



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Final Environmental Impact Statement for Amendment 2 to the Consolidated Atlantic Highly Migratory Species Fishery Management Plan Available

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) announces the availability of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Amendment 2 to the Consolidated Atlantic Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Fishery Management Plan (FMP). Publication and review of the FEIS precedes issuance of the final rule, which would establish regulatory changes associated with Amendment 2.

Consistent with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, the FEIS describes a range of management measures, including:

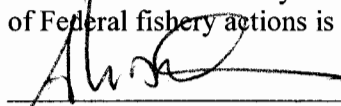
- revised quotas, retention limits, and authorized species for the commercial shark fishery;
- establishing a shark research fishery;
- complementary time/area closures for bottom longline gear that were included in Amendment 14 to the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management plan and are being implemented by the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council;
- modified seasons and regions for the commercial shark fishery;
- requiring that all sharks be landed with all fins naturally attached;
- revised authorized species for the recreational shark fishery;
- updates to handling and release protocols for smalltooth sawfish;
- clarification of the definition of a 'first receiver' for shark dealers; and
- modifications to the stock assessment schedule and timing of release for the annual Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) Report.

The FEIS is available at <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/> or by contacting Michael Clark, Highly Migratory Species Management Division, National Marine Fisheries Service, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910, (301) 713-2347.

Comments on this document during the Agency's 30-day review period for the FEIS must be received by May 19, 2008. Comments received will be reviewed and considered for their impact on the issuance of the final rule. Written comments should be submitted by mail to Michael Clark at the address above, faxed to (301) 713-1917, or submitted by e-mail to Shark.FinalEIS@noaa.gov (include the following identifier in the subject line: Amendment 2 FEIS).

The final rule is expected to publish soon after the review period closes on the FEIS. Regulations will become effective 30 days after the final rule is published, or as specified in the DATES section of the final rule.

This notice is a courtesy to Atlantic HMS interests to keep you informed about your fisheries. Official notice of Federal fishery actions is made through filing such notice with the Office of the Federal Register.


Alan Risenhoover
Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries

APR 10 2008
Date

