



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

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

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:
727-824-5305, FAX 727-824-5308

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Commercial Harvest of Black Sea Bass Closing to Vessels Fishing in the South Atlantic Federal Waters on October 8, 2012

The commercial harvest of black sea bass in federal waters of the South Atlantic from 35°15.19' N. lat. (the latitude of Cape Hatteras Light, North Carolina) to Key West, Florida, will be **closed, effective 12:01 a.m. (local time), October 8, 2012**, through 12:01 a.m. June 1, 2013. NOAA Fisheries has determined the 2012-2013 commercial annual catch limit of 309,000 pounds will be reached by that date.

The operator of a vessel that has been issued a federal commercial permit for snapper-grouper and that is landing black sea bass for sale must have landed and bartered, traded, or sold such black sea bass prior to 12:01 a.m., local time, October 8, 2012. All black sea bass pots must be removed from South Atlantic federal waters subject to the closure prior to 12:01 a.m., local time, October 8, 2012.

During the closure, all harvest and possession of black sea bass in or from closed federal waters of the South Atlantic is subject to the applicable bag and possession limits, and the sale or purchase of black sea bass taken from closed federal waters is prohibited. In addition, those bag and possession limits, and the prohibition on sale or purchase apply in state and federal waters of the South Atlantic for a vessel for which a valid federal commercial or charter vessel/headboat permit for South Atlantic snapper-grouper has been issued.

The prohibition on sale or purchase does not apply to sale or purchase of black sea bass that were harvested, landed ashore, and sold prior to 12:01 a.m., local time, October 8, 2012, and were held in cold storage by a dealer or processor.