

**R.I. Marine Fisheries Statutes and Regulations
PART VII - MINIMUM SIZES OF FISH/SHELLFISH**

7.24 Coastal Sharks

7.24.1 – Commercial

7.24.1-1 Commercial Species Groupings - Species managed under the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) Interstate Fishery Management Plan (IFMP) for Atlantic Coastal Sharks shall be grouped into six commercial “species groups” for management purposes, hereafter referred to as: Prohibited Species, Research Species, **Smoothhound Sharks** ~~Smooth-dogfish~~, Small Coastal Sharks, Non-Sandbar Large Coastal Sharks, and Pelagic Sharks. These groupings apply to all commercial shark fisheries in state waters.

7.24.1-2 Commercial Fishing Year - The commercial shark fishery shall operate on a January 1 through December 31 fishing year.

7.24.1-3 Commercial Possession Limits – Possession limits, quotas, and seasonal periods for commercial shark fisheries will be established annually either through the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), ~~or~~ the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC), ~~or the~~ **Division of Fish and Wildlife**. ~~In~~ in accordance therewith:

- a. Properly licensed commercial fishermen may possess any of the species of sharks listed in Table 7.1 below in the **Smoothhound Sharks** ~~Smooth-dogfish~~, Small Coastal Sharks, Non-Sandbar Large Coastal Sharks and Pelagic Sharks species groups.
- b. There are no commercial trip limits or possession limits for **Smoothhound Sharks** ~~Smooth-dogfish~~ or for the sharks listed in the Small Coastal Sharks and the Pelagic Species groups.
- a. No person shall possess more than 36 sharks, per vessel per calendar day, regardless of species, from the Non-Sandbar Large Coastal Sharks species group.

Table 7.1 Sharks in the **Smoothhound Sharks ~~Smooth-dogfish~~, Small Coastal Sharks, Non-Sandbar Large Coastal Sharks, and Pelagic Species Groups.**

Common Name	Scientific Name
<u>Smoothhound Sharks</u> Smooth-dogfish	
Smooth Dogfish	<i>Mustelus canis</i>
<u>Florida smoothhound</u>	<i>Mustelis norrisi</i>

Small Coastal Sharks (SCS)	
Atlantic sharpnose	<i>Rhizoprionodon terraenovae</i>
Finetooth	<i>Carcharhinus isodon</i>
Blacknose	<i>Carcharhinus acronotus</i>
Bonnethead	<i>Sphyrna tiburo</i>
Non-Sandbar Large Coastal Sharks (LCS)	
Silky	<i>Carcharhinus falciformis</i>
Tiger	<i>Galeocerdo cuvier</i>
Blacktip	<i>Carcharhinus limbatus</i>
Spinner	<i>Carcharhinus brevipinna</i>
Bull	<i>Carcharhinus leucas</i>
Lemon	<i>Negaprion brevirostris</i>
Nurse	<i>Ginglymostoma cirratum</i>
Scalloped hammerhead	<i>Sphyrna lewini</i>
Great hammerhead	<i>Sphyrna mokarran</i>
Smooth hammerhead	<i>Sphyrna zygaena</i>
Pelagic Sharks	
Shortfin mako	<i>Isurus oxyrinchus</i>
Porbeagle	<i>Lamna nasus</i>
Common thresher	<i>Alopias vulpinus</i>
Oceanic whitetip	<i>Carcharhinus longimanus</i>
Blue	<i>Prionace glauca</i>

7.24.1-4 Transfer of Sharks - No person shall transfer sharks between vessels at sea.

7.24.1-5 Prohibition on the Possession of Sharks in the Prohibited and Research Species Groups – No person shall possess any species of sharks listed in Table 7.2 below in the Prohibited Species and Research Species groups, except in accordance with the provisions of section 7.24.1-8.

Table 7.2 Sharks in the Prohibited and Research Species Groups

Prohibited Species Group	
Common Name	Scientific Name
Sand tiger	<i>Carcharias taurus</i>
Bigeye sandtiger	<i>Odontaspis noronhai</i>
Whale	<i>Rhincodon typus</i>
Basking	<i>Cetorhinus maximus</i>
White	<i>Carcharodon carcharias</i>
Dusky	<i>Carcharhinus obscurus</i>
Bignose	<i>Carcharhinus altimus</i>
Galapagos	<i>Carcharhinus galapagensis</i>
Night	<i>Carcharhinus signatus</i>
Reef	<i>Carcharhinus perezii</i>
Narrowtooth	<i>Carcharhinus brachyurus</i>
Caribbean sharpnose	<i>Rhizoprionodon porosus</i>

Smalltail	<i>Carcharhinus porosus</i>
Atlantic angel	<i>Squatina dumeril</i>
Longfin mako	<i>Isurus paucus</i>
Bigeye thresher	<i>Alopias superciliosus</i>
Sharptooth sevengill	<i>Heptranchias perlo</i>
Bluntnose sixgill	<i>Hexanchus griseus</i>
Bigeye sixgill	<i>Hexanchus nakamurai</i>
Research Species Group	
Sandbar	<i>Carcharhinus plumbeus</i>

7.24.1-6 Quota Specification – Quotas for coastal shark species will be established annually by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and/or the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Commerce as published in the Federal Register. It shall be unlawful for any person to possess any species of shark in state waters when the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) prohibits the possession of that species in federal waters.

