

ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION

REVIEW OF THE INTERSTATE FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN

FOR BLACK SEA BASS *(Centropristis striata)*

2022 FISHING YEAR



Prepared by the Plan Review Team
Approved August 2023



Sustainable and Cooperative Management of Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

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2023 Review of the ASMFC Fishery Management Plan for Black Sea Bass

I. Status of the Fishery Management Plan

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC or Commission) management of black sea bass was initiated as one component of a multi-species fishery management plan (FMP) addressing summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass. In 1990, summer flounder was singled out for immediate action under a joint ASMFC and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC or Council) plan. Further action on the scup and black sea bass plan was delayed until 1992 to expedite the summer flounder FMP and subsequent amendments. The joint Black Sea Bass FMP was completed and approved in 1996. The MAFMC approved regulations for black sea bass as Amendment 9 to the Summer Flounder FMP in May 1996.

The management unit of the Black Sea Bass FMP includes all black sea bass in U.S. waters in the western Atlantic Ocean from Cape Hatteras, North Carolina north to the Canadian border. The Commission's Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Management Board (or Board) and the MAFMC guide development of the FMP. New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina have declared an interest in black sea bass; Maine and New Hampshire declared interest in 2014, then declined interest in the fishery in 2017 and 2018, respectively. New Hampshire re-declared an interest in 2020 and rejoined the Board in 2021. The Black Sea Bass Plan Review Team conducts annual reviews and monitors compliance, and the Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Advisory Panel provides industry input and advice. Technical issues are addressed through the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Technical and Monitoring Committees.

The objectives of the FMP are to reduce fishing mortality to ensure overfishing does not occur, reduce fishing mortality on immature black sea bass to increase spawning stock biomass, improve yield from the fishery, promote compatible regulations among states and between federal and state jurisdictions, promote uniform and effective enforcement, and minimize regulations necessary to achieve the stated objectives. The initial [black sea bass FMP \(1996\)](#) aimed to reduce fishing mortality using a coastwide commercial quota allocated into quarterly periods beginning in 1998, and a recreational harvest limit constrained through the use of minimum size, possession limit, and seasonal closures.

[Amendment 12](#) to the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass FMP was approved by the Commission and MAFMC in October 1998. The Amendment revised overfishing definitions, identified and described essential fish habitat, and defined the framework adjustment process.

[Addendum IV](#), approved in 2001, provides that upon the recommendation of the relevant monitoring committee and joint consideration with the Council, the Board will decide state regulations rather than forward a recommendation to NMFS. Addendum IV also made the states responsible for implementing the Board's decisions on regulations.

Starting in 1998, the fishery was subject to lengthy closures and had some significant quota overages in the commercial sector. Fishery closures occurring as a result of exceeded quotas resulted in increased discards of legal sized black sea bass in mixed fisheries for the remainder of the closed period. A significant financial hardship for the fishing industry resulted from a decrease in market demand caused by a fluctuating supply. To address these issues, the Board enacted a series of Emergency Rules in 2001 that established initial possession limits, triggers, and adjusted possession limits. These measures helped reduce the length of fishery closures, but the rapidly changing regulations confused fishermen and added significant administrative burden to the states. To simplify the process for all parties, the Board approved Addendum VI to provide a mechanism for initial possession limits, triggers, and adjusted possession limits to be set during the annual specification setting process without the need for further Emergency Rules.

[Amendment 13](#), approved by ASMFC and MAFMC in 2002, implemented a federal, annual coastwide commercial quota managed in state waters by ASMFC using a state-by-state allocation system. The Amendment was implemented for 2003 and 2004. Amendment 13 also removed the necessity for fishermen who have both a Northeast Region (NER, now referred to as the Greater Atlantic Region) Black Sea Bass permit and a Southeast Region (SER) Snapper Grouper (S/G) permit to relinquish their permits for a six-month period prior to fishing south of Cape Hatteras during a northern closure.

