



Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council

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P. Weston Townsend, Chairman | Michael P. Luisi, Vice Chairman
Christopher M. Moore, Ph.D., Executive Director

September 16, 2024

Mr. Michael Pentony
Regional Administrator
National Marine Fisheries Service
Greater Atlantic Region
55 Great Republic Drive
Gloucester, MA 01930

Dear Mike:

This letter summarizes the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council’s recommendations for 2025 black sea bass specifications, as adopted during their August 2024 meeting. These specifications are based on the 2025 acceptable biological catch limit (ABC) recommended by the Council’s Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC). The ABC is derived from stock projections based on the 2024 Black Sea Bass Management Track Stock Assessment model. The SSC concluded that their recommended ABC is based on the best scientific information available according to National Standard guidelines. The Council agreed to use the same methods as prior years for calculating expected dead discards in each sector to derive the commercial quota and recreational harvest limit. The resulting specifications are shown in the table at the end of this letter.

The Council also adopted a 5% in-season commercial closure buffer for 2025, meaning the commercial fishery would close in-season if 105% of the quota is projected to be landed prior to the end of the year. They made no changes to any other commercial management measures. As you know, the approach for 2025 recreational bag, size, and season limits will be discussed by the Council later this year.

Please contact me or Julia Beaty of my staff if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "C. Moore".

Christopher M. Moore, Ph.D.
Executive Director

cc: W. Townsend, M. Luisi, M. Kelly

Table 1: Implemented 2024 specifications for black sea bass and Council recommendations for 2025 specifications. Numbers may not add precisely due to unit conversions and rounding.

Measure	2024 (implemented)		Basis	2025 (Council recommendation)		Basis
	mil lb	mt		mil lb	mt	
Overfishing limit (OFL)	17.01	7,716	SSC recommendation based on 2021 Management Track Assessment projections and Council risk policy	13.65	6,193	Projections provided by NEFSC
ABC	16.66	7,557		13.29	6,027	SSC recommendation
Com. annual catch limit (ACL)	7.50	3,401	45% of ABC (commercial allocation in FMP)	5.98	2,712	45% of ABC (commercial allocation in FMP)
Com. annual catch target (ACT)	7.50	3,401	Monitoring Committee recommendation; no deduction from ACL for mgmt. uncertainty	5.98	2,712	No deduction from ACL for mgmt. uncertainty
Projected com. dead discards	1.50	680	3-year avg. proportion of commercial dead catch that was discarded applied to the com. ACL (i.e., 20% based on 2020-2022)	1.20	542	3-year avg. proportion of commercial dead catch that was discarded applied to the com. ACL (i.e., 20% based on 2021-2023)
Com. quota	6.00	2,721	Com. ACT minus projected com. dead discards	4.78	2,170	Com. ACT minus projected com. dead discards
Rec. ACL	9.16	4,156	55% of ABC (recreational allocation in FMP)	7.31	3,315	55% of ABC (recreational allocation in FMP)
Rec. ACT	9.16	4,156	Monitoring Committee recommendation; no deduction from ACL for mgmt. uncertainty	7.31	3,315	No deduction from ACL for mgmt. uncertainty
Projected rec. dead discards	2.89	1,311	Average of avg. 2020-2022 rec. dead discards and results using commercial method summarized above	2.85	1,294	Average 2021-2023 rec. dead discards
RHL	6.27	2,845	Rec. ACT minus projected rec. dead discards	4.46	2,021	Rec. ACT minus projected rec. dead discards