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NOAA's Fisheries Service Proposes 33 Percent Increase for 2011 Spiny Dogfish Quota

NOAA's Fisheries Service today announced that it will propose increasing the spiny dogfish quota to 20 million pounds for 2011. The new quota would be a 33 percent increase over the 2010 catch limit of 15 million pounds.

Spiny dogfish are found throughout the northwest Atlantic between Labrador and Florida. In fishing year 2009, the U.S. commercial spiny dogfish fishery generated revenues of nearly \$2.4 million.

"The higher catch limit will provide further opportunity to fishermen in the dogfish fishery, and to others who supplement their groundfish income by catching dogfish," said Patricia Kurkul, administrator, Northeast Region, NOAA Fisheries Service.

NOAA's Fisheries Service updated the spiny dogfish stock assessment in the fall of 2010, incorporating 2009 catch data and results from the agency's 2010 trawl survey. The updated assessment indicated that the stock was healthy and not being overfished. This information was provided to the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council and the New England Fishery Management Council, which jointly develop management measures for the spiny dogfish stock. The councils forwarded their recommendation to increase the 2011 catch limit to NOAA's Fisheries Service, which has agreed to increase the catch limit.

The proposed catch level for 2011 is consistent with the level set by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission for state waters.

The 2011 fishing year runs from May 1, 2011 to April 30, 2012. Under the spiny dogfish fishery management plan, the quota is divided between two quota periods. During period 1, May 1 through October 31, roughly 11.6 million pounds will be available to the fishery. The remaining 8.4 million pounds will be available to the fishery during period 2, November 1 through April 30. Vessel trip limits are proposed to remain at 3,000 pounds for the 2011 fishing year.

Members of the public are invited to comment by April 18 by no later than 5:00 pm EDT:

Online: <http://www.regulations.gov>

Fax: 978-281-9135, Attn: Lindsey Feldman

Mail: Patricia A. Kurkul, regional administrator

NOAA's Fisheries Service

Northeast Regional Office

55 Great Republic Drive,

Gloucester, MA 01930.

Mark the outside of the envelope: "Comments on 2011 Dogfish Specifications."

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