[Addendum XII](#), approved in 2004, continued the use of an annual coastwide commercial quota managed by the ASMFC through a state-by-state allocation system.

[Addendum XIII](#) and the MAFMC's complementary Framework 5, approved in 2004, modified the FMP so that Total Allowable Landings (TALs) for the summer flounder, scup, and/or black sea bass can be specified for up to three years.

[Addendum XIX](#), approved in 2007, continued the state-by-state black sea bass commercial management measures, without a sunset clause. This addendum, and the MAFMC's complementary Framework 7, also broadened the descriptions of stock status determination criteria contained within the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass FMP to allow for greater flexibility in those definitions, while maintaining objective and measurable status determination criteria for identifying when stocks or stock complexes covered by the FMP are overfished. It established acceptable categories of peer-review for stock status determination criteria. When these specific peer-review metrics are met and new or updated information is available, the new or revised stock status determination criteria may be incorporated by the Commission directly into the annual management measures for each species, rather than requiring a modification to the FMP.

[Addendum XX](#), approved in 2009, set policies to reconcile commercial quota overages to address minor inadvertent quota overages. It streamlined the quota transfers process and established clear policies and administrative protocols to guide the allocation of transfers from

states with underages to states with overages. It also allowed for commercial quota transfers to reconcile quota overages after the year's end.

Beginning in 2011 due to concerns about equitable access to the resource, a series of addenda replaced the use of uniform coastwide measures to manage the recreational fishery.

[Addendum XXI](#) established state shares of the recreational harvest limit (RHL) for 2011.

[Addenda XXII](#), [XXIII](#), [XXV](#), and [XXVII](#) implemented an ad hoc regional management approach for 2012-2017, whereby the northern region states of Massachusetts through New Jersey individually crafted state measures aimed at liberalizing or reducing harvest by the same percent to achieve the RHL, while the southern region states of Delaware through North Carolina largely set regulations consistent with the measures set for federal waters.

For 2018, [Addendum XXX](#) established a regional allocation of the coastwide RHL to address state concerns regarding equity and accountability in recreational black sea bass management. Based on a combination of exploitable biomass information from the latest stock assessment and historical harvest, the RHL was allocated to three regions: 1) Massachusetts through New York, 2) New Jersey as a state-specific region, and 3) Delaware through North Carolina. The 2018 state recreational measures were then revised in May 2018 following an appeal of the Addendum to the ISFMP Policy Board by Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut and New York.

In December 2018, the Board approved [Addendum XXXI](#) (and the Council approved corresponding Framework 14), which modified the FMP to allow federal conservation equivalency (i.e., waiving federal waters measures in favor of state waters measures) as an option for the recreational black sea bass fishery beginning in 2020, and implemented transit provisions for Block Island Sound for recreational and commercial fisheries for summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass in the same area as the existing striped bass transit zone. The Council's framework action also modified the Council's FMP to allow a maximum size limit to be used in the recreational fisheries for summer flounder and black sea bass.

[Addendum XXXII](#), approved in December 2018, established a new process for developing recreational management measures for black sea bass and summer flounder whereby measures will be set annually through a specifications process, rather than addenda. The Board will approve measures in early spring each year, based on Technical Committee analysis of stock status, resource availability, and harvest estimates. To further aid in setting specifications, the Addendum established standards and guiding principles intended to structure the development of recreational measures on a regional basis. Public input on specifications will be gathered by states through their individual public comment processes.

