



BILLING CODE 3510-22-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XF820

Schedules for Atlantic Shark Identification Workshops and Protected Species Safe

Handling, Release, and Identification Workshops

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

ACTION: Notice of public workshops.

SUMMARY: Free Atlantic Shark Identification Workshops and Protected Species Safe Handling, Release, and Identification Workshops will be held in January, February, and March of 2018.

Certain fishermen and shark dealers are required to attend a workshop to meet regulatory requirements and to maintain valid permits. Specifically, the Atlantic Shark Identification Workshop is mandatory for all federally permitted Atlantic shark dealers. The Protected Species Safe Handling, Release, and Identification Workshop is mandatory for vessel owners and operators who use bottom longline, pelagic longline, or gillnet gear, and who have also been issued shark or swordfish limited access permits. Additional free workshops will be conducted during 2018 and will be announced in a future notice.

DATES: The Atlantic Shark Identification Workshops will be held on January 11, February 15, and March 15, 2018.

The Protected Species Safe Handling, Release, and Identification Workshops will be held on January 12, January 24, February 6, February 22, March 7, and March 13, 2018.

See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** for further details.

ADDRESSES: The Atlantic Shark Identification Workshops will be held in Kenner, LA; Corpus Christi, TX; and Fort Pierce, FL.

The Protected Species Safe Handling, Release, and Identification Workshops will be held in Key Largo, FL; Portsmouth, NH; Wilmington, NC; Gulfport, MS; Palm Coast, FL; and Houston, TX.

See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** for further details on workshop locations.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Rick Pearson by phone: (727) 824-5399, or by fax: (727) 824-5398.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The workshop schedules, registration information, and a list of frequently asked questions regarding these workshops are posted on the Internet at:

<http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/compliance/workshops/index.html>.

Atlantic Shark Identification Workshops

Since January 1, 2008, Atlantic shark dealers have been prohibited from receiving, purchasing, trading, or bartering for Atlantic sharks unless a valid Atlantic Shark Identification Workshop certificate is on the premises of each business listed under the shark dealer permit that first receives Atlantic sharks (71 FR 58057; October 2, 2006). Dealers who attend and successfully complete a workshop are issued a certificate for each place of business that is permitted to receive sharks. These certificate(s) are valid for 3 years. Approximately 139 free Atlantic Shark Identification Workshops have been conducted since January 2007.

Currently, permitted dealers may send a proxy to an Atlantic Shark Identification Workshop. However, if a dealer opts to send a proxy, the dealer must designate a proxy for each

place of business covered by the dealer's permit which first receives Atlantic sharks. Only one certificate will be issued to each proxy. A proxy must be a person who is currently employed by a place of business covered by the dealer's permit; is a primary participant in the identification, weighing, and/or first receipt of fish as they are offloaded from a vessel; and who fills out dealer reports. Atlantic shark dealers are prohibited from renewing a Federal shark dealer permit unless a valid Atlantic Shark Identification Workshop certificate for each business location that first receives Atlantic sharks has been submitted with the permit renewal application. Additionally, trucks or other conveyances that are extensions of a dealer's place of business must possess a copy of a valid dealer or proxy Atlantic Shark Identification Workshop certificate.

Workshop Dates, Times, and Locations

1. January 11, 2018, 12 p.m. – 4 p.m., Double Tree Hotel, 2150 Veteran's Memorial Boulevard, Kenner, LA 70062.
2. February 15, 2018, 12 p.m. – 4 p.m., LaQuinta Inn, 546 South Padre Island Drive, Corpus Christi, TX 78405.
3. March 15, 2018, 12 p.m. – 4 p.m., Hampton Inn, 1985 Reynolds Drive, Fort Pierce, FL 34945.

Registration

To register for a scheduled Atlantic Shark Identification Workshop, please contact Eric Sander at ericssharkguide@yahoo.com or at (386) 852-8588.

Registration Materials

To ensure that workshop certificates are linked to the correct permits, participants will need to bring the following specific items to the workshop:

- Atlantic shark dealer permit holders must bring proof that the attendee is an owner or agent of the business (such as articles of incorporation), a copy of the applicable permit, and proof of identification.
- Atlantic shark dealer proxies must bring documentation from the permitted dealer acknowledging that the proxy is attending the workshop on behalf of the permitted Atlantic shark dealer for a specific business location, a copy of the appropriate valid permit, and proof of identification.

