Southeast Fishery Bulletin

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Commercial Harvest of Black Sea Bass Closing to Vessels Fishing in the South Atlantic Federal Waters on July 15, 2011

The commercial sector for black sea bass in federal waters of the South Atlantic from 35°15.19' N. lat. (the latitude of Cape Hatteras Light, NC) to Key West, FL, will be **closed, effective 12:01 a.m. (local time), July 15, 2011,** through 12:01 a.m. June 1, 2012. NOAA Fisheries Service has determined the 2011-2012 commercial quota of 309,000 pounds has been reached.

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, July 15, 2011. 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, July 15, 2011.

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, July 15, 2011, and were held in cold storage by a dealer or processor.

Closure of commercial fishing for black sea bass in federal waters of the South Atlantic from 35°15.19' N. lat. (the latitude of Cape Hatteras Light, NC) to Key West, FL, complies with the regulations implementing the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region and is necessary to protect the black sea bass resource.

If you would like to receive these fishery bulletins via e-mail as soon as they are published, please e-mail us at SERO.Communications.Comments@noaa.gov.

This bulletin provides only a summary of the information regarding the existing regulations. Any discrepancies between this bulletin and the regulations as published in the *Federal Register* will be resolved in favor of the *Federal Register*.