

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL

DIVISION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

Statutory Authority: 7 Delaware Code, Sections 901(b) and 903(e)(2)a
(7 Del.C. §901(b); 7 Del.C. §903 (e)(2)a)
7 DE Admin. Code 3507

PROPOSED

REGISTER NOTICE

SAN #2012-08

3507 Black Sea Bass Size Limit; Trip Limits, Seasons; Quotas

1. TITLE OF THE REGULATION:

3507 Black Sea Bass Size Limit; Trip Limits, Seasons; Quotas

2. BRIEF SYNOPSIS OF THE SUBJECT, SUBSTANCE AND ISSUE:

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) approved Addendum XXII to the Fishery Management Plan for Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass. Addendum XXII established a regional management approach and requires the southern region states (Delaware to North Carolina) to implement management measures consistent with those required for federal waters. The Department was notified on May 17, 2012 by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration that a federal rule was approved that included among its provisions an open season for the recreational black sea bass fishery from May 19 through October 14. In response, the Department issued an Emergency Order (2012-F-0019) to remain consistent with Addendum XXII and to prevent Delaware anglers and dependent businesses from being disadvantaged by remaining closed to recreational sea bass fishing through May 21.

The purpose of this action is to formally adopt the full provisions of the federal rule for the recreational black sea bass fishery and remain compliant with Addendum XXII by amending Tidal Finfish Regulation 3507 Black Sea Bass Size Limit; Trip Limits; Seasons; Quotas through the normal regulatory process. The federal rule establishes a 12.5-inch minimum size limit; an open season from January 1 through February 28 with a corresponding 15-fish per person possession limit; and open seasons from May 19 through October 14 and from November 1 through December 31 with corresponding 25-fish per person possession limits.

Based on the stock projections completed in 2011, the black sea bass stock is not overfished and overfishing is not occurring. The projections indicate the stock is at about 111% of its biomass target.

3. POSSIBLE TERMS OF THE AGENCY ACTION:

None.

4. STATUTORY BASIS OR LEGAL AUTHORITY TO ACT:

7 Del.C., §901(b) & §903(e)(2)a

5. LIST OF OTHER REGULATIONS THAT MAY BE IMPACTED OR AFFECTED BY THE PROPOSAL:

N/A

6. NOTICE OF PUBLIC COMMENT:

The hearing record on the proposed changes to the black sea bass regulation will be open August 1, 2012. Individuals may submit written comments regarding the proposed changes via e-mail to Lisa.Vest@state.de.us or via the USPS to Lisa Vest, Hearing Officer, DNREC, 89 Kings Highway, Dover, DE 19901 (302) 739-9042. A public hearing on the proposed amendment will be held on August 30, 2012 beginning at 7 pm in the DNREC Auditorium, located at the Richardson & Robbins Building, 89 Kings Highway, Dover, DE 19901.

7. PREPARED BY:

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David E. Saveikis, Director

3507 Black Sea Bass Size Limit; Trip Limits, Seasons; Quotas

(Penalty Section 7 Del.C. §936(b)(2))

- 1.0 It shall be unlawful for any commercial person to have in possession any black sea bass (*Centropristis striata*) that measures less than eleven (11) inches, total length excluding any caudal filament.
- 2.0 It shall be unlawful for any recreational person to have in possession any black sea bass that measures less than twelve and one-half (12.5) inches total length excluding any caudal filament.