In February 2021, the Board approved [Addendum XXXIII](#) and the Council approved Amendment 23, making changes to black sea bass commercial state allocations. Connecticut's baseline allocation increased to 3% of the coastwide quota. State allocations will be calculated by allocating 75% of the coastwide quota according to new, adjusted baseline quotas after the increase to Connecticut. The other 25% of quota will be allocated to three regions (Maine-New

York, New Jersey, and Delaware-North Carolina) based on the most recent regional biomass distribution from the stock assessment. The Council and Board also approved addition of the state specific commercial allocations in the Federal FMP, along with modifications to regulations for federal in-season closures. In March 2021, New York appealed the allocation changes approved by the Board. In May 2021, the Policy Board remanded Section 3.1.1 of Addendum XXXIII back to the Board for corrective action to adjust New York's allocation. Based on this directive, the Board and Council approved a 1% increase to New York's baseline allocation, bringing it to 8% of the coastwide quota. All changes to the black sea bass commercial state allocations in this Addendum went into effect on January 1, 2022 (Table 1). In August 2023, NOAA Fisheries partially approved Amendment 23, by approving changes to the commercial in-season quota trigger, but disapproved adding the state-by-state quota allocations to the Federal FMP. However, the state-by-state quota allocations for black sea bass remain in effect through the Commission's Addendum XXXIII.

In December 2021, the Commission and Council took final action on the [Amendment 22](#) which modified the allocations between the commercial and recreational sectors for the three species. The Board and Council agreed to modify the commercial and recreational black sea bass allocations from landings-based 49% commercial and 51% recreational to catch-based 45% commercial and 55% recreational. This action aimed to address the allocation-related impacts of the revised recreational catch and landings data provided by MRIP. These allocation changes took effect January 1, 2023.

In June 2022, the Commission's Interstate Fisheries Management Program Policy Board (Policy Board) and the Council approved [Addendum XXXIV](#) and Council Framework 17 which modified the process for setting recreational measures and made minor modifications to the recreational accountability measures. The new process gives greater consideration to stock status when determining whether recreational measures should be restricted, liberalized, or remain unchanged for the upcoming two years (Table 2). The new process was used starting in 2023 and will sunset no later than the end of 2025 with a goal of implementing an improved process by the beginning of 2026.

II. Status of the Stock

The most recent benchmark stock assessment for black sea bass was peer reviewed in December 2016 (SAW-62). The assessment used an age-structured assessment model (ASAP) that partitioned the resource into two spatial sub-units separated at approximately Hudson Canyon. This approach was accepted as the best scientific information available for determining stock status for black sea bass; however, it should be noted that the two sub-units were not considered separate stocks by the stock assessment working group, peer review panel, nor the MAFMC Scientific and Statistical Committee.

A management track assessment that incorporated fishery-dependent and -independent data through 2019, including revised recreational estimates from MRIP, was peer reviewed and

accepted in June 2021¹. The management track assessment was limited to data through 2019 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Data from 2020 was either not available or limited. The 2021 Management Track Assessment found that the black sea bass stock north of Cape Hatteras, North Carolina was not overfished and overfishing was not occurring in 2019 relative to the revised reference points. Spawning stock biomass (SSB) in 2019 was 65.63 million pounds (adjusted for retrospective bias), 2.1 times the updated biomass reference point (i.e., $SSB_{MSY\ proxy} = SSB_{40\%} = 31.84$ million pounds). The average fishing mortality on fully selected ages 6-7 fish in 2019 was 0.39 (adjusted for retrospective bias), 85% of the updated fishing mortality threshold reference point (i.e., $F_{MSY\ proxy} = F_{40\%} = 0.46$). Recruitment (R) of the 2018 year class as age 1 in 2019 was estimated at 46.2 million (79.4 million with the retrospective adjustment), above the 1989-2018 time series average of 39 million fish. The 2011 year class was estimated to be the largest in the time series at 170.4 million fish and the 2015 year class was the second largest at 93.8 million fish. The 2019 estimates of SSB, F, and R were adjusted for internal model retrospective error.

