

Summary of Port Meeting Comments on Shark Issues

1) Cape Hatteras, NC –

Shark Issues—

- Too many sharks; sharks are affecting snapper grouper fishery in this area.

2) Titusville, FL –

Issues—

- Closure of sandbar sharks; cross fishery issue associated with other snapper grouper closures.

3) Stuart, FL –

Issues—

- Florida is disadvantaged by the management plan for sharks (NOAA Highly Migratory Species).
- Need a shark season; incorporate sharks, etc. into quota and limits.
- How to avoid sharks eating hooked fish?

Solutions—

- Allow for consistent shark fishery at some level.
- Open seasons for sharks twice a year.
- Split shark season.
- Allow a limited harvest of sharks to control population of certain shark species.
- Identify areas with overabundance of sharks and allow harvesting.

4) Lake Park, FL –

Issues—

- Sharks overabundant in the area; eating snapper grouper as fish are being reeled in.
- Dive boat feeding of sharks— causing same problems.

Solutions/Comments—

- Open fishing for sharks in winter, don't cave to the Carolinas .
- Overabundance issue associated with sharks – have fed a lot of sharks banded rudderfish this year.
- Where we fish is so tight geographically, do they have same interaction problems off NC with sharks?
- Discussion about sandbar sharks historically being an edge fish, but now they are in 60' water and all over; also evidence of unique spawning aggregations of lemon sharks in the area.

5) Key Largo, FL –

Issues—

- Too many sharks – specifically bull and spinner sharks;
- Sharks are eating lots of snapper grouper species before fish can be brought on boat.

Solutions—

- Improve communication between HMS and Council (shark 'problem')
- Open commercial harvest of sharks (species specific).