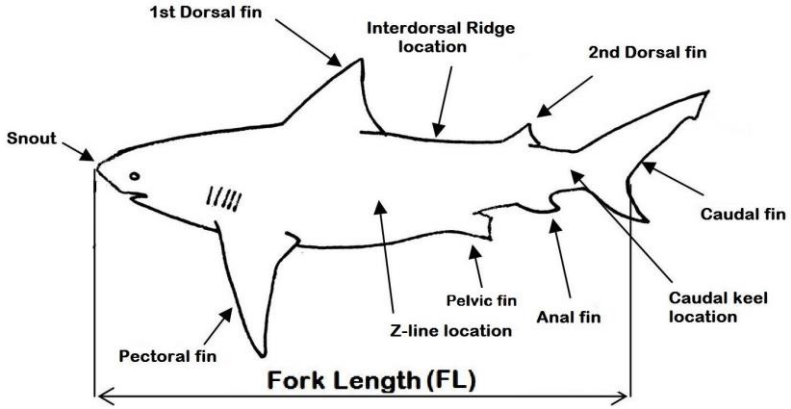
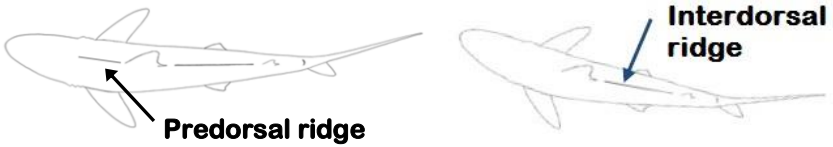


# VI. SHARKS

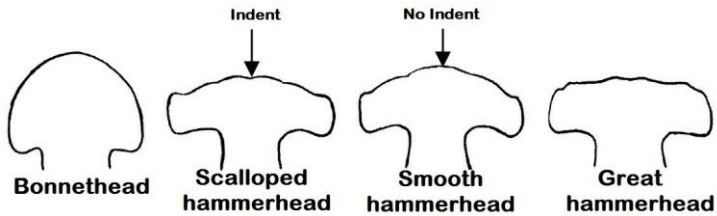
## ANATOMY OF A SHARK



## IDENTIFICATION OF RIDGEBACK SHARKS



## IDENTIFICATION OF HAMMERHEAD SHARKS



Sharks can be difficult to identify, even for experts. To make sure you do not accidentally retain a prohibited species, release any sharks you are not sure you can identify correctly. If the shark has an interdorsal ridge (a ridge of skin on the back between the two dorsal fins), there is a good chance it is a prohibited species and you should release it.

Remember: *If you don't know, let it go.* For help with shark identification, download the Recreational Atlantic HMS Shark ID Placard ([http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/species/sharks/documents/shark\\_id\\_placard\\_532017\\_web.pdf](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/species/sharks/documents/shark_id_placard_532017_web.pdf)), the Prohibited Shark ID Placard ([http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/species/sharks/documents/prohibited\\_shark\\_id\\_placard\\_5302017\\_web.pdf](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/species/sharks/documents/prohibited_shark_id_placard_5302017_web.pdf)) or contact the Atlantic HMS Management



Division at 301-427-8503 to request a waterproof hard copy of the placard.

**AUTHORIZED SPECIES<sup>55</sup> (retention allowed)**

Large Coastal Sharks (LCS) (non-ridgeback LCS & tiger)		Small Coastal Sharks (SCS)	Pelagic Sharks	Smoothhound Sharks <sup>**+</sup>
Blacktip	Lemon	Atlantic	Blue	Smooth dogfish
Bull	Nurse	sharpnose	Oceanic	Florida
Hammerhead, great*	Spinner	Blacknose	whitetip <sup>+</sup>	smoothhound
Hammerhead, scalloped*	Tiger+	Bonnethead	Porbeagle <sup>***</sup>	Gulf smoothhound
Hammerhead, smooth*		Finetooth	Shortfin mako	
			Thresher	

+ Ridgeback sharks that have an interdorsal ridge, or visible line of raised skin, between their dorsal fins.