III. Status of the Fishery

In 2022, the commercial fishery was allocated 49% of the total allowable landings (TAL) for black sea bass, loosely based on the proportion of recreational to commercial landings from 1983-1992. The principal gears used in the fishery are otter trawls, fish pots (or traps), and handlines. After peaking at 21.8 million pounds in 1952, commercial landings markedly decreased in the 1960s and have ranged from 1.14 to 4.50 million pounds since 1981. In 1998, a commercial quota system was incorporated into management and state-by-state shares were introduced in 2003. From 2006-2016 commercial landings ranged between 1.14 million pounds in 2009 to 2.53 million pounds in 2016 (Tables 3 and 4). From 2017-2021, higher quotas resulted in commercial landings of ranging between 3.34 million pounds in 2018 to 4.50 million pounds in 2021. Although 2022 commercial landings were at a time series high of 5.1 million pounds, they were under the coastwide quota of 6.47 million pounds by approximately 20% (Tables 3 and 4)².

In 2022, the recreational fishery was allocated 51% of the TAL for black sea bass, loosely based on the proportion of recreational to commercial landings from 1983-1992. In 2018, recreational harvest estimates from the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) were recalibrated based on the new Fishing Effort Survey (FES). In general the recalibration resulted in higher harvest estimates throughout the time series, with more divergence in recent years. After a peak in 1986 at 11.19 million pounds, recreational harvest averaged 5.02 million pounds annually from 1987 to 1997. Recreational harvest limits were put in place in 1998 and harvest generally increased from 1.92 million pounds (1.56 million fish) in 1998 to 9.06 million pounds in 2015 (4.94 million fish; Tables 5 and 6; Figure 1). In 2016 and 2017 harvest jumped up to 12.05 and 11.48 million pounds (5.84 and 5.70 million fish), respectively; however, the 2016 and 2017 estimates are regarded as implausibly high outliers by the Technical Committee.

¹ The final report for the 2021 Operational Assessment can be found here: <https://apps-st.fisheries.noaa.gov/sis/docServlet?fileAction=download&fileId=7410>

² Commercial landings for 2022 are derived from state compliance reports.

Recreational harvest for black sea bass from Maine to Cape Hatteras peaked again in 2021 at 11.97 million pounds (6.44 million fish), before declining the following year by 32% to 8.14 million pounds (4.57 million fish). Recreational live discards as a proportion of total catch have generally increased over the time series, averaging 46% in the 1980s, and 85% over the last decade (Figure 1). According to MRIP, total live recreational discards from Maine to Virginia were 35.40 million fish in 2022. Assuming 15% hook and release mortality, estimated recreational discard losses in 2022 were estimated to be 5.31 million fish, equal to approximately 54% of the total recreational removals (harvest plus dead discards).

IV. Status of Assessment Advice

A management track stock assessment was peer reviewed in June 2021, and was accepted for management use. According to the assessment, the black sea bass stock north of Cape Hatteras, North Carolina was not overfished and overfishing was not occurring in 2019 compared to the revised reference points. The next stock assessment is a research track assessment that will be peer reviewed in October 2023. The research track assessment is not intended to provide outputs that will be used directly in management. Rather, the research track assessment model will be used in a management track planned for June 2024, which will incorporate the most recent data available and will provide outputs for use in setting management measures for 2025. There will be an updated management track again in 2025, and afterwards, updated black sea bass management track assessments are expected to be available every other year.

V. Status of Research and Monitoring

Commercial landings information is collected by the Vessel Trip Reporting (VTR) system and dealer reports. States are also required to collect and report landings data. The Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC) uses observer data to estimate discards for the trawl and gill net fisheries, and VTR data is used to estimate discards from pots and hand lines if observer data are insufficient. The NEFSC weigh-out program provides commercial age and length information. Recreational landings and discards were estimated through the Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey (MRFSS) until it was replaced by MRIP, which has provided recreational landings and discards from 2008 to present. In 2018, MRIP released recalibrated harvest estimates derived from a new mail-based fishing effort survey (FES), rather than the Coastal Household Telephone Survey. Recreational discards in weight are estimated by the NEFSC. New York conducts fishery-dependent surveys of the recreational and commercial fishery, and North Carolina conducts dockside commercial sampling.

