

ASMFC Sets Spiny Dogfish 2012/2013 Fishing Year Quota at 30 Million Pounds

Boston, MA – The Commission's Spiny Dogfish and Coastal Sharks Management Board approved a 30 million pound quota for the 2012/2013 fishing season (May 1 – April 30), with a maximum possession limit of 3,000 pounds per day for the northern region states Maine through Connecticut. State-specific shares for the southern region (New York through North Carolina) are provided in the table below. Any overages from the 2011/2012 fishing season will be paid back by region or state in the 2012/2013 season. The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC) forwarded a recommendation for a 35.6 million pound quota to the National Marine Fisheries Service Northeast Regional Administrator for final action prior to the start of the 2012/2013 fishing season.

**Regional/state quotas and possession limits for the 2012/2013 fishing season (in pounds).
Quotas will be adjusted for any over/under harvests in the 2011/2012 fishing season.**

	Northern Region (ME - CT)	NY	NJ	DE	MD	VA	NC
Possession Limit	3,000	To be specified by the individual southern region states					
% Allocation	58%	2.707%	7.644%	0.896%	5.920%	10.795%	14.036%
2012/2013 Quota	17,400,000	812,100	2,293,200	268,800	1,776,000	3,238,500	4,210,800

The Board's action responds to the findings of the 2011 Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC) Update on the Status of Spiny Dogfish, which estimates that spiny dogfish are not overfished and not experiencing overfishing. Spawning stock biomass (SSB) was estimated at 373.56 million pounds in 2011, and has exceeded the target (351.23 million pounds) for the last four years. Fishing mortality (F) is estimated to be 0.093 in 2010, well below the plan's target (0.207) and threshold (0.325). While the stock remains not overfished, it is projected record low recruitment from 1997 to 2003 will cause SSB to decrease in the future. Projections indicate that the magnitude of this drop is reduced by lower F rates (quotas).

The Commission's Spiny Dogfish Technical Committee and MAFMC's Monitoring Committee (MC) both recommended a maximum quota of 35.6 million pounds for the 2012/2013 fishing season. However, members of the public cautioned the Board against setting a 35.6 million pound quota, citing the market cannot absorb a 75% increase in quota and dogfish prices are likely to drop significantly with increased supply. In addition, they asked that the Board set a lower quota to minimize future fluctuations in the annual quota given concern regarding the limited contributions of the 1997 to 2003 year classes to the fishery.

Discards decreased by 31% from 2009 (13 million pounds) to 2010 (8.1 million pounds) and the number of commercial groundfish trips decreased by 48% following the implementation of Amendment 16 the Northeast Multispecies Groundfish FMP. Canadian landings have also decreased significantly in recent years (3.5 million pounds in 2008; 249,000 pounds in 2009; 13,230 pounds in 2010). It is believed the Canadian dogfish harvest will not increase in the near future given the lack of demand for the product and the subsequent closure of Canadian spiny dogfish processors.

Based on the recommendation of its Coastal Sharks Technical Committee, the Board approved a 33 fish possession limit for sharks in the large coastal sharks (LCS) species group (silky, tiger,

blacktip, spinner, bull, lemon, nurse, scalloped hammerhead, great hammerhead, and smooth hammerhead sharks) for 2012. The Board maintained the 33 fish LCS possession limit since it worked well in distributing the quota in 2010 and 2011 and is consistent with proposed federal shark specifications.

For more information, please contact Christopher Vonderweidt, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at 703.842.0740 or <cvonderweidt@asmfc.org>.