\* Anglers cannot possess these sharks while in possession of tunas, billfish or swordfish.<sup>56</sup>

\*\* Smoothhound sharks are the only authorized species with both a predorsal and an interdorsal ridge.

\*\*\* Porbeagle sharks caught alive must be released unharmed if swordfish, tunas, or billfish are retained, possessed, or offloaded from the vessel during that trip.<sup>57</sup>

**PROHIBITED SPECIES<sup>58</sup> (must be released)**

Atlantic angel	Caribbean reef+	Night+	Sixgill
Basking	Caribbean sharpnose	Sandbar+	Smalltail
Bigeye sand tiger	Dusky+	Sand tiger	Whale
Bigeye sixgill	Galapagos+	Sevengill	White*
Bigeye thresher	Longfin mako	Silky+	
Bignose+	Narrowtooth		

\* A person may fish for white sharks with rod and reel, but must release the fish immediately, with minimal injury, and without removing it from the water.<sup>59</sup>

+ Ridgeback sharks that have an interdorsal ridge, or visible line of raised skin between their dorsal fins.

**PERMITS, ENDORSEMENTS, AND GEARS**

**Permits and Endorsements<sup>60</sup>**

To fish recreationally for sharks, a **shark endorsement** must be held on one of the following permits:

1. HMS Angling,<sup>62</sup> **OR**
2. HMS Charter/Headboat,<sup>63</sup> **OR**
3. Atlantic Tunas General category<sup>64</sup> **OR** Swordfish General Commercial<sup>65</sup> **ONLY** if participating in a registered Atlantic HMS tournament.

**Gear<sup>61</sup>**

Handline and Rod and reel



## SIZE/BAG LIMITS AND SEASONS

Permits	Species	Minimum Size <sup>66</sup> (FL)	Trip Bag Limit <sup>**67</sup>	Season
HMS Angling, Charter/Headboat, Atlantic Tunas General Category*, or Swordfish General Commercial*	Atlantic sharpnose	None	1 per person	Jan. 1 - Dec. 31
	Bonnethead	None	1 per person	
	Smoothhound Sharks	None	None	
	Hammerheads (Great, Smooth, and Scalloped)	78"	1 per vessel	
	Shortfin mako	83"		
	All other sharks <sup>***</sup>	54"		

\* Only if participating in a registered HMS tournament.

\*\* For example, if there are 3 passengers on a trip, the vessel may retain up to 3 Atlantic sharpnose, 3 bonnethead, and 1 hammerhead or other shark (7 sharks total). Any number of smoothhound sharks may also be retained. If a hammerhead shark is retained, no tunas, billfish, or swordfish may be retained.

\*\*\* See above for authorized and prohibited species.

### SHARK ENDORSEMENT<sup>68</sup>

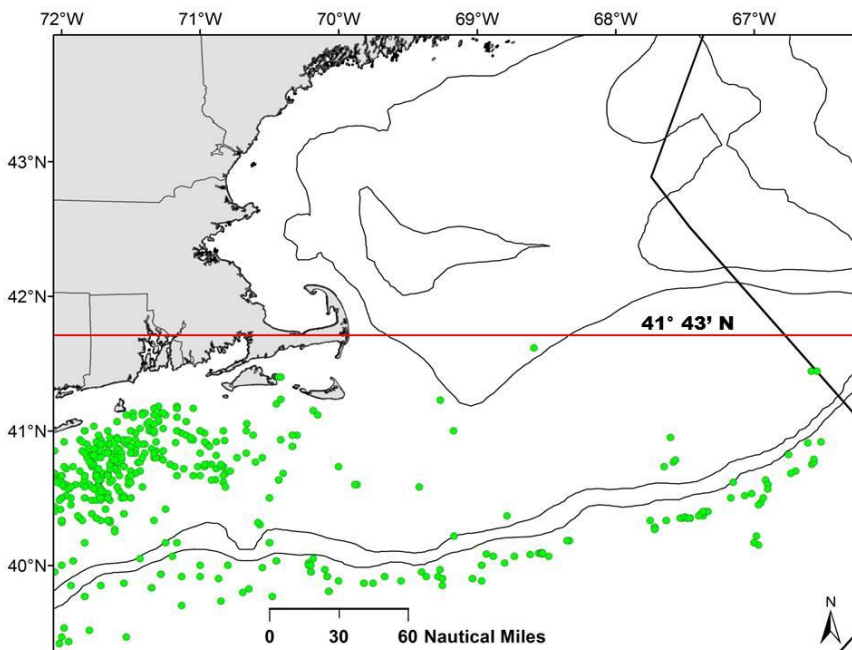
Starting January 1, 2018, all HMS permit holders that recreationally fish for, retain, possess, or land sharks are required to obtain a shark endorsement on the permit, which requires completing an online shark identification and fishing regulation training course and quiz. Permit holders can take the quiz at any time during the fishing year but the vessel(s) may not leave the dock on a trip that will include fishing for sharks unless a new or revised permit with a shark endorsement has been issued for the vessel. If requested by the vessel owner, the shark endorsement may be removed from the permit at any time; removal of the shark endorsement means sharks can no longer be fished for, retained, or landed by person(s) aboard that vessel.