Fishery-independent surveys are conducted by Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia. The Virginia Game Fish Tagging Program has targeted black sea bass since 1997. Recruitment and stock abundance data are also provided by the NEFSC spring, autumn, and winter trawl surveys.

VI. Status of Management Measures and Developing Issues

Recreational Reform Initiative topics that were agreed upon in December 2022 by the Board and Council for further development include a framework/addenda and amendment, which both begin development in 2023.

- The framework/addenda will explore options for a new recreational measure setting process as a replacement for the Percent Change Approach in Addendum XXXIV after the sunset period, to be in effect for 2026. If the recreational measures setting process is not updated through an addenda/framework or amendment to the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass and Bluefish FMPs prior to 2026, then the recreational measures setting process will revert back to the processes outlined Addendum XXXII for summer flounder and black sea bass, Addendum XI for scup, and Amendment 1 for bluefish.
- The amendment will consider the following two topics: 1) Options for managing for-hire recreational fisheries separately from other recreational fishing modes (referred to as sector separation), and 2) Options related to recreational catch accounting, such as private angler reporting and enhanced vessel trip report requirements.

Updates on ongoing recreational reform work can be found [here](#).

VII. Black Sea Bass Compliance Criteria

2022 Commercial Fishery Requirements

Minimum size of possession: 11"

Minimum mesh: Nets must possess a minimum of 75 meshes of 4.5" diamond mesh in the codend, or the entire net must have a minimum mesh size of 4.5" throughout; for codends with fewer than 75 meshes, the entire net must have 4.5" diamond mesh or larger throughout

Threshold to trigger minimum mesh requirements: 500 lbs for January-March and 100 lbs for April-December

Maximum roller rig trawl roller diameter: 18"

Pot and trap escape vents: 2 ½" for circular, 2" for square, and 1-3/8 x 5-3/4" for rectangular. Must be 2 vents in the parlor portion of the trap.

Pot and trap degradable fastener provisions: a) untreated hemp, jute, or cotton string 3/16" (4.8 mm) or smaller; b) magnesium alloy timed float releases or fasteners; c) ungalvanized, uncoated iron wire of 0.094" (2.4mm) or smaller. The opening covered by a panel affixed with degradable fasteners is required to be at least 3" x 6".

Commercial quota: 6.47 million lbs

Pot and trap definition: A black sea bass pot or trap is defined as any pot or trap used by a fisherman to catch and retain black sea bass.

2022 Recreational Fishery Requirements

Recreational harvest limit: 6.74 million lbs

2022 recreational measures aimed to achieve a 20.7% reduction in harvest compared to the 2018-2021 average. See Table 7 for 2022 state recreational measures.

Other Measures

Reporting: States are required to submit an annual compliance report to the Chair of the Black Sea Bass Plan Review Team by June 1st. The report must detail the state's management program for the current year and establish proof of compliance with all mandatory management measures. It should include landings information from the previous year and the results of any monitoring or research programs.

Black Sea Bass FMP Compliance Schedule*

Commercial	
11" Size Limit	1/1/02
4.5" diamond minimum mesh throughout codend and threshold provisions	1/1/02
Pot and trap escape vents and degradable fasteners	1/1/97
Maximum 18" roller diameter restriction	1/1/97
States must report to NMFS all landings from state waters	1/1/98
Recreational	
Size Limit	1/1/97
Harvest Limit	1/1/98
Ability to implement possession limits and seasonal closures	1/1/98
General	
Annual compliance report	Annually, 6/1

*This summary of compliance criteria is intended to serve as a quick reference guide. It in no way alters or supersedes compliance criteria as contained in the Black Sea Bass FMP and any Amendments thereto. Management measures may change annually.

VIII. Status of Implementation of FMP Requirements

For 2022, states and jurisdictions required to comply with the provisions of the Black Sea Bass FMP are: New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Potomac River Fisheries Commission, Virginia, and North Carolina.

