

NMFS Proposal:

In light of our discussions at the 4/3 MMB briefing, NMFS requests the MMB:

- a) Endorse the 2013 Parrish/Van Atta permit
- b) Approve an amendment that will allow the use of other bait types, including but not limited to: tuna heads, salvaged Hawaiian monk seal tissue (e.g., from seal that had previously died), and other bait types previous approved for use in the Monument, for the purposes of capturing Galapagos sharks displaying the unique predatory behavior of killing monk seal pups.

Rationale:

NMFS believes that, given current options, the only practicable means to increase catch per unit effort (CPUE) for Galapagos sharks and save monk seal pups from shark attack is to expand the types of bait used, and include the option of using salvaged monk seal tissue as bait. This is based on data from 2001-2006 shark removal activities at FFS, when the CPUE using handlines with salvaged monk seal bait was higher than when using handlines with fish bait. This strategy was also recommended through consultation with other wildlife managers engaged in predator control activities.

- 2001-2006: 3 catches out of 15 attempts, or a 20% success rate (using salvaged monk seal bait)
- 2010-2012: 2 Galapagos sharks were caught during 2091.5 hook hours of fishing (using frozen tuna heads), 0.001 CPUE.

Compliance:

- Use of salvaged monk seal tissue as bait for predatory shark removal activities in order to enhance seal survival is authorized per the ESA and MMPA under NMFS permit No. 10137-07 dated July 11, 2012.

Fishing Method:

- Fishing methods will not change from those described in the 2013 permit application.

The following protocols are in place to mitigate by-catch mortality and safety risks.

- Fishing will only occur after a known or inferred shark injury/disappearance or if G. sharks observed demonstrating predatory behaviors in near-shore waters.
- Fishing will only occur during daylight hours, no lines will be left in the water overnight.
- All lines will be continuously monitored.
- Bottomset and drumline hooks and bait will be checked every 2 hours.

The following additional protocols are specific to using salvaged monk seal tissue:

- Soak times for salvaged monk seal bait will not exceed 2 hours with at least 1 hour between successive fishing attempts.
- Trends in by-catch will be monitored to determine if by-catch rates increase with the use of seal tissue as bait.

Process

- NMFS is preparing a Supplemental Information Report for NEPA compliance.