



NMFS Announces a Closure of the Commercial Porbeagle Shark Fishery

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) projects that fishing season landings for the commercial porbeagle fishery have exceeded 80 percent of the available quota. As required by NMFS regulations, NMFS therefore is closing the commercial porbeagle fishery as of 11:30 p.m. local time November 18, 2008. From the effective date and time of the closure until NMFS announces, via a notice in the Federal Register, that additional quota is available and the season is reopened, the fishery for that specific quota is closed, even across fishing years.

Below are preliminary landings estimates in metric tons (mt) and pounds (lbs) dressed weight (dw) for the Atlantic Shark commercial fisheries since January 1, 2008. These preliminary landings estimates include landing reports received through October 15, 2008 (dealer landings through the 15th of any month must be received by the 25th of that month; data was entered and received by HMS Management Division on November 7, 2008). The landings presented below are total landings reported through the Pelagic Dealer Compliance (PDC) (previously known as the Quota Monitoring System), and the Automated Landings Reporting System (ALS) (previously known as the General Canvass). The estimates include landings by both state only permitted vessels and federally permitted vessels as well as landings from the 2008 shark research fishery. Due to the privacy regulations of North Carolina (NC), NMFS is unable to remove all instances where NC dealers report in both the PDC and ALS. As a result, some NC landings may be inflated.

For the September 23, 2008, landings update (released October 22, 2008), sharks reported as unknowns were apportioned to species or species groups using observer data by number rather than weight. This method was originally used because it follows the procedures used in the stock assessment. However, while the stock assessment is done in number of sharks, quota monitoring is done by weight. As such, for this and all future updates, sharks reported as unknowns will be apportioned to species or species groups by weight. Thus, landings for some groups may differ from previous landings updates. Additionally, NMFS worked with the State of North Carolina to try to determine the amount of double reporting between the state and federal landings. While doing this, NMFS discovered that many of North Carolina's landings of spiny dogfish were incorrectly reported as unknown or sandbar sharks. The latest update corrects this reporting error. NMFS reminds fishermen and dealers that they are required to identify all landed sharks to species.

Species Group	Region	Quota	80% of Quota	Estimated Landings	% of Quota
Non-Sandbar Large Coastal Sharks (390.5 mt dw)	Gulf of Mexico	390.5 mt dw (860,896 lb dw)	312.4 (688,717 lb dw)	143.6 mt dw (316,590 lb dw)	36.7%
	Atlantic	187.8 mt dw (414,024 lb dw)	150.2 (331,131 lb dw)	92.3 mt dw (203,509 lb dw)	49.2%
Shark Research Fishery Quota (Non-Sandbar LCS)	No regional quotas	37.5 mt dw (82,673 lb dw)	30.0 (66,138 lb dw)	5.9 mt dw (13,107 lb dw)	15.7%

Shark Research Fishery Quota (Sandbar only)		87.9 mt dw (193,784 lb dw)	70.3 (154,983 lb dw)	Inside SRF 8.8 mt dw (19,371 lb dw)	57.5%
				Outside SRF * 41.7 mt dw (92,020 lb dw)	
Small Coastal Sharks	No regional quotas	454 mt dw (1,000,888 lb dw)	363.2 (800,710 lb dw)	211.4 mt dw (465,974 lb dw)	46.6%
Blue Sharks	No regional quotas	273 mt dw (601,856 lb dw)	218.4 (481,485 lb dw)	1.3 mt dw (2,845 lb dw)	0.5%
Porbeagle Sharks		1.7 mt dw (3,748 lb dw)	1.36 (2,998 lb dw)	2.0 mt dw (4,349 lb dw)	116.0%
Pelagic Sharks Other Than Porbeagle or Blue		488 mt dw (1,075,856 lb dw)	390.4 (860,676 lb dw)	94.6 mt dw (208,512 lb dw)	19.4%

* These landings are from state landings.

This notice is a courtesy to the HMS fishery participants to help keep you informed about your fishery. For further information on this landings update or the closure, contact Karyl Brewster-Geisz or Jess Beck at 301-713-2347. The information will also be posted on the HMS website at: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms>.

Emily Menashes

Alan D. Risenhoover
Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries

NOV 14 2008

Date