All states appear to have regulations consistent with the FMP provisions for fishing year 2022; except for the following issue noted in a previous FMP review, which is in the process of being rectified:

- Connecticut regulation did not include the requirement of two escape vents in the parlor portion of the trap/pot. This is in the process of being rectified via direct regulation change, with it estimated to be finalized in 2024.

Therefore, the PRT determined that all states have made a good faith effort to implement regulations that are consistent with the requirements approved by the Board.

IX. Research Recommendations

Research recommendations were identified during the [2016 Black Sea Bass Benchmark Stock Assessment at the 62nd SAW](#) (pg. 65)

X. References

NEFSC (Northeast Fisheries Science Center). 2017. 62nd Northeast Regional Stock Assessment Workshop (62nd SAW) Assessment Report. US Dept Commerce, Northeast Fish Sci Cent Ref Doc. 17-03; 822 p. Available from: National Marine Fisheries Service, 166 Water Street, Woods Hole, MA 02543-1026, or online at <http://nefsc.noaa.gov/publications/>.

NEFSC. 2021. Black Sea Bass Operational Assessment for 2021. Available at: <https://apps-st.fisheries.noaa.gov/sis/docServlet?fileAction=download&fileId=7410>

XI. Tables and Figures

Table 1. Revised black sea bass state-by state baseline allocation of annual commercial quota, as adopted by the Council and Board in February 2021 and implemented via Addendum 33 to the FMP, effective January 1, 2022. The final allocations are the baseline quota plus the regional biomass distribution based on the results of the most recent stock assessment.

State	Baseline Percent Allocation
ME	0.25%
NH	0.25%
MA	12.62%
RI	10.68%
CT	3.00%
NY	8.00%
NJ - N	9.71%
NJ - S	9.71%
DE	5.00%
MD	10.68%
VA	19.42%
NC	10.68%
Total	100%

Table 2. Process for determining the appropriate percent change in harvest when developing management measures.

Future RHL vs Harvest Estimate¹	Stock Size SSB/SSB_{MSY}	Change in Harvest
Future 2-year avg. RHL greater than upper bound of harvest estimate confidence interval	> 1.5	Liberalization percent equal to difference between harvest estimate and 2-year avg. RHL, not to exceed 40%
	1 – 1.5	Liberalization percent equal to difference between harvest estimate and 2-year avg. RHL, not to exceed 20%
	< 1	10% Liberalization
Future 2-YR avg. RHL within confidence interval of harvest estimate	> 1.5	10% Liberalization
	1-1.5	0%
	< 1	10% Reduction
Future 2-YR avg. RHL less than lower bound of harvest estimate confidence interval	> 1.5	10% Reduction
	1-1.5	Reduction percent equal to difference between harvest estimate and 2-year avg. RHL, not to exceed 20%
	< 1	Reduction percent equal to difference between harvest estimate and 2-year avg. RHL, not to exceed 40%

¹ The two-year average MRIP estimate with associated CI is intended as a predictor of future harvest under status quo measures. This may be replaced with statistical model based approaches for predicting harvest.

Table 3. Black Sea Bass Commercial Landings by State (2013-2022) in pounds. Source: State Compliance Reports & ACCSP (June 2023).

Year	ME	NH	MA	RI	CT	NY	NJ	DE	MD	VA	NC*	TOTAL
2013			328,393	265,691	23,066	180,694	421,310	C	234,074	495,938	88,242	2,037,409***
2014			307,046	267,703	26,957	223,677	493,775	C	251,724	387,518	212,488	2,173,311***
2015			347,820	238,647	24,591	151,409	468,248	111,508	236,183	422,333	241,538	2,242,277
2016			354,031	294,343	29,236	184,529	525,647	96,794	271,512	553,491	225,405	2,534,987
2017			541,932	458,153	43,798	285,122	898,665	117,452	409,594	745,087	388,858	3,888,660
2018			481,146	374,637	37,912	274,114	700,130	172,180	373,991	606,240	315,983	3,336,459
2019		C	530,770	399,085	62,261	296,333	719,544	172,738	369,507	590,526	279,008	3,497,182***
2020		C	722,428	553,749	85,613	415,017	1,076,593	182,815	397,203	521,691	217,847	4,173,157***
2021			759,362	660,033	91,198	434,076	1,112,447	258,225	482,233	491,601	200,565	4,498,156
2022**			916,027	824,345	275,696	647,943	1,223,726	241,929	385,762	522,175	108,991	5,146,594

