



NMFS Announces Public Hearings for Draft Amendment 5 to the 2006 Consolidated HMS FMP

December 11, 2012

On November 26, 2012 (77 FR 70552), the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS or we) published a proposed rule for draft Amendment 5 to the 2006 Consolidated Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Fishery Management Plan (FMP) in response to several shark stock assessments that were completed from 2009 to 2012. The assessments for Atlantic blacknose, dusky, and scalloped hammerhead sharks indicated that these species are overfished and experiencing overfishing. As described in the proposed rule, we are proposing measures that would reduce fishing mortality and effort in order to rebuild overfished Atlantic shark species while ensuring that a limited sustainable shark fishery can be maintained consistent with our legal obligations and the 2006 Consolidated HMS FMP. The proposed measures include changes to commercial quotas and species groups, the creation of several time/area closures, a change to an existing time/area closure, an increase in the recreational minimum size restrictions, and the establishment of recreational reporting for certain species of sharks. Any comments received during the comment period will be considered in the development and finalization of Amendment 5 to the 2006 Consolidated HMS FMP.

We will hold six public hearings in Florida (2), Massachusetts, Louisiana, New Jersey, and North Carolina, and two conference calls/webinars to provide the opportunity for public comment on the measures described in the proposed rule and draft Amendment 5. Additionally, we will consult with the HMS Advisory Panel on January 8, 2013, on the proposed rule and draft Amendment 5. This HMS Advisory Panel meeting will consist of a presentation of the proposed measures, a discussion with the Advisory Panel, and the opportunity for public comment during an open session. See Table 1 for times, dates, and location. NMFS has also asked to present information on the proposed rule and draft Amendment 5 to the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, South Atlantic, Mid-Atlantic, and New England Fishery Management Councils. Information on the date and time of that presentation will be provided on the appropriate council agenda

Table 1: Dates, Times and Locations of Upcoming Public Hearings, Conference calls, and HMS Advisory Panel meeting.

Venue	Date/Time	Meeting Locations	Location Contact Information
HMS Advisory Panel Meeting	January 8, 2013 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.	Silver Spring, MD	Silver Spring Civic Center One Veteran's Place Silver Spring, MD 20910 (240) 777-5350

Venue	Date/Time	Meeting Locations	Location Contact Information
Conference call / Webinar	January 9, 2013 1 p.m. – 4 p.m.		To participate in conference call, call: (888) 469-2979 Passcode: 2809363 To participate in webinar, RSVP at: https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/740306032 A confirmation email with webinar log-in information will be sent after RSVP is registered.
Public Hearing	January 15, 2013 4 p.m. – 7 p.m.	Madeira Beach, FL	Gulf Beaches Public Library 100 Municipal Drive Madeira Beach, FL 33708 (727) 391-2828
Public Hearing	January 17, 2013 5 p.m. – 8 p.m.	Vero Beach, FL	Vero Beach Community Center 2266 14 th Avenue Vero Beach, FL 32960 (772) 770-6517
Public Hearing	January 22, 2013 5 p.m. – 8 p.m.	Manalapan, NJ	Monmouth County Public Library – Headquarters 125 Symmes Road Manalapan, NJ 07726 (732) 431-7220
Public Hearing	January 24, 2013 5 p.m. – 8 p.m.	Manteo, NC	Commissioner’s Meeting Room Dare County Administration Building 954 Marshall C. Collins Drive Manteo, NC 27954
Public Hearing	January 30, 2013 5 p.m. – 8 p.m.	Gloucester, MA	NOAA Fisheries Service 55 Great Republic Drive Gloucester, MA
Conference Call	February 5, 2013 5 p.m. – 8 p.m.		To participate in conference call, call: (888) 469-2979 Passcode: 2809363 To participate in webinar, RSVP at: https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/623300105 A confirmation email with webinar log-in information will be sent after RSVP is registered.
Public Hearing	February 7, 2013 5 p.m. – 8 p.m.	Belle Chasse, LA	Belle Chasse Auditorium 8398 Hwy 23 Belle Chasse, LA 70037

The comment period for draft Amendment 5 ends on February 12, 2013. Written public comments can be submitted electronically or by mail. Submit written comments to Peter Cooper, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910, please mark the outside of the envelope “Comments on the Draft Amendment 5 to the 2006 Consolidated HMS FMP.” Submit all electronic public comments via the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. To submit comments via the e-Rulemaking Portal, first click the “submit a comment” icon, then enter NOAA-NMFS-2012-0161 in the keyword search. Locate the document you wish to comment on from the resulting list and click on the “Submit a Comment” icon on the right of that line.

This notice is a courtesy to the HMS fishery participants to help keep you informed about the fishery. For further information on these proposed measures, contact Peter Cooper, Guý DuBeck, Michael Clark, or Karyl Brewster-Geisz at 301-427-8503. The information will also be posted on the HMS website at: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms>.

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