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Marine Fisheries Advisory

***Marine Fisheries* TO HOST ASMFC PUBLIC MEETING ON
COASTAL SHARKS PUBLIC INFORMATION DOCUMENT
Meeting in Massachusetts on Wednesday, June 21st**

The Commonwealth will host an ASMFC meeting to gather public comment on a Public Information Document (PID) for the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Atlantic Coastal Sharks. The meeting will take place on Wednesday, June 21st (6PM) at the Plymouth Harbor Radisson (180 Water St.). Please see the ASMFC press releases below and visit www.asmfc.org for further information.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 5, 2006

PRESS CONTACT: Tina Berger
(202) 289-6400

**Atlantic Coastal States Schedule Public Meetings
to Gather Input on Coastal Sharks PID**

Washington, DC – Atlantic coastal states from Maine to Florida have scheduled their public meetings in order to gather public comment on the Public Information Document (PID) for the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Atlantic Coastal Sharks. The dates, times, and locations of those meetings follow:

North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries

Thursday, June 1, 2006; 6:00 pm
Crystal Coast Civic Center
3505 Arendell Street
Morehead City, North Carolina
Contact: Louis Daniel at (252) 726-7021

South Carolina Department of Natural Resources

Monday, June 5, 2006; 7:00 pm
Marine Resources Division Office
217 Fort Johnson Road
James Island/Charleston, South Carolina
Contact: Mel Bell at (843) 953-9007

Georgia Division of Coastal Resources

Wednesday, June 7, 2006; 6:00 pm
Holton's Restaurant
13711 E Oglethorpe Highway
Midway, Georgia
Contact: Spud Woodward/Doug Haymans at
(912) 264-7218

Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission

Thursday, June 8, 2006; 6:00 pm
Public Water Works Reclaim Building
1600 Minuteman Causeway
Cocoa Beach, Florida
Contact: Michelle Mitchell at (727) 896-8626

Maryland Department of Natural Resources

Tuesday, June 13, 2006; 6:00 pm

Ocean Pines Library

11107 Cathell Road

Berlin, Maryland

Contact: Mike Luisi at (410) 260-8341

Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries

Wednesday, June 21, 2006; 6:00 pm

Plymouth Radisson

180 Water Street

Plymouth, Massachusetts

Contact: Melanie Griffin at (617) 626-1528

New York Department of Environmental Conservation

Monday, June 19, 2006; 7:00 pm

205 North Belle Mead Road

East Setauket, New York

Contact: Gordon Colvin/Steve Heins at (631) 444-0433

Rhode Island Division of Fish & Wildlife

Thursday, June 22, 2006; 6:00 pm

Fort Wetherill Marine Laboratory

3 Fort Wetherill Road

Jamestown, Rhode Island

Contact: Chris Powell at (401) 423-1929

New Hampshire, Connecticut and Delaware have declined to hold public meetings. The remaining states (Maine, New Jersey and Virginia) may still schedule public meetings; information of these meetings will be released as they become available.

As the first step in the development of an interstate FMP, the PID presents a broad overview of the issues facing Atlantic coastal sharks and the fishing industry. It provides the public with the opportunity to tell the Commission about changes observed in the fishery, things that should or should not be done in terms of management, regulation, enforcement, research, development, and enhancement, and any other concerns about the resource or the fishery as well as the reasons for those concerns.

Please note that the PID focuses entirely on Atlantic coastal sharks (see table below). This species complex does NOT include spiny dogfish, as such, commenters are asked to direct their input on those species under consideration for inclusion in the PID.

Management Unit (36)	Shark Species Included
Large Coastal Sharks (11)	Sandbar, silky, tiger, blacktip, bull, spinner, lemon, nurse, smooth hammerhead, scalloped hammerhead, and great hammerhead sharks
Small Coastal Sharks (4)	Atlantic sharpnose, blacknose, finetooth, and bonnethead sharks
Pelagic Sharks (5)	Shortfin mako, thresher, oceanic whitetip, porbeagle, and blue sharks
Prohibited Species (16)	Whale, basking, sandtiger, bigeye sandtiger, white, dusky, night, bignose, narrowtooth, longfin mako, bigeye thresher, sevengill, sixgill, bigeye sixgill, smalltail, and Atlantic angel sharks.

The PID and subsequent FMP are being developed to help coordinate the conservation and management of coastal sharks among the Atlantic coastal states and between the states and the federal government. Currently, Atlantic coastal sharks are managed by individual states in inshore waters (0 – 3 miles from shore) and by the federal government through the 1999 Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Tunas, Swordfish and Sharks in offshore waters (3 to 200 miles from shore). Cooperation between federal and state governments in developing coordinated conservation measures is important to successful domestic management of coastal shark species because range, migrations, mating and pupping areas overlap state and federal jurisdictions. Many coastal species utilize highly productive bays and estuaries within state waters as nursery habitat. In addition, because the unique nature of shark biology (late maturity, low fecundity) makes shark species more susceptible to overfishing, traditional fisheries management methods become less effective.

Following the initial phase of information-gathering and public comment, the Commission will evaluate potential management alternatives and develop a draft FMP with preferred management measures identified for public review. Following that review and public comment, the Commission will specify the management measures to be included in the new FMP. A tentative schedule for the completion of the FMP for Atlantic Coastal Sharks is included in PID.

Fishermen and other interested groups are encouraged to provide input on the PID, either through attending public hearings or providing written comments. Copies can be obtained by contacting the Commission at (202) 289-6400 or via the Commission's website at www.asafc.org under Breaking News. Public comment will be accepted until **5:00 PM on July 14, 2006** and should be forwarded to Ruth Christiansen, Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator, 1444 'Eye' Street, NW, Sixth Floor, Washington, DC 20005; 202-289-6051 (FAX) or at comments@asafc.org (Subject line: Coastal Sharks). For more information, please contact Ruth Christiansen at 202-289-6400.

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