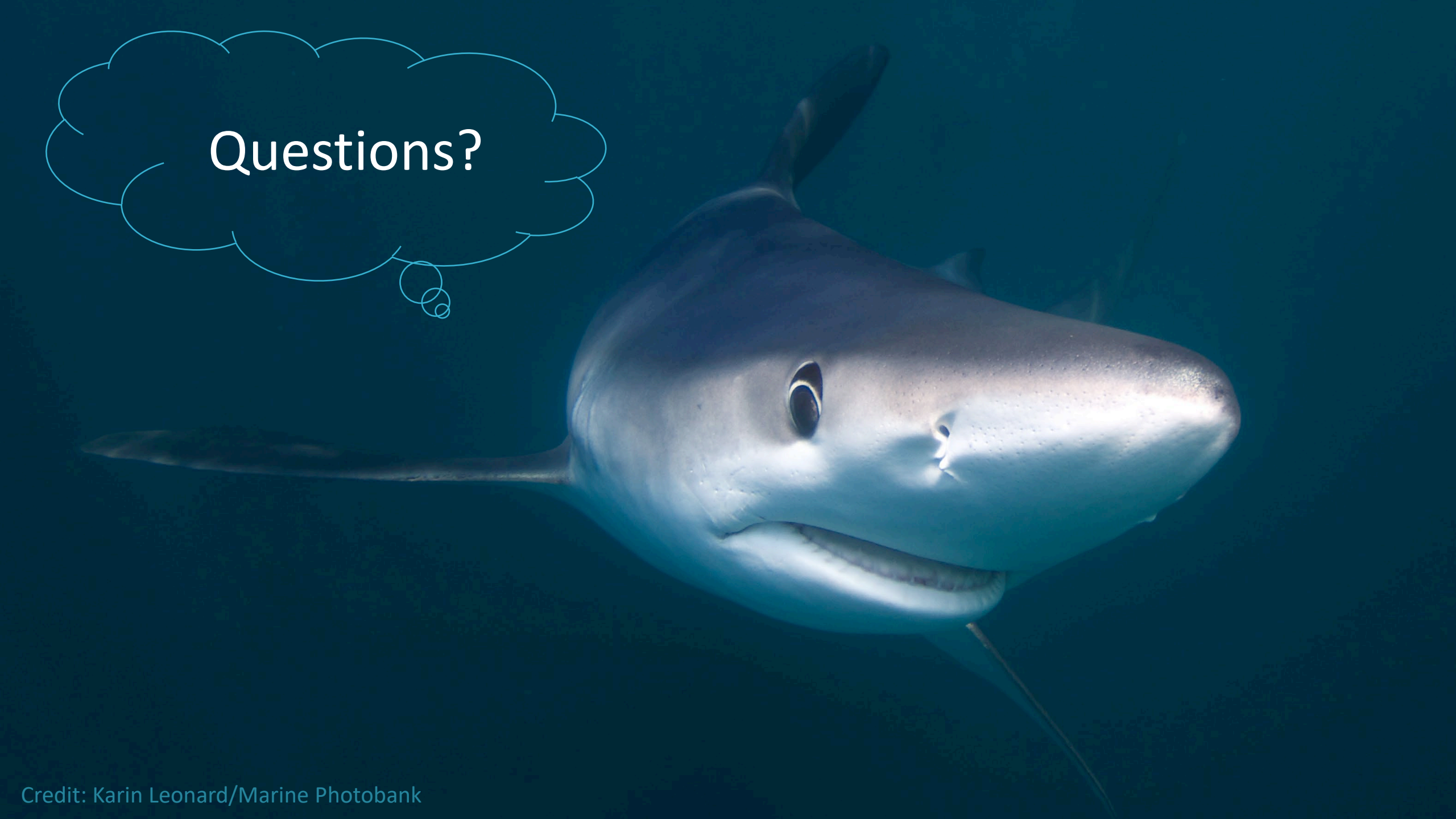
- PRT recommends that *de minimis* status be granted to MA for large coastal and hammerhead sharks
- DE's regulations regarding the circle hook requirement excludes smoothound
  - The exemption of smoothhound from the circle hook requirement is inconsistent with the Board action.
- With the exception noted above, all states have implemented regulations consistent with the FMP requirements.

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries COMMISSION

Board Action

- Approve *de minimis* status for Massachusetts

- Approve FMP Review and state compliance for the 2025 Fishing Year



Credit: Karin Leonard/Marine Photobank