All HMS permits, including those with shark endorsements, are vessel-based permits that authorize all individuals fishing on the permitted vessel to fish for, retain, possess, and land species under that permit. Anglers that wish to fish for other HMS (billfish, tuna, swordfish) are not required to obtain a shark endorsement if they do not intend to fish for sharks or harvest the sharks they catch incidentally. HMS permit holders without a shark endorsement that incidentally hook a shark while fishing for other species are required to release the shark immediately without removing it from the water.

### CIRCLE HOOK REQUIREMENT FOR SHARKS<sup>69</sup>

As of January 1, 2018, anglers aboard federally permitted vessels fishing recreationally for sharks are required to use non-offset, non stainless steel circle hooks whenever they are fishing south of 41° 43' N latitude (near Chatham, Massachusetts – the northern extent of the dusky shark's U.S. Atlantic range), except when fishing with flies or artificial lures. The circle hook regulatory line is presented on the following map.





**Figure 2. Chart of the northern extent of dusky shark distribution (points) and the regulatory line at 41° 43' N latitude. Starting January 1, 2018, HMS anglers fishing south of the regulatory line are required to use circle hooks when fishing recreationally for sharks.**

### **LANDING RESTRICTIONS<sup>70</sup>**

All sharks must be landed intact with the head, tail, and all fins naturally attached. The shark may be gutted and bled at sea (e.g., by making an incision at the base of the tail).<sup>71</sup> “Naturally attached” means attached to the shark carcass by at least some portion of uncut skin.<sup>72</sup>

If an Atlantic shark is caught but not kept, it must be released immediately to improve its chances of survival without removing it from the water.<sup>73</sup>

### **NOAA Fisheries encourages the live release of shortfin mako sharks.**

The minimum size limit for retention of shortfin mako sharks is 83” FL<sup>77</sup>, however, live release of all shortfin mako sharks is encouraged. Fishermen can use the “Release Mako” application (app) to report live releases of shortfin mako sharks using their Android or iPhones. The app can be downloaded for free from Google Play or iTunes. Fishermen can also report shortfin mako releases on the Atlantic HMS website <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/tools/release-mako-app>.



A vessel that has been issued an Atlantic Tunas General category or Swordfish General Commercial permit with a shark endorsement may fish recreationally for Atlantic sharks during a registered Atlantic HMS tournament. HMS Angling category regulations for Atlantic sharks apply, including those addressing authorized gears, techniques, bag limits and size limits.

### **REPORTING REQUIREMENTS<sup>74</sup>**

- The Large Pelagic Survey (LPS) or Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP, formerly MRFSS) may survey anglers at the dock, by phone, or by mail.<sup>75</sup> If contacted, anglers are required to participate in these surveys.
- Anglers in Maryland must report all recreational shark landings, and anglers in North Carolina must report some pelagic shark species, at a state-operated reporting station (state contact information is in Section XI).

### **RESTRICTED AREAS<sup>76</sup>**

- Tortugas Marine Reserves (closed year-round)
- Madison Swanson and Steamboat Lumps closed areas (closed year-round; except for surface trolling, allowed May-October)
- Edges 40 Fathom Contour closed area (closed January-April)

