

NEFSC STUDY FLEET PROGRAM EFP—Continued

Number of vessels	24
Possession	Possession for at-sea sampling plus limited landing
	§ 648.231 Spiny dogfish closure. § 648.235 Spiny dogfish possession and landing restrictions.

The following descriptions detail the NEFSC Study Fleet Program's Sampling Needs:

Haddock—whole fish would be retained for maturity and fecundity research. The haddock retained would not exceed 30 fish per trip, or 360 fish for all trips. The maximum weight of haddock on any trip would not exceed 120 lb (54.43 kg) total weight per trip, and would not exceed 1,440 lb (653.17 kg) for all trips combined.

Yellowtail Flounder—whole fish would be retained for maturity, fecundity, bioelectrical impedance analysis (BIA), food habits, and genetic research. The yellowtail flounder retained would not exceed 60 fish per month from each of the three stock areas (Gulf of Maine (GOM), Georges Bank (GB), Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic (SNE/MA)), or 1,800 fish total from each stock area for all trips. The maximum weight on any trip would not exceed 50 lb (22.70 kg) total weight, and would not exceed 1,500 lb (680.39 kg) for all trips combined.

Summer Flounder—whole fish would be retained for maturity, fecundity, BIA, food habits, and genetic research. The summer flounder retained would not exceed 60 fish per month from each of the three stock areas (GOM, GB, SNE/MA), or 1,800 fish total from each stock area for all trips. The maximum weight on any trip would not exceed 100 lb (45.36 kg) total weight, and would not exceed 3,000 lb (1,360.78 kg) for all trips combined.

Winter Flounder—whole fish would be retained for maturity, fecundity, BIA, food habits, and genetic research. The winter flounder retained would not exceed 60 fish per month from each of the three stock areas (GOM, GB, SNE/MA), or 1,800 fish total from each stock area for all trips. The maximum weight on any trip would not exceed 75 lb (34.02 kg) total weight, and would not exceed 2,250 lb (1,020.58 kg) for all trips combined.

Spiny Dogfish—Whole fish would be retained for reproductive biology research. The spiny dogfish retained would not exceed 50 fish per month from each of the two stock areas (GOM, SNE/MA), or 1,200 fish total for all trips. The maximum weight on any trip would not exceed 390 lb (176.9 kg), and

would not exceed 9,360 lb (4,245.62 kg) total for all trips.

Monkfish—whole fish would be retained for maturity and fecundity research. Monkfish retained would not exceed 10 fish per trip, or 120 fish total for all trips. The maximum weight on any trip would not exceed 100 lb (45.36 kg) total weight, and would not exceed 1,200 lb (544.31 kg) for all trips combined.

Cod—whole fish would be retained for tagging demonstrations and educational purposes. Cod to be retained would not exceed 15 fish per trip, or 60 cod for all trips. The maximum weight on any trip would not exceed 150 lb (68.04 kg) total weight, and would not exceed 600 lb (272.16 kg) for all trips combined.

Barndoor Skate—whole and, in some cases, live skates would be retained for age and growth research and species confirmation. The barndoor skates retained would not exceed 20 fish per trip, or 80 skates total for all trips. The maximum weight on any trip would not exceed 75 lb (34.02 kg) total weight, and would not exceed 300 lb (136.08 kg) total for all trips combined.

Thorny Skate—whole and, in some cases, live skates would be retained for age and growth research and species confirmation. Thorny skates retained would not exceed 20 fish per trip, or 80 skates total for all trips. The maximum weight on any trip would not exceed 75 lb (34.02 kg) whole weight, and would not exceed 300 lb (136.08 kg) total for all trips combined.

Black Sea Bass—whole fish would be retained for examination of seasonal and latitudinal patterns in energy allocation. This effort is in support of an ongoing study at the NEFSC to evaluate BIA to measure fish energy density and reproductive potential for stock assessment. Black sea bass retained would not exceed 75 fish per trip or 300 black sea bass total for all trips. The maximum weight on any trip would not exceed 250 lb (113.40 kg) total weight, and would not exceed 1,000 lb (453.59 kg) total for all trips combined.

If approved, the applicant may request minor modifications and extensions to the EFP throughout the year. EFP modifications and extensions may be granted without further notice if they are deemed essential to facilitate

completion of the proposed research and have minimal impact that do not change the scope or impact of the initially approved EFP request. Any fishing activity conducted outside the scope of the exempted fishing activity would be prohibited.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*

Dated: March 18, 2011.

Margo Schulze-Haugen,

Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-BA89

Identification of Nations Whose Fishing Vessels Are Engaged in Fishing in Waters Beyond Any National Jurisdiction That Target or Incidentally Catch Sharks

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice and request for information.

SUMMARY: NMFS is seeking information regarding nations whose vessels are engaged in fishing in waters beyond any national jurisdiction that target or incidentally catch sharks. Such information will be reviewed for the purposes of the identification of nations pursuant to the High Seas Driftnet Fishing Moratorium Protection Act (Moratorium Protection Act).

DATES: Information should be received on or before August 1, 2011, but will be accepted up to December 1, 2011.

