

**South Atlantic
Frequently Asked Questions
Proposed Regulations for Black Sea Bass in the South Atlantic
Regulatory Amendment 19**

July 2013

What are the proposed actions in Regulatory Amendment 19 for black sea bass?

- An increase in the optimum yield, commercial annual catch limit, recreational annual catch limit, and recreational annual catch target for black sea bass.
- The annual catch limits and recreational annual catch target would change as indicated in the table below.

Fishing Year ¹	Commercial ACL ²	Recreational ACL ²	Recreational ACT ²
2013-2014	780,020	1,033,980	903,905
2014-2015	780,020	1,033,980	903,905
2015-2016	780,020	1,033,980	903,905
2016-2017 ²	755,274	1,001,177	875,228

¹The fishing years are from June 1 through May 31.
²Values are in pounds whole weight.
³The ACLs for 2016-2017 would remain in place until modified.

- A prohibition on the use of black sea bass pots annually from November 1 through April 30, which corresponds to large whale migrations and the right whale calving season in the South Atlantic.

Why are the increases in catch limits for black sea bass being proposed?

- The health of the black sea bass population in the South Atlantic was assessed in 2013. The black sea bass stock is not undergoing overfishing (fish being removed too quickly), is not overfished (too few fish in the population), and is rebuilt. The assessment results suggest the black sea bass catch levels can be increased without jeopardizing the health of the population.

Why is the prohibition of the use of black sea bass pots annually from November 1 through April 30 being proposed?

- The large whale migration period and the right whale calving season in the South Atlantic extends approximately from November 1 through April 30 each year. Since 2010, harvest levels have reached the commercial annual catch limit with the harvest of black sea bass prohibited before November 1; therefore, actions to prevent black sea bass pot gear from being in the water during this time period have not previously been proposed. However, fishing season length projections have determined that the increase in the commercial annual catch limit, as proposed in Regulatory Amendment 19, could extend the commercial black sea bass season beyond November 1. The prohibition would represent precautionary measures to prevent interactions between black sea bass pot gear and whales listed under the Endangered Species Act during large whale migrations and the right whale calving season off the southeastern coast.

Where can I find more information on Regulatory Amendment 19?

- Contact NOAA Fisheries, Southeast Regional Office
By Mail: Rick DeVictor
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By FAX: (727) 824-5308
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- Regulatory Amendment 19 may be found online at the NOAA Fisheries Southeast Regional Office Web site at: <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sf/SASnapperGrouperHomepage.htm>.
- Additional information on management of black sea bass in the South Atlantic may be found at: http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable_fisheries/s_atl/sg/bsb/index.html.

How can I submit a comment on the proposed rule for Regulatory Amendment 19?

- You may submit comments by either of the following methods. Comments received through other means may not be considered.
 - **Electronic Submissions:** Submit all electronic public comments via the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal.
 - Go to: <http://www.regulations.gov/#!docketDetail;D=NOAA-NMFS-2013-0096>
 - Click on “Comment Now!”. Complete the required fields, and enter or attach your comments.
 - Attachments to electronic comments (up to 10 MB) will be accepted in Microsoft Word, Excel, WordPerfect, or Adobe PDF file formats only.
 - **Mail:** Rick DeVictor
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