Workshop Objectives

The Atlantic Shark Identification Workshops are designed to reduce the number of unknown and improperly identified sharks reported in the dealer reporting form and increase the accuracy of species-specific dealer-reported information. Reducing the number of unknown and improperly identified sharks will improve quota monitoring and the data used in stock assessments. These workshops will train shark dealer permit holders or their proxies to properly identify Atlantic shark carcasses.

Protected Species Safe Handling, Release, and Identification Workshops

Since January 1, 2007, shark limited-access and swordfish limited-access permit holders who fish with longline or gillnet gear have been required to submit a copy of their Protected Species Safe Handling, Release, and Identification Workshop certificate in order to renew either permit (71 FR 58057; October 2, 2006). These certificate(s) are valid for 3 years. As such, vessel owners who have not already attended a workshop and received a NMFS certificate, or vessel owners whose certificate(s) will expire prior to the next permit renewal, must attend a workshop to fish with, or renew, their swordfish and shark limited-access permits. Additionally, new shark and

swordfish limited-access permit applicants who intend to fish with longline or gillnet gear must attend a Protected Species Safe Handling, Release, and Identification Workshop and submit a copy of their workshop certificate before either of the permits will be issued. Approximately 268 free Protected Species Safe Handling, Release, and Identification Workshops have been conducted since 2006.

In addition to certifying vessel owners, at least one operator on board vessels issued a limited-access swordfish or shark permit that uses longline or gillnet gear is required to attend a Protected Species Safe Handling, Release, and Identification Workshop and receive a certificate. Vessels that have been issued a limited-access swordfish or shark permit and that use longline or gillnet gear may not fish unless both the vessel owner and operator have valid workshop certificates onboard at all times. Vessel operators who have not already attended a workshop and received a NMFS certificate, or vessel operators whose certificate(s) will expire prior to their next fishing trip, must attend a workshop to operate a vessel with swordfish and shark limited-access permits that uses longline or gillnet gear.

Workshop Dates, Times, and Locations

1. January 12, 2018, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m., Holiday Inn, 99701 Overseas Highway, Key Largo, FL 33037.

2. January 24, 2018, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m., Holiday Inn, 300 Woodbury Avenue, Portsmouth, NH 03801.

3. February 6, 2018, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m., Hilton Garden Inn, 6745 Rock Spring Road, Wilmington, NC 28405.

4. February 22, 2018, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m., Holiday Inn, 9515 U.S. 49, Gulfport, MS 39503.

5. March 7, 2018, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m., Hilton Garden Inn, 55 Town Center Boulevard, Palm Coast, FL 32164.

6. March 13, 2018, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m., Holiday Inn Express, 9300 South Main Street, Houston, Texas 77025.

Registration

To register for a scheduled Protected Species Safe Handling, Release, and Identification Workshop, please contact Angler Conservation Education at (386) 682-0158.

Registration Materials

To ensure that workshop certificates are linked to the correct permits, participants will need to bring the following specific items with them to the workshop:

- Individual vessel owners must bring a copy of the appropriate swordfish and/or shark permit(s), a copy of the vessel registration or documentation, and proof of identification.
- Representatives of a business-owned or co-owned vessel must bring proof that the individual is an agent of the business (such as articles of incorporation), a copy of the applicable swordfish and/or shark permit(s), and proof of identification.
- Vessel operators must bring proof of identification.

Workshop Objectives

The Protected Species Safe Handling, Release, and Identification Workshops are designed to teach longline and gillnet fishermen the required techniques for the safe handling and release of entangled and/or hooked protected species, such as sea turtles, marine mammals, and smalltooth sawfish, and prohibited sharks. In an effort to improve reporting, the proper identification of protected species and prohibited sharks will also be taught at these workshops. Additionally,

individuals attending these workshops will gain a better understanding of the requirements for participating in these fisheries. The overall goal of these workshops is to provide participants with the skills needed to reduce the mortality of protected species and prohibited sharks, which may prevent additional regulations on these fisheries in the future.

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

Dated: December 1, 2017.

Emily H. Menashes,
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National Marine Fisheries Service.

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