

DIRECTED SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES, INC. (DSF)
A SALT WATER FISHERIES CONSULTING COMPANY

May 12, 2015

Assistant Regional Administrator
Protected Resources Division
Attn: Porbeagle Shark Status Review
Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office
National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)
55 Great Republic Drive
Gloucester, MA 01930

Re: Porbeagle shark science information <http://www.regulations.gov/#!docketDetail;D=NOAA-NMFS-2015-0013>

To: Assistant Regional Administrator,

Directed Sustainable Fisheries, Inc. (DSF) submits scientific information about the Northwest (NW) Atlantic Ocean Porbeagle shark (*Lamna nasus*) distinct population segment (DPS) status that was not properly addressed in the two petitions from the Wild Earth Guardians (WEG) and the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) dating from 2010. The March 27, 2015 Federal Register request for information was to ensure a comprehensive review you are soliciting scientific and commercial data and other information relevant to the status of porbeagle sharks worldwide. DSF wants the information we are providing to assist the NMFS **to find that a listing is not warranted** on or before December 12, 2015.

When the WEG and HSUS petitions were originally filed the actual porbeagle shark pupping (birthing) grounds for the NW Atlantic Ocean DPS was not publicly known. On November 16, 2009 a study was received, then on March 01, 2010 accepted, and published March 30, 2010 on the NRC Research Press Web site about porbeagle sharks pupping grounds authored by Campana et al¹. They were using pop-up archival transmission tags that proved the mature female porbeagle sharks were traveling south to the sub-tropical waters of the Sargasso Sea in the Central Atlantic Ocean to give birth to their pups. As noted by the authors in the abstract this "...key life history stage in international, largely unregulated waters poses problems for the conservation and management of a species that is largely fished in Canadian waters." It is not unreasonable to assume that the other distinct population segments of mature female porbeagle sharks in the Northeast Atlantic Ocean, and the Mediterranean Sea could demonstrate similar behavior.

The Campana et al NW Atlantic Ocean DPS porbeagle shark stock assessment² was completed during 2009, and dated in the collection by ICCAT³ as 2010. That assessment was used by the NMFS to manage the US porbeagle shark fishery. The authors state on PDF page 4 (page 2112) in the assessment report, Section 2.4 titled "*Porbeagle reproduction*" that "*The location of the pupping ground remains unknown.*" That statement raises a red flag with DSF clients because some of the authors did know since April 2008 through to July 2009 that the pop-up archival transmission tags indicated that several mature female porbeagle sharks were in the Sargasso Sea region at the end of the pupping cycle. See Table 1 in the

¹ "Subtropical pupping ground for a cold-water shark" by Steven E. Campana, Warren Joyce and Mark Fowler <http://atlanticsharks.org/papers/campana%20et%20al.%202010.pdf>

² "Population dynamics of porbeagle in the Northwest Atlantic, with an assessment of status to 2009 and projections for recovery" by Steven E. Campana, A. Jamie F. Gibson, Mark Fowler, Anna Dorey and Warren Joyce. https://www.iccat.int/Documents/CVSP/CV065_2010/no_6/CV065062109.pdf

³ International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) <https://www.iccat.int/en/>

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subtropical pupping ground report for the accurate dates and locations. The secured document will not allow for the table to be pasted in this comment and the hyperlink is provided in the first footnote above. The two Campana et al reports will be uploaded along with the DSF written comment on the www.regulations.gov web page dedicated for this status review.

DSF wants the NMFS Protected Resources Division to use this scientific information we provided to deny the two petitions from the WEG and the HSUS because a listing is not warranted. The NMFS should convene an updated stock assessment for the NW Atlantic Ocean porbeagle shark DPS to include the pupping ground information omitted before. The US porbeagle shark fishery has been damaged by the use of the Campana et al stock assessment for several years now.

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American Elasmobranch Society (AES) member 2004-2015
Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) Advisory Committee member from Florida
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) Coastal Shark (CS) Florida (FL) Advisory Panel (AP) commercial & for-hire recreational member [former Chair of CS AP]
National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Highly Migratory Species (HMS) AP commercial member 2013-2015
NMFS HMS SouthEast Data, Assessment and Review (SEDAR) AP Pool member 2013-2015
South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC) SEDAR AP Pool member
SAFMC Marine Protected Area (MPA) Expert Work Group (EWG) participant 2012-2013
Former SAFMC MPA AP FL commercial member
Former NMFS Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team FL participant (ALWTRT)
Former NMFS Bottlenose Dolphin Take Reduction Team FL participant (BDTRT)
Participant, observer and/or contributor to US coastal shark stock assessments during 1992, 1996, 1998, 2001, 2002, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015
Participant, observer and/or contributor SouthEast Data, Assessment and Review (SEDAR) 11 (Large Coastal Sharks), 13 (Small Coastal Sharks), 16 (King Mackerel), 19 (Red Grouper/Black Grouper), 21 (Large Coastal Sharks/Small Coastal Shark), 24 (Red Snapper), 25 (Black Sea Bass/Golden Tilefish), 28 (Spanish Mackerel/Cobia), 29 (Gulf Blacktip Shark), 32 (Gray Triggerfish/Blueline Tilefish), 34 (Atlantic Sharpnose Shark/Bonnethead Shark), 36 (Snowy Grouper), 38 (King Mackerel), 39 (Smoothhound Sharks) and SEDAR 41 (Red Snapper/Gray Triggerfish)

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