



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
 NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
 Silver Spring, MD 20910

NMFS Announces Intent to Amend Essential Fish Habitat for Atlantic Highly Migratory Species

Essential Fish Habitat (EFH), including Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (HAPCs), for Atlantic Highly Migratory Species (HMS) were identified and described in the 1999 Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Atlantic Tunas, Swordfish, and Sharks, and in the 1999 Amendment 1 to the Atlantic Billfish FMP. EFH for five shark species was updated in the 2003 Amendment 1 to the FMP. As part of the five-year review required by the EFH regulatory guidelines, NMFS reviewed all new and existing EFH data in the Consolidated HMS FMP and determined that revisions to existing EFH for some Atlantic HMS may be warranted. This rulemaking would propose alternatives to amend some of the existing EFH, to consider additional HAPCs, and to minimize any adverse fishing and non-fishing impacts on HMS EFH consistent with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act), and other relevant Federal laws.

NMFS is requesting any new EFH information not considered in the Consolidated HMS FMP, comments on potential habitat areas of particular concern (HAPCs), and comments on potential fishing and non-fishing impacts that may adversely affect HMS EFH. Comments received on this action will assist NMFS in determining the options for rulemaking to revise EFH, consistent with the Magnuson-Stevens Act and the Consolidated HMS FMP.

This notice is a courtesy to Atlantic HMS fisheries interests to keep you informed about your fishery. Official notice of Federal fishery actions is made through filing such notice with the Office of the Federal Register. For further information, contact Chris Rilling at (301) 713-2347.

for James P. Buzyn
 Alan Risenhoover
 Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries

10/31/06
 Date