When notified that the quota set for any species of shark is harvested or projected to be harvested, as determined by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), ~~or the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC), or the Division of Fish and Wildlife,~~ the Division of Fish and Wildlife shall file notice with the Office of the Secretary of State prohibiting the commercial landings, harvest and possession of that species in state waters for the remainder of the designated period.

7.24.1-12 Prohibition of Finning – Finning is defined as the act of taking a shark and removing its fins. Finning of sharks is prohibited in all state waters. All sharks, with the exception of smoothhound Smooth dogfish, possessed by commercial fishermen within state boundaries must have the tails and fins attached naturally to the carcass until landed. Fins may be cut as long as they remain attached to the carcass, by natural means, with at least a small portion of uncut skin. Sharks may be gutted and bled provided the tail is not removed. Sharks taken and possessed by commercial fishermen may have the heads removed, but no commercial fisherman shall fillet a shark at sea or otherwise cut a shark into pieces at sea.

Commercial fishermen may completely remove all smoothhound fins year round the fins of smooth dogfish from March through June of each year. If fins are removed, the total wet weight of the shark fins may not exceed **5 12** percent of the total dressed weight of smoothhound smooth dogfish carcasses landed or found on board a vessel.

~~From July through February for the smooth dogfish fishery only, commercial fishermen may completely remove the head, tail, pectoral fins, pelvic (ventral) fins, anal fin, and second dorsal fin, but must keep the dorsal fin attached naturally to the carcass through landing. Fins may be~~

~~cut as long as they remain attached to the carcass, by natural means, with at least a small portion of uncut skin. If fins are removed, the total wet weight of the shark fins may not exceed 5 percent of the total dressed weight of smooth dogfish carcasses landed or found on board a vessel.~~

7.24.2 – Recreational

7.24.2-1 Recreationally Permitted Species – Recreational fishermen may possess any of the species of sharks listed in Table 7.3.

Table 7.3 Recreationally Permitted Species List.

Recreationally PERMITTED Species	
Smooth Dogfish (Smoothhound)¹	<i>Mustelus canis</i>
Atlantic sharpnose	<i>Rhizoprionodon terraenovae</i>
Finetooth	<i>Carcharhinus isodon</i>
Blacknose	<i>Carcharhinus acronotus</i>
Bonnethead	<i>Sphyrna tiburo</i>
Tiger	<i>Galeocerdo cuvier</i>
Blacktip	<i>Carcharhinus limbatus</i>
Spinner	<i>Carcharhinus brevipinna</i>
Bull	<i>Carcharhinus leucas</i>
Lemon	<i>Negaprion brevirostris</i>
Nurse	<i>Ginglymostoma cirratum</i>
Scalloped hammerhead	<i>Sphyrna lewini</i>
Great hammerhead	<i>Sphyrna mokarran</i>
Smooth hammerhead	<i>Sphyrna zygaena</i>
Shortfin mako	<i>Isurus oxyrinchus</i>
Porbeagle	<i>Lamna nasus</i>
Common thresher	<i>Alopias vulpinus</i>
Oceanic whitetip	<i>Carcharhinus longimanus</i>
Blue	<i>Prionace glauca</i>

¹ ~~Smooth dogfish are considered and referred to as smoothhound. smooth dogfish are not regulated in federal waters and are not prohibited as a result.~~

7.24.2-4 Recreational Minimum Size Limits – No person fishing recreationally shall possess a shark with a fork length less than 54 inches, with the exception of Atlantic sharpnose, blacknose, finetooth, bonnethead, and **smooth dogfish smoothhound**, which have no minimum size limit. (See Table 7.4).

Table 7.5 Recreational Minimum Size Limits

No Minimum Size Limit	At Least 54 inches (4.5 Feet) Fork Length
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Smooth Dogfish (Smoothhound)	Tiger	Shortfin mako
Atlantic sharpnose	Blacktip	Porbeagle
Finetooth	Spinner	Common thresher
Blacknose	Bull	Oceanic whitetip
Bonnethead	Lemon	Blue
	Nurse	Scalloped hammerhead
	Great hammerhead	Smooth hammerhead

7.24.2-6 Recreational Shore-Fishing Possession Limits – No recreational fishermen fishing from shore shall possess, in any one calendar day, more than one shark from the recreationally permitted species list (*Section 7.24.2-1, Table 7.3*), except that each such fishermen may individually possess one additional bonnethead (*Sphyrna tiburo*), and one additional Atlantic sharpnose (*Rhizoprionodon terraenovae*) per calendar day. However, recreational shore-fishermen may harvest an unlimited amount of **smooth-dogfish smoothhound.**

Sharks that are transported by a vessel are considered ‘boat assisted’ and are regulated under the more restrictive vessel-fishing possession limits in section 7.24.2-7 regardless of how or where they were caught.

7.24.2-7 Recreational Vessel-Fishing Possession Limits - No vessel engaged in recreational fishing vessels shall possess, in any one calendar day, or any one trip, whichever is less, more than one shark from the recreationally permitted species list (*Section 7.24.2-1, Table 7.3*), regardless of the number of people on board the vessel, except that each recreational fisherman fishing from a vessel may individually possess one additional bonnethead (*Sphyrna tiburo*), and one additional Atlantic sharpnose (*Rhizoprionodon terraenovae*), per calendar day, or per trip, whichever is less. However, recreational vessel-fishermen may harvest an unlimited amount of **smooth-dogfish smoothhound.**