



Spiny Dogfish AP Fishery Performance Report August 2020

The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council's (Council) Spiny Dogfish Advisory Panel (AP) met via webinar on August 19, 2020 to review the Spiny Dogfish Fishery Information Document and develop the following Fishery Performance Report. The primary purpose of this report is to contextualize catch histories for the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) by providing information about fishing effort, market trends, environmental changes, and other factors. Trigger questions (see below) were posed to the AP to generate discussion of observations in the spiny dogfish fishery. Advisor comments described below are not necessarily consensus or majority statements.

Advisory Panel members attending: Bonnie Brady, Scott Curatolo-Wagemann, Jim Fletcher, Sonja Fordham, Scott MacDonald, John Whiteside, Jr., and Douglas Zemeckis. **Others attending:** Jason Didden, Ron Larsen, Kirby Rootes-Murdy, Chris Batsavage, Stephanie Sykes, Nichola Meserve, Paul Rago, Allison Ferreira, Angel Willey, Yan Jiao, and Cynthia Ferrio.

Trigger questions:

The AP was presented with the following trigger questions:

1. What factors have influenced recent catch (markets/economy, environment, regulations, other factors)?
2. Are the current fishery regulations appropriate? How could they be improved?
3. What would you recommend as research priorities?
4. What else is important for the Council to know?

Market/Economic Conditions

COVID-19 has not had a large impact to date. Similar market issues persist as with previous years – demand has been low but stable recently.

Changing the name to Chip Fish would help with marketing/exports.

There are no Southern processors – they were “burnt” by previous management and won’t get back in without quota stability on a decadal timeframe. They would need to know that the quota won’t go down for 5-10 years.

Not having a processor also depresses NY landings. NY would like some opportunity for trawlers: a bi-monthly larger landing or something similar. Developing other markets, be it fertilizer or processed export, requires a higher trip limit for trawlers, for example a 30,000-pound trip limit 2-3 times per month.

Regarding the fin market – there are self-imposed bans by cargo lines than prohibit fin

transport even from sustainable sources (i.e. this is beyond our control).

Environmental Conditions

Environmental conditions are always a factor. Ongoing mild winter weather in VA has increased VA landings.

Further north in 2020, dogfish have been offshore and vessels have had trouble landing the trip limit, leading to less participation and less landings so far in 2020.

Management Issues

Regulations (especially the trip limit) do not allow a male fishery. State regulations do not allow new fishermen to participate. The current regulations are geared to keep price up and production limited and do not allow industrial production.

Other Issues

Given the lack of an off-shelf survey and vertical water column usage by dogfish, we don't really know the population size.

Allowing dogfish populations to increase has hurt all other fish populations. We need calculations regarding consumption by dogfish of other fish.

With the recent executive order, we need to look at opening way up beyond any recent proposals.

Research Priorities

To add fishery value, we should research the value and production of squalamine in spiny dogfish livers for medical use.

The assessment needs to account for the continual pup production observed in females, which is primarily affected by food availability/consumption.

We should conduct research into the purposes of the horn/spine – is it offensive (weakening potential prey), or defensive?