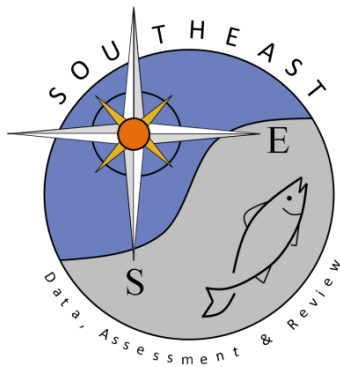


Bycatch estimates of Sandbar Shark in the Shark Research Fishery

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Bycatch estimates of Sandbar Shark in the Shark Research Fishery

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Introduction

Currently about 200 United States (US) fishers are permitted to target sharks (excluding dogfish) in the Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of Mexico, with an additional number of fishers (<250) permitted to land sharks incidentally. Amendments to the Consolidated Atlantic Highly Migratory Species Fishery Management Plan based on stock assessments have eliminated the major directed shark fishery in the US South Atlantic (NMFS 2007). These amendments also implemented a Shark Research Fishery, which allows the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to select a limited number of commercial shark vessels on an annual basis to collect life history data and catch data for future stock assessments. Since 2008, only commercial shark fishers participating in the Shark Research Fishery are allowed to land sandbar sharks, *Carcharhinus plumbeus*, and must carry an observer on 100% of all trips.

Fishery observers are trained in fishery and biological data collection, biological sampling, and teleost and elasmobranch species identification. Observers are required to record and measure all species captured, their disposition (e.g. kept, discarded dead, used for bait, etc.) and effort (e.g. number of hooks, gear characteristics, set and haul times).

Methods

Estimates of dead and live discards are reported separately for the Shark Research Fishery. As vessels in the shark research fishery are monitored 100%, no extrapolations of the discards are needed.

Results and Discussion

Table 1. Yearly observed dead discards of sandbar shark from Shark Research Fishery. Discards are reported in numbers.

Year	Number Observed Sets	Total Dead Discards
2008	62	6
2009	111	195
2010	185	246
2011	236	104
2012	85	6
2013	93	3
2014	104	0
2015	99	2
2016	81	6
2017	104	4
2018	108	10
2019	100	11
2020	79	3
2021	77	8
2022	47	6
2023	25	2
2024	37	9
2025	40	7

Table 3. Yearly observed live discards of sandbar shark from Shark Research Fishery. Discards are reported in numbers.

Year	Number Observed Sets	Total Live Discards
2008	62	32
2009	111	401
2010	185	926
2011	236	386
2012	85	4
2013	93	1
2014	104	2
2015	99	9
2016	81	3
2017	104	8
2018	108	9
2019	100	1
2020	79	2
2021	77	0
2022	47	1
2023	25	0
2024	37	25
2025	40	0

