



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

1050 N. Highland Street • Suite 200A-N • Arlington, VA 22201
703.842.0740 • 703.842.0741 (fax) • www.asmfc.org

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's Spiny Dogfish and Coastal Sharks Management Board has approved Draft Addendum III to the Atlantic Coastal Sharks Fishery Management Plan for public comment. The Draft Addendum proposes changes to the coastal shark species groupings for hammerhead and blacknose sharks, the establishment of a new commercial quota for hammerhead sharks and to increase the recreational size limit for hammerhead sharks.

Draft Addendum III was initiated to ensure consistency between the state and federal coastal shark plans. The federal Highly Migratory Species Fishery Management Plan was amended (Amendment 5a) to address recent findings that scalloped hammerhead and blacknose sharks are overfished and/or experiencing overfishing. Specifically Amendment 5a, which has been adopted and is currently in effect in federal waters, changed the coastal shark species groupings for hammerhead and blacknose sharks and established a new commercial quota for the aggregated hammerhead sharks. Amendment 5a also establishes a 78-inch minimum recreational size limit for hammerhead sharks.

Draft Addendum III (ASMFC) proposes to be consistent with the federal FMP and remove all hammerheads (i.e., great, scalloped, and smooth) from the "Non-Sandbar Large Coastal Sharks" group and move them under the "Hammerheads" group due to the difficulty in differentiating between various hammerhead species particularly when dressed. Draft Addendum III also proposes removing blacknose sharks from the "Small Coastal Sharks" group and placing them under the "Blacknose Shark" group. Finetooth, bonnethead and Atlantic sharpnose would remain in the "Non-Blacknose Small Coastal Sharks" species group. The Blacknose Shark group, Non-Blacknose Small Coastal Sharks group, Aggregated Large Coastal group and Hammerhead group would each have their own separate quota. The Blacknose Shark group quota and Non-Blacknose Small Coastal Sharks group quota would be linked together and the Aggregated Large Coastal group quota and Hammerhead group quota would be linked such that when the quota for either group is caught the fishery for the other linked group would be closed.

Further, the Draft Addendum considers a new recreational size limit of 78 inches fork length (FL) for all hammerhead sharks based on research which found female scalloped hammerhead sharks reach maturity at 78 inches. The proposed measure is intended to limit the retention of immature female hammerheads.

All of these measures have been previously adopted in the federal FMP and are currently in effect in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ, 3 to 200 miles) off the Atlantic Coast.

Fishermen and other interested groups are encouraged to provide input on the Draft Addendum III. Written comments on the Draft Addendum III should be provided to Robert L. O'Reilly, VMRC Fisheries Management Division, 2600 Washington Avenue, 3rd Floor, Newport News, Virginia 23607, by 12:00 p.m., Friday September 20, 2013. For more information contact Lewis Gillingham at lewis.gillingham@mrc.virginia.gov

The complete Draft Addendum is available on the ASMFC website (www.asmfc.org) under *Breaking News*. Public comment can also be provided directly to the ASMFC and will be accepted until 5:00 PM (EST) on September 25, 2013 and should be forwarded to Marin Hawk, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at 1050 N. Highland St., Suite 200 A-N, Arlington, VA 22201; 703.842.0741 (FAX) or comments@asmfc.org (Subject line: Coastal Sharks Draft Addendum III).