* Landings from NC are from north of Cape Hatteras

** 2022 landings are preliminary from state compliance reports

*** Totals do not include confidential landings

Delaware landings from 2013 to 2014 and Maine landings in 2019 and 2020 are confidential.

Table 4. 2022 Commercial Landings and 2022 Black Sea Bass State by State Quotas (pounds). The final allocations (% Allocation below) are the baseline quota (Table 1) plus the regional biomass distribution based on the results of the most recent stock assessment (2021). Landings Source: State Compliance Reports, June 2023.

State	% Allocation	2022 ASMFC Initial Quota	2022 Quota After Transfers	Preliminary 2022 Landings
Maine	0.40%	25,880	2,880	
New Hampshire	0.40%	25,880	880	
Massachusetts	15.44%	998,901	948,901	916,027
Rhode Island	13.06%	845,224	870,224	824,345
Connecticut	3.67%	237,417	310,417	275,696
New York	9.79%	633,113	633,113	647,943
New Jersey	19.81%	1,281,984	1,281,984	1,223,726
Delaware	4.09%	264,488	264,488	241,929
Maryland	8.73%	564,958	564,958	385,762
Virginia	15.88%	1,027,196	1,032,196	522,175
North Carolina	8.73%	564,958	559,958	108,991
Coastwide Total	100%	6,470,000	6,470,000	5,146,594

* Landings from North Carolina are from North of Cape Hatteras

Table 5. Black Sea Bass Recreational Harvest Estimates by State (2013-2022) in pounds.

Source: MRIP, 2023. NC estimates for North of Cape Hatteras from compliance reports, June 2023.

State	ME	NH	MA	RI	CT	NY	NJ	DE	MD	VA	NC*	Coastwide
2013		64,478	1,228,732	313,316	413,558	2,106,973	1,389,868	56,384	35,802	58,919	21,617	5,689,647
2014			2,148,079	659,562	1,063,682	2,224,755	892,307	62,504	79,659	109,054	1,269	7,240,871
2015			1,629,169	807,840	1,011,926	4,722,098	596,811	59,710	118,061	104,944	6,224	9,056,782
2016			1,765,705	1,124,414	1,364,242	6,547,541	693,808	127,182	274,441	148,818	1,591	12,047,742
2017			1,444,180	749,965	1,102,722	5,515,386	2,088,631	150,530	239,715	156,810	33,421	11,481,361
2018			1,818,682	1,628,875	873,055	1,726,555	1,440,761	109,365	189,711	123,937**	9,494	7,920,435
2019			1,361,112	1,225,057	1,180,400	3,126,473	1,117,658	61,974	156,986	371,523**	11,639	8,612,822
2020		3,388	1,537,990	1,480,782	905,145	2,808,726	1,147,599	188,978	103,461	796,053**	74,149	9,046,271
2021		4,101	2,622,511	1,116,032	2,094,825	1,927,674	2,613,242	478,941	278,677	823,538**	6,564	11,966,105
2022		193	895,844	618,968	863,167	2,682,422	2,011,517	250,347	198,383	564,208	57,252	8,142,301

*Harvest is from north of Hatteras.

**Virginia participated in the February 2018-2021 black sea bass recreational fishery, and the February harvest estimate is not included in the state total for 2018-2021.

Table 6. Black Sea Bass Recreational Harvest Estimates by State (2013-2022) in numbers of fish.

