



# NMFS Announces the Availability of Draft Amendment 5b to the 2006 Consolidated Highly Migratory Species Fishery Management Plan

October 13, 2016

Draft Amendment 5b to the Consolidated Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Fishery Management Plan (FMP) proposes a range of management measures to prevent overfishing and rebuild overfished shark stocks. These measures are based on recent assessments that determined dusky sharks are overfished and experiencing overfishing.

### Who is affected?

Draft Amendment 5b could affect:

- Any commercial fishermen with HMS permits.
- Any recreational fishermen who catch sharks of any species.
- Any dealers who buy or sell sharks or shark products.

### What will it do?

The full range of alternatives considered can be found in the draft environmental impact statement and/or proposed rule, which can be found at:

[http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/documents/fmp/am5/a5b\\_index.html](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/documents/fmp/am5/a5b_index.html)

The preferred alternatives, consistent with recent stock assessments, are summarized below and include:

Recreational Measures	Preferred Alternatives in DEIS
Permit Requirements and Outreach	<i>Alternative A2</i> Require HMS permit holders fishing for sharks recreationally to obtain a shark endorsement, which requires completion of an online shark identification and fishing regulation training course, plus additional recreational fisheries outreach.
Circle Hook Requirement	<i>Alternative A6a</i> Require the use of circle hooks by all HMS permit holders fishing for or landing sharks recreationally. Any shark caught on non-circle hooks must be released. A vessel is considered to be fishing for sharks when using natural bait and wire or heavy

	(200 pound test or greater) monofilament or fluorocarbon leader.
<b>Commercial Measures</b>	<b>Preferred Alternatives in DEIS</b>
Shark Release Protocol	<i>Alternative B3</i>  Fishermen with an Atlantic shark limited access permit with pelagic longline gear onboard must release all sharks not being retained using a dehooker or cutting the gangion less than three feet from the hook.
Additional Training Requirements	<i>Alternative B5</i>  Require completion of a shark identification and fishing regulation training course as a new part of all Safe Handling and Release Workshops for HMS pelagic longline, bottom longline, and shark gillnet vessel owners and operators.
Outreach and Fleet Communication Protocol	<i>Alternative B6</i>  Increase dusky shark outreach and awareness through development of additional outreach materials, and require HMS pelagic longline, bottom longline, and shark gillnet vessels to abide by a dusky shark fleet communication and relocation protocol.
Circle Hook Requirement	<i>Alternative B9</i>  Require the use of circle hooks by all HMS directed shark permit holders using bottom longline.

### Submit Comments by December 22, 2016:

NMFS will hold numerous public hearings for this rulemaking along the Atlantic Coast, including the Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico regions until the end of the comment period:

Venue	Date/time	Meeting location	Location contact information
Public Hearing	November 9, 2016, 5 p.m. – 8 p.m.	Manalapan, NJ	Monmouth County Public Library – Headquarters 125 Symmes Road Manalapan, NJ 07726
Public Hearing	November 15, 2016, 5:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.	Newport, RI	Hotel Viking 1 Bellevue Ave Newport, RI 02840
Public Hearing	November 15, 2016, 5 p.m. – 8 p.m.	Belle Chasse, LA	Belle Chasse Branch Library 8442 Louisiana 23

Venue	Date/time	Meeting location	Location contact information
			Belle Chasse, LA 70037
Public Hearing	November 16, 2016, 5 p.m. – 8 p.m.	Houston, TX	Clear Lake City-County Freeman Branch Library 16616 Diana Lane Houston, TX 77062
Public Hearing	November 21, 2016, 5 p.m. – 8 p.m.	Melbourne, FL	Melbourne Public Library 540 E. Fee Ave Melbourne, FL 32901
Public Hearing	November 28, 2016, 5 p.m. – 8 p.m.	Manteo, NC	Commissioners Meeting Room, Dare County Administration Building 954 Marshall C. Collins Dr. Manteo, NC 27954
Conference call	December 12, 2016, 2 p.m. – 4 p.m.		To participate in conference call, call: (888) 790-3514  Passcode: 1029249  To participate in webinar, RSVP at: <a href="https://noaaevents2.webex.com/mw3100/mywebex/default.do?nomenu=true&amp;siteurl=noaaevents2&amp;service=6&amp;rnd=0.5722618598976709&amp;main_url=https%3A%2F%2Fnoaaevents2.webex.com%2Fec3100%2Feventcenter%2Fevent%2FeventAction.do%3FtheAction%3Ddetail%26%26%26EMK%3D4832534b0000000274c902c10b1213f88484f05821429342e756fdecbad04e74e804da6c498aaf5f%26siteurl%3Dnoaaevents2%26confViewID%3D422630081%26encryptTicket%3DSDJTSwAAAAJC7aKRCiFIqT_gqFltkrAG9vq8AwtwiNksxtKENgpmzQ2%26">https://noaaevents2.webex.com/mw3100/mywebex/default.do?nomenu=true&amp;siteurl=noaaevents2&amp;service=6&amp;rnd=0.5722618598976709&amp;main_url=https%3A%2F%2Fnoaaevents2.webex.com%2Fec3100%2Feventcenter%2Fevent%2FeventAction.do%3FtheAction%3Ddetail%26%26%26EMK%3D4832534b0000000274c902c10b1213f88484f05821429342e756fdecbad04e74e804da6c498aaf5f%26siteurl%3Dnoaaevents2%26confViewID%3D422630081%26encryptTicket%3DSDJTSwAAAAJC7aKRCiFIqT_gqFltkrAG9vq8AwtwiNksxtKENgpmzQ2%26</a>

During these hearings, NMFS will receive public feedback on the proposed management measures. Written comments, identified by “NOAA-NMFS-2013-0070”, may be submitted electronically via the Federal eRulemaking Portal <http://www.regulations.gov>, or sent by fax or mail to the contact information included below. All comments received are a part of the public record and generally will be posted to <http://www.regulations.gov> without change. All Personal Identifying Information (for example, name, address, etc.) voluntarily submitted by the commenter may be publicly accessible. Do not submit Confidential Business Information or otherwise sensitive or protected information. NMFS will accept anonymous comments (enter N/A in the required fields, if you wish to remain anonymous). You may submit attachments to electronic comments in Microsoft Word, Excel, WordPerfect, or Adobe PDF file formats only.

This notice is a courtesy to Atlantic HMS fishery participants to help keep you informed about the fishery. Official notice of Federal actions is made through filing such notice with the Office of Federal Register. For further information on this proposed rule and draft environmental impact statement, contact Tobey Curtis at 978-281-9273 or Karyl Brewster-Geisz at 301-427-8503. Copies of the proposed rule, draft environmental impact statement, and other supporting documents are available upon request from the Highly Migratory Species Management Division, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910 (phone: 301-427-8503, fax: 301-713-1917). The information will also be posted on the HMS website at: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/>.