6 DE Reg. 1230 (3/1/03)

6 DE Reg. 1360 (4/1/03)

12 DE Reg. 1430 (05/01/09)

14 DE Reg. 1382 (06/01/11)

- 3.0 It shall be unlawful for any commercial fisherman to land, to sell, trade and or barter any black sea bass in Delaware unless authorized by a black sea bass landing permit issued by the Department. The black sea bass landing permit shall be presumed to transfer with the vessel whenever it is bought, sold, or otherwise transferred, unless there is a written agreement, signed by the transferor/seller and transferee/buyer, or other credible written evidence, verifying that the transferor/seller is retaining the vessel's fishing and permit history for purposes of replacing the vessel.
- 4.0 The black sea bass pot fishery and the black sea bass commercial hook and line fishery shall be considered separate black sea bass fisheries. The total pounds allocated to each fishery by the Department shall be as follows: 96 percent of the State's commercial quota, as determined by the ASMFC, for the pot fishery; 4 percent for the commercial hook and line fishery.
- 5.0 The Department may only issue a black sea bass landing permit for the pot fishery to a person who is the owner of a vessel permitted by the National Marine Fisheries Service in accordance with 50 CFR §§ 648.4 and who had applied for and secured from the Department a commercial food fishing license and has a reported landing history in either the federal or state reporting systems of landing by pot at least 10,000 pounds of black sea bass during the period 1994 through 2001. Those individuals that have landing history only in the federal data base must have possessed a state commercial food fishing license for at least one year during the time from 1994 through 2001.
- 6.0 The Department may only issue a black sea bass landing permit for the commercial hook and line fishery to a person who has applied for and secured from the Department a commercial food fishing license and a fishing equipment permit for hook and line and submitted landings reports in either the federal or state landing report systems for black sea bass harvested by hook and line during at least one year between 1994 and 2001.

1 DE Reg.1767 (5/1/98)

2 DE Reg. 1900 (4/1/99)

3 DE Reg. 1088 (2/1/00)

4 DE Reg. 1665 (4/1/01)

4 DE Reg. 1859 (5/1/01)

5 DE Reg. 2142 (5/1/02)

6 DE Reg. 348 (9/1/02)

6 DE Reg. 1230 (3/1/03)

- 7.0 Any overage of the State's commercial quota will be subtracted by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission from the next year's commercial quota.
Any overage of an individual's allocation will be subtracted from that individual's allocation the next year and distributed to those individuals in the appropriate fishery that did not exceed their quota.
- 8.0 Each participant in a black sea bass fishery shall be assigned a equal share of the total pounds of black sea bass allotted by the Department for that particular fishery. A share shall be determined by dividing the number of pre-registered participants in one of the two recognized fisheries into the total pounds of black sea bass allotted to the fishery by the Department. In order to pre-register an individual must indicate their intent in writing to participate in this fishery.
- 9.0 Individual shares of the pot fishery quota may be transferred to another participant in the pot fishery. Any transfer of black sea bass individual pot quota shall be limited by the following conditions:
- 9.1 A maximum of one transfer per year per person.
- 9.2 No transfer of shares of the black sea bass pot fishery quota shall be authorized unless such transfer is documented on a form provided by the Department and approved by the Secretary in advance of the actual transfer.
- 10.0 Individual shares of the commercial hook and line fishery quota may be transferred to another participant in the commercial hook and line fishery. Any transfer of black sea bass individual commercial hook and line quota shall be limited by the following conditions:
- 10.1 A maximum of one transfer per year per person.

- 10.2 No transfer of shares of the black sea bass commercial hook and line quota shall be authorized unless such transfer is documented on a form provided by the Department and approved by the Secretary in advance of the transfer.
- 11.0 Each commercial food fisherman participating in a black sea bass fishery shall report to the Department, via the interactive voice phone reporting system operated by the Department, each days landings in pounds at least one hour after packing out their harvest.
- 12.0 It shall be unlawful for any recreational fisherman to take and reduce to possession or to land any black sea bass beginning at 12:01a.m. ~~January~~ March 1, and ending midnight May 24 18, and beginning at 12:01 a.m. October 4~~2~~ 15 and ending mid-night October 31.
- 12.1 It shall be unlawful for any recreational fisherman to have in possession more than 25 black sea bass at or between the place where said black sea bass were caught and said recreational fisherman's personal abode or temporary or transient place of lodging during the period May 19 through October 14 and during the period November 1 through December 31.
- 12.2 It shall be unlawful for any recreational fisherman to have in possession more than 15 black sea bass at or between the place where said black sea bass were caught and said recreational fisherman's personal abode or temporary or transient place of lodging during the period January 1 through February 28.

7 DE Reg. 1575 (5/1/04)

6 DE Reg. 1230 (3/1/03)

8 DE Reg. 1488 (4/1/05)

9 DE Reg. 1759 (5/1/06)

11 DE Reg. 1662 (06/01/08)

14 DE Reg. 113 (08/01/10)

16 DE Reg. 184 (08/01/12) (Prop.)