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1. *Correspondence (June 22-24, 2021) M*

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# Swordfish and Shark Retention Limit Final Management Measures

Presented Spring 2021

# Outline

- Background
- Summary of Public Comments
- Changes from Proposed to Final Measures
- Outreach



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# Background

## Rulemaking Objective

- Provide increased fishing opportunities for sharks and swordfish for fishermen with Swordfish General Commercial (SGC), HMS Charter/Headboat, and HMS Commercial Caribbean Small Boat (CCSB) permits.
- Streamline and consolidate regulatory procedures for retention limit adjustments for three open-access swordfish commercial permits.

## Management Options

- Inseason Adjustment of Retention Limits under the CCSB Permit.
- Retention Limit Alternatives for Swordfish.
- Retention Limit Alternatives for Sharks for CCSB Permit.



# Proposed Rule

- Proposed Rule published April 27, 2020 (85 FR 23315):
  - Comments accepted through June 26, 2020;
  - Held Public Hearings: Two Public Webinars and Advisory Panel Meeting May 19, 2020; and
  - Received 29 comments.
- Final Rule published April 30, 2021 (86 FR 22882).



# Summary of Public Comments



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## A. Proposed Inseason Adjustment of Retention Limits under the CCSB Permit

- The majority of commenters supported the proposed changes to the regulatory procedures.

## B. Proposed Retention Limit Alternatives for Swordfish

- General support for increasing the swordfish retention limit up to 18 swordfish per vessel per trip.
- Some opposition to increasing the existing swordfish retention limit because of concerns over the sustainability of the swordfish fishery, crew safety (for smaller vessels in the Caribbean), the lack of accurate commercial landings data, and lack of law enforcement presence in the Caribbean region.
- Requests for additional outreach and education on permit requirements under the HMS CCSB permit.



# C. Proposed Retention Limit Alternatives for Sharks

- Some supported the no action alternative to prevent overfishing of sharks.
- Some comments opposed the retention limit for specific sharks, such as oceanic whitetip, shortfin mako, and hammerhead sharks.
- Some commenters supported combining Alternative C2 and C3 to establish a default retention limit of 3 non-prohibited large coastal, small coastal, and/or smoothhound sharks, with no retention of pelagic sharks.
- Requests for extensive outreach and education to fishermen and government agencies on species identification and permit requirements in the U.S. Caribbean.



# Changes from Proposed to Final Measures



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# Final Measure – No change

## A. Inseason Adjustment of Retention Limits under the CCSB Permit

### ➤ **Alternative A2:**

- Adopt the Swordfish General Commercial Permit inseason adjustment authorization criteria to adjust the regional swordfish retention limit for the CCSB permit.

### ➤ **Alternative A3:**

- Adopt the shark inseason trip limit adjustment authorization criteria to adjust the regional shark retention limit for the CCSB permit.



# Final Measures - Changed

## B. Retention Limit Alternatives for Swordfish

Limits/Regions	Proposed Preferred Alternative B2	Final New Preferred Alternative B4
Retention Limit Range	0-6 per vessel per trip for all permits	0-18 per vessel per trip for all permits
Default NW Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico Limit	6 per vessel per trip for SGC and CHB	18 per vessel per trip for SGC and CHB
Default Florida Swordfish Management Area Limit	0 per vessel per trip for SGC and CHB	0 per vessel per trip for SGC and CHB
Default U.S. Caribbean Limit†	6 per vessel per trip for all permits	18 per vessel per trip for all permits

SGC = Swordfish General Commercial permit

CHB = HMS Charter/Headboat permit with a commercial sale endorsement



## B. Retention Limit Alternatives for Swordfish (Cont.)

- Rationale for Change:
  - Align regional retention limits of three HMS permits.
  - Provide additional swordfish fishing opportunities as stock can support higher removal levels within established quotas and without jeopardizing sustainability of the stock.
  - Defer to captains/vessel operators for carry capacity designs.
  - Improve compliance and landings information.
  - Streamline and increase efficiencies in inseason adjustments.

# Final Measures - Changed

## C. Retention Limit Alternatives for Sharks for CCSB Permit

U.S. Caribbean	Proposed Preferred Alternative C2	Final New Preferred Alternative C4
Retention Limit Range	0-3 per vessel per trip	0-3 per vessel per trip
Default Retention Limit	3 smoothhound or tiger Sharks (combined) per vessel per trip	3 tiger, blacktip, bull, spinner, lemon, Atlantic sharpnose, finetooth, bonnethead, and smoothhound Sharks (combined) per vessel per trip

NOTE: Retention of hammerhead, pelagic, blacknose, silky, sandbar, and dusky sharks is not allowed.



## C. Retention Limit Alternatives for Sharks for CCSB Permit (Cont.)

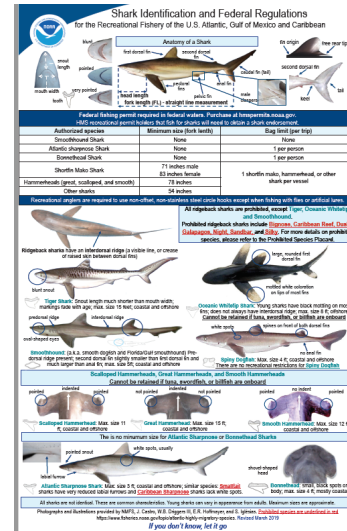
- Rationale for Change:
  - Allow for additional fishing opportunities to harvest sustainably managed sharks.
  - Avoid overharvest of sharks, specifically including prohibited, pelagic, silky, sandbar, and hammerhead sharks.
  - Improve catch and landings data in the U.S. Caribbean shark fishery by encouraging adoption of the permit.



# Outreach

Our efforts include:

- Creating educational placards and videos.
- Fostering partnerships with state partners and local organizations.
- Distributing information over social media, websites and listserv.



Coming Soon!  
Summer and Fall 2021



# Contacts

Please contact us with any other questions or comments:

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