

Please note that this press release is a re-issue of an earlier release, originally sent out on April 2, in order to clarify that the regulations pertain to black sea bass harvested North of Hatteras.

ASMFC Black Sea Bass Board Finalizes 2012 Recreational Measures

Arlington, VA – Upon review of the latest black sea bass recreational data from last year (waves 1 – 6), the Commission's Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Management Board has modified the percent that states may liberalize their 2012 recreational management measures to achieve the 1.32 million pound (942,857 fish) harvest limit for the 2012 fishery. The northern region states of Massachusetts through New Jersey will implement measures that achieve a 37 percent liberalization throughout the region and a 32 percent liberalization coastwide; the percent of liberalization will vary by state. Northern region states had the option to collectively liberalize regulations by 41 percent but opted to be more conservative. State-specific regulations follow below.

State	Minimum Size (inches)	Possession Limit	Open Season
Massachusetts	14	10 fish	May 11 – June 24
		20 fish	June 25 – October 31
Rhode Island	13	15 fish	June 15 – December 31
Connecticut	13	15 fish	June 15 – December 31
New York	13	15 fish	June 15 – December 31
New Jersey		Still finalizing measures	
Delaware	12.5	25 fish	May 22 – October 14
			November 1 – December 31
Maryland	12.5	25 fish	May 22 – October 14
			November 1 – December 31 (Season may change depending on federal regulations)
Virginia	12.5	25 fish	May 19 – October 14
			November 1 – December 31
PRFC	12.5	25 fish	May 19 – October 14
			November 1 – December 31
North Carolina (North of Hatteras)	12.5	25 fish	May 19 – October 14
			November 1 – December 31

Since the Board's approval of Addendum XXII and the resultant 2012 state recreational management measures in February 2012, new 2011 recreational harvest estimates were released by the National Marine Fisheries Service. The data indicates the projections used to form the basis of this year's regulations underestimated the 2011 harvest. Coastwide recreational harvest for the 2011 black sea bass fishery is now estimated at 713,478 fish (versus the initial estimate of 654,142 fish). As a result of the new estimate, northern states will still be able to liberalize their 2012 recreational management measures but not to the extent that they would have under the previous estimate (initial liberalization was 57 percent). The northern states will be working over the next month to finalize their recreational black sea bass management measures.

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 percent of its biomass target. For more information, please contact Toni Kerns, Senior Fishery Management Plan Coordinator for Management, at tkerns@asmfc.org or 703-842-0740.