



# NEWS FROM NOAA

## NATIONAL OCEANIC & ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION • US DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
July 24, 2007

### **NOAA PROPOSES STRINGENT LIMITS TO SANDBAR SHARK FISHING**

NOAA Fisheries Service is proposing that commercial and recreational fishing for sandbar sharks be significantly reduced and limited to only those commercial vessels that take part in a shark research program. This proposal is open to public comment.

“Because sandbar sharks as well as dusky sharks have been severely depleted, we must take strong measures to stop overfishing and allow these species to rebuild,” said Dr. William T. Hogarth, director of NOAA Fisheries Service. “Even with these measures, it will take a long time to rebuild the population of these sharks because of their unique biology.”

Sandbar and dusky sharks, like other shark species, mature late, grow slowly and produce relatively few young. This makes them particularly vulnerable to overexploitation. NOAA banned the fishing of dusky sharks in 2000, after stock assessments showed severe depletion.

There are approximately 529 commercial fishing permits for shark fishing in the Atlantic Ocean, Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean. Sandbar sharks, because of their large fins, are the most valuable species among the large coastal sharks. The fins are considered a delicacy and are a main ingredient in ethnic food dishes such as shark fin soup.

The proposed amendment to the Consolidated Highly Migratory Species Fishery Management Plan would reduce the quota for sandbar sharks by 80 percent as part of the rebuilding plan. The measures would help NOAA Fisheries meet the Congressional mandate of the newly reauthorized Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act to end all overfishing.

NOAA Fisheries would also establish a shark research fishery of between five and 10 vessels that could land sandbar and other sharks. The vessels would have observers on board and meet other criteria to be part of the program. The research would be designed to gain more information about the status, mobility, migration, habitat, ecology, and age and growth characteristics of sandbar sharks.

Other measures in the proposed amendment are the closing of some areas to shark fishing as recommended by the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council; establishing a limit per trip on the amount of other large coastal sharks a fishermen can keep; requiring that fins be attached to any shark that is commercially landed; and reducing the shark species that recreational fishermen can keep.

During the months of August and September, NOAA Fisheries Service will hold several hearings along the Atlantic Coast and Gulf of Mexico to gather public comments on the proposed amendment. The schedule follows:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Hearing Location</b>	<b>Hearing Address</b>
Wednesday, Aug. 8, 2007	6:00 - 8:50 p.m.	Manahawkin Public Library	129 North Main Street, Manahawkin, NJ 08050
Wednesday, Aug. 8, 2007	6:00 – 9:00 p.m.	SEFSC, Panama City Laboratory	3500 Delwood Beach Drive, Panama City, FL 32408
Tuesday, Aug. 14, 2007	6:00 – 9:00 p.m.	Bayou Black Recreational Center	3688 Southdown Mandalay Road, Houma, LA 70360
Wednesday, Aug. 22, 2007	6:30 – 9:30 p.m.	City of Madeira Beach	300 Municipal Drive, Madeira Beach, FL 33708
Thursday, Aug. 23, 2007	5:30 – 8:30 p.m.	Fort Pierce Library	101 Melody Lane, Fort Pierce, FL 34950
Wednesday, Aug. 29, 2007	6:00 – 9:00 p.m.	Ocean Pines Public Library	11107 Cathell Road, Berlin, MD 21811
Wednesday, Sept. 5, 2007	6:00 – 9:00 p.m.	University of Texas, Marine Science Institute	Visitor's Center, 750 Channel View Drive, Port Aransas, TX 78373
Thursday, Sept. 6, 2007	5:00 – 8:00 p.m.	Islamorada Public Library	81500 Overseas Highway, Islamorada, FL 33036
Monday, Sept. 10, 2007	6:00 – 9:00 p.m.	Manteo Town Hall	407 Budleigh Street, Manteo, NC 27954
Monday, Sept. 17	5:30-8:30 p.m.	Portsmouth Public Library	175 Parrott Avenue, Portsmouth, NH

NOAA Fisheries Service is dedicated to protecting and preserving our nation's living marine resources and their habitat through scientific research, management and enforcement. NOAA Fisheries Service provides effective stewardship of these resources for the benefit of the nation, supporting coastal communities that depend upon them, and helping to provide safe and healthy seafood to consumers and recreational opportunities for the American public.

NOAA is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and information service delivery for transportation, and by providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources. Through the emerging Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), NOAA is working with its federal partners, more than 70 countries and the European Commission to develop a global monitoring network that is as integrated as the planet it observes, predicts and protects.

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On the Web:

NOAA: <http://www.noaa.gov>

NOAA Fisheries: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov>