



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

National Marine Fisheries Service, Southeast Regional Office, 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, FL 33701

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NOAA Fisheries Requests Public Comments on an Action to Allow Transfer of Black Sea Bass Pot Endorsements (Comment Period Ends October 22, 2012)

NOAA Fisheries requests public comments on a resubmitted action from Amendment 18A to the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region (Amendment 18A). The notice of availability published in the *Federal Register* on **August 22, 2012** (77 FR 50672).

Amendment 18A was implemented on July 1, 2012, and established a black sea bass pot endorsement program. Amendment 18A also contained an action to allow black sea bass pot endorsements to be transferred to individuals or entities that hold or simultaneously obtain a South Atlantic Unlimited Snapper-Grouper Permit. However, Amendment 18A had the wrong preferred alternative designated and there were discrepancies in the record regarding the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council's discussion of the alternatives. Therefore, NOAA Fisheries did not implement the transferability action in Amendment 18A and the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council addressed the action in a separate amendment.

The Resubmitted Amendment 18A Action Amendment would allow black sea bass endorsements to be transferred under the following conditions:

- Valid or renewable black sea bass pot endorsements would be transferable upon the effective date of the final rule implementing this action.
- Valid and renewable endorsements could only be transferred to any individual or entity holding or simultaneously obtaining a valid South Atlantic Unlimited Snapper-Grouper Permit.
- Valid and renewable endorsements would be transferable, independently from the South Atlantic Unlimited Snapper Grouper Permit.
- All landings of black sea bass using the black sea bass pot endorsement would be associated with

the South Atlantic Unlimited Snapper-Grouper Permit with which the endorsement is associated regardless of when landings occurred.

- Landings of black sea bass using the black sea bass pot endorsement would not be transferred with the endorsement.
- Endorsements would not be automatically renewed when the associated South Atlantic Unlimited Snapper-Grouper Permit is renewed. (Endorsement holders would need to check a box on the application to renew their black sea bass pot endorsement.)

Request for Comments

Comments on the Resubmitted Amendment 18A Action Amendment must be received no later than October 22, 2012, to be considered by NOAA Fisheries. See the Addresses section for information on where and how to submit comments.

Addresses

Electronic or hardcopies of the Resubmitted Amendment 18A Action Amendment may be obtained from:

- The NOAA Fisheries Web site <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sf/SASnapperGrouperHome page.htm>.
- The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council's Web site at <http://www.safmc.net>.

To request a CD of the Resubmitted Amendment 18A Action Amendment contact:

NOAA Fisheries
Southeast Regional Office
Sustainable Fisheries Division
263 13th Avenue South
St. Petersburg, Florida 33701
Phone: (727) 824-5305

You may submit comments by the following methods:

- Electronic Submission: The Federal e-Rulemaking Portal at <http://www.regulations.gov> (select "Submit

Comment”, then type in NOAA-NMFS-2012-0128 in the “Keyword or ID” box). All comments received are part of the public record and will generally be posted to <http://www.regulations.gov> without change.

- **Mail:** NOAA Fisheries
Southeast Regional Office
Sustainable Fisheries Division
c/o Kate Michie
263 13th Avenue South
St. Petersburg, Florida 33701

NOAA Fisheries will accept anonymous comments. Attachments to electronic comments will be accepted in Microsoft Word, Excel, WordPerfect, or Adobe PDF file formats only.

Comments received through means not specified in this bulletin may not be considered.

More Information

For more information on the Resubmitted Amendment 18A Action Amendment please click on this link to the Resubmitted Amendment 18A Action Amendment Frequently Asked Questions found at <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sf/SASnapperGrouperHomepage.htm> or view the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council’s Web page at: www.safmc.net.