ADDRESSES: Information should be submitted to NMFS Office of International Affairs, Attn.: MSRA Shark Information, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910. E-mail address: SHARK.INFO@noaa.gov or fax (301) 713-9106.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: NMFS Office of International Affairs,

or Cheri McCarty (ph. 301-713-9090).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Shark Conservation Act of 2010 (S.850) amended the Moratorium Protection Act (16 U.S.C.1826d-k) to require actions be taken by the United States to strengthen shark conservation. Specifically, these amendments to the Moratorium Protection Act require the Secretary of Commerce to identify nations whose fishing vessels are engaged, or have been engaged during the preceding calendar year, in fishing activities or practices in waters beyond any national jurisdiction that target or incidentally catch sharks and the nation has not adopted a regulatory program to provide for the conservation of sharks, including measures to prohibit removal of any of the fins of a shark (including the tail) and discarding the carcass of the shark at sea, that is comparable to that of the United States, taking into account different conditions. The Secretary is required to begin making identifications not later than January 4, 2012.

The Moratorium Protection Act also requires the Secretary of Commerce to certify whether each nation identified has taken the following steps to warrant receipt of a positive certification: Provided documentary evidence of adoption of a regulatory program that is comparable to that of the United States, taking into account different conditions and established a management plan containing requirements that will assist in gathering species-specific data. If a nation does not receive a positive certification by the Secretary of Commerce, it could be subject to sanctions under the High Seas Driftnet Fisheries Enforcement Act (Enforcement Act) (16 U.S.C. 1826a).

In fulfillment of its requirements under the Moratorium Protection Act, NMFS is in the process of collecting and analyzing information on nations whose vessels target or incidentally catch sharks in waters beyond any national jurisdiction in anticipation of making identifications by January 4, 2012. NMFS is soliciting information from the public that could assist in its identification of nations engaged in such activities. Information that may prove useful to NMFS includes:

- Documentation (photographs, *etc.*) of fishing vessels engaged in targeted or incidental catch of sharks on the high seas;
- Fishing vessel records;
- Trade data supporting evidence that a nation's vessels are engaged in shark catch;
- Reports from off-loading facilities, port-side government officials, enforcement agents, military personnel,

port inspectors, transshipment vessel workers and fish importers;

- RFMO catch documents and statistical document programs, as appropriate;
- Nation's domestic regulations for shark conservation and management; and
- Reports from governments, international organizations, or nongovernmental organizations.

NMFS will consider all available information, as appropriate, when making a determination whether or not to identify a particular nation whose fishing vessels are engaged, or have been engaged during the preceding calendar year, in fishing activities or practices in waters beyond any national jurisdiction that target or incidentally catch sharks and the nation has not adopted a regulatory program to provide for the conservation of sharks, including measures to prohibit removal of any of the fins of a shark (including the tail) and discarding the carcass of the shark at sea, that is comparable to that of the United States, taking into account different conditions. NMFS is interested in information on shark fishing activity during calendar year 2011. Information should be as specific as possible to assist NMFS in its review.

NMFS will consider several criteria when determining whether information is appropriate for use in making identifications, including but not limited to:

- Corroboration of information;
- Whether multiple sources have been able to provide information in support of an identification;
- The methodology used to collect the information;
- Specificity of the information provided;
- Susceptibility of the information to falsification and alteration; and
- Credibility of the individuals or organization providing the information.

On January 12, 2011, NMFS published a final rule to implement both the identification and certification procedures for nations whose vessels were engaged in illegal, unreported, or unregulated (IUU) fishing or bycatch of protected living marine resources. NMFS plans to publish a proposed rule to establish the identification and certification procedures for nations whose fishing vessels are engaged in fishing activities or practices in waters beyond any national jurisdiction that target or incidentally catch sharks if the nation has not adopted a regulatory program for the conservation of sharks that is comparable to that of the United States, taking into account different conditions.

Dated: March 21, 2011.

Rebecca Lent,

*Director, Office of International Affairs,
National Marine Fisheries Service.*

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XA315

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC); Meetings

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of public meeting.

SUMMARY: The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) and its Ecosystems and Ocean Planning Committee, its Squid, Mackerel, and Butterfish Committee, its Spiny Dogfish Committee, and its Executive Committee will hold public meetings.

DATES: Tuesday, April 12, 2011 through Thursday, April 14, 2011. On Tuesday, April 12—The Ecosystems and Ocean Planning Committee will meet from 2 p.m. until 5 p.m. On Wednesday, April 13—The Squid, Mackerel, and Butterfish Committee will meet from 8:30 a.m. until 11 a.m. From 11 a.m. until 12 p.m. there will be a Squid Trawl Proposed Rule Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Presentation. From 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. there will be a continuation of the Squid, Mackerel, and Butterfish Committee. The Spiny Dogfish Committee will meet from 3 p.m. until 5 p.m. There will be a Public Listening Session from 5 p.m. until 6 p.m. On Thursday, April 14—The Executive Committee will meet from 8 a.m. until 9 a.m. The Council will convene at 9 a.m. A 3-Year Standardized Bycatch Reporting Methodology Report (SBRM) will be from 9 a.m. until 10 a.m. There will be a Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement (BOEMRE) Presentation from 10 a.m. until 11 a.m. From 11 a.m. until 11:30 a.m. the Council will receive an Update on Amendment 6 to the Monkfish Fishery Management Plan (FMP). The Council will hold its regular Business Session from 11:30 a.m. until 1:30 p.m. to approve the February 2011 minutes, receive Organizational Reports, the South Atlantic Liaison Report, the