



TAKE ACTION!

SMALL SHARKS, BIG FISHERIES: *Please help limit fishing, prevent finning!*

Just in time for *Shark Week*, concerned citizens have great opportunities to help improve fishing and finning policies for the two most heavily fished sharks in the US: **Smooth and Spiny Dogfishes**.

These two small species are taken in great numbers for their meat and fins, mostly for export to Europe and Asia. They aren't nearly as loved as bigger sharks, and have fallen through some important [management cracks](#). Dogfish deserve sound fishing and finning policies, just like other sharks! *Please weigh in with fishery managers during these two key comment periods.*



Background

Shark finning (slicing off a shark's fins and discarding the body at sea) is a wasteful practice that was prohibited in the US Atlantic in 1993. In 2008, to more effectively prevent finning, US Atlantic fishery managers switched from a complicated fin-to-body weight ratio limit to banning any and all removal of shark fins at sea. This "fins attached" method is widely recognized as the best practice for finning ban enforcement and also helps in the collection of species-specific catch data. With the 2010 [Shark Conservation Act](#), Congress expanded the fins-attached rule to US Pacific fisheries, but unfortunately created a new exception for Atlantic Smooth Dogfish (aka Dusky Smoothhound Sharks) and paved the way for raising the associated fin-to-body ratio from 5% to 12%. Such a high limit dramatically increases the wiggle room for undetected finning of not only smoothhounds, but also many other coastal sharks. Some Atlantic states have already adopted this exceptionally lenient ratio for Smooth Dogfish. The Shark Conservation Act's Smooth Dogfish exception text is so problematic that the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) delayed basic catch limits for the species that were scheduled to take effect in 2012. Cleaning up these problems will help US efforts to promote better shark conservation policies around the world.

New Opportunities: How You Can Help



SMOOTH DOGFISH: Support limits, oppose weak finning ban!

NMFS is now asking for public input on [options](#) to limit Smooth Dogfish catches and prevent finning. Before **November 14, 2014**, send comments to Margo Schulze-Haugen, NMFS/SF1, 1315 East West Highway, National Marine Fisheries Service, SSMC3, Silver Spring, MD 20910 through regular mail or the [e-Rulemaking Portal](#) in support of a ban on at-sea removal of Smooth Dogfish fins (Alternative A1) and science-based Smooth Dogfish catch limits (Alternative B4).

SPINY DOGFISH: Support a Stronger Finning Ban!

Spiny dogfish were *not* exempted from the fins-attached mandate in the Shark Conservation Act, but some Atlantic states – like Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Maryland, and North Carolina – still allow spiny dogfish fins to be removed at sea. The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) is considering fixing this with a coast-wide [ban on at-sea removal of spiny dogfish fins](#), now out for public comment.



By **September 30, 2014**, please send a letter in support of ASMFC banning at-sea fin removal for Spiny and Smooth Dogfish to Marin Hawk, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, 1050 N. Highland St., Suite 200 A-N, Arlington, VA 22201 by regular mail or email: comments@asmfc.org.

Follow @SharkAdvocates & #DogfishRSharks2 on Twitter for updates. THANK YOU!

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