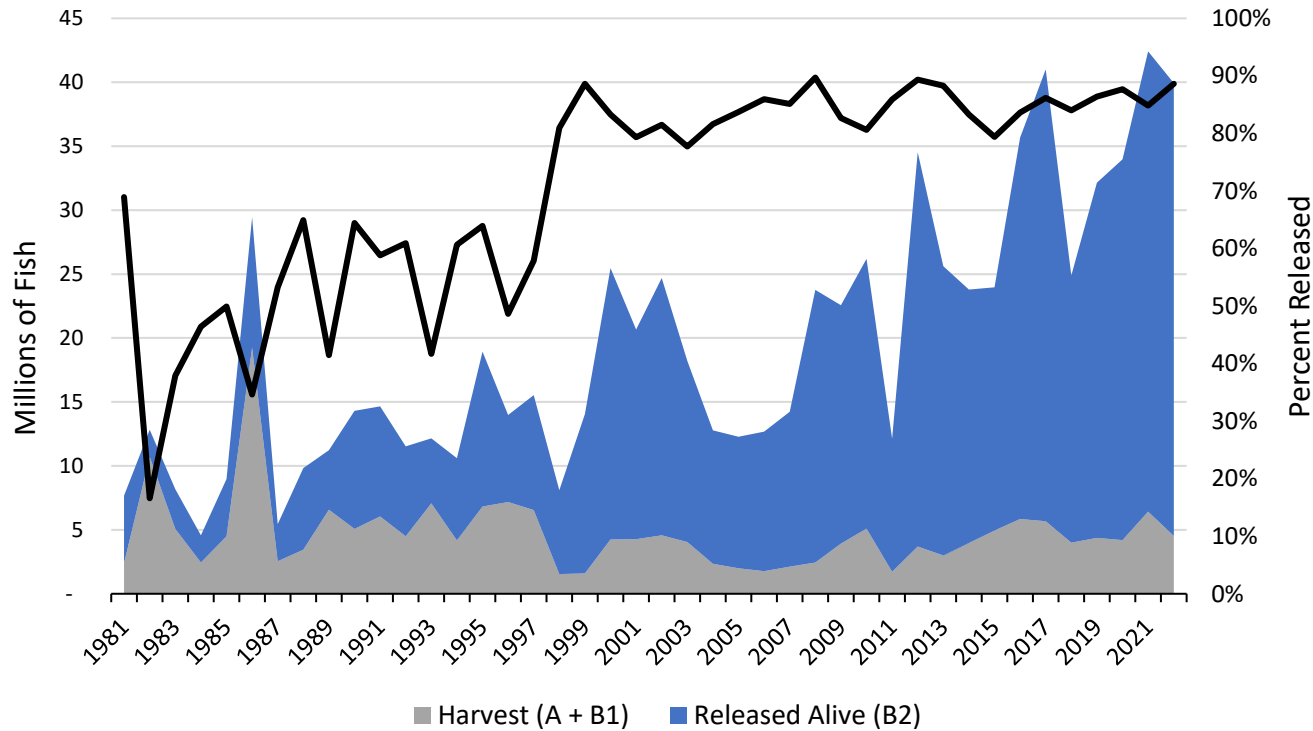
Source: MRIP, 2023. NC estimates for North of Cape Hatteras from compliance reports, June 2023.

State	ME	NH	MA	RI	CT	NY	NJ	DE	MD	VA	NC*	Coastwide
2013		43,757	548,062	165,668	193,455	999,019	933,784	48,313	27,211	46,145	16,119	3,021,533
2014			807,323	403,725	701,332	1,233,787	639,200	48,295	62,814	77,629	768	3,974,873
2015			736,824	433,580	621,969	2,493,816	440,220	57,116	89,061	65,998	2,955	4,941,539
2016			733,520	507,716	664,311	3,034,695	516,998	95,128	206,842	81,064	1,188	5,841,462
2017			568,982	327,803	491,499	2,434,199	1,500,473	111,662	149,155	96,696	23,720	5,704,189
2018			678,143	706,153	379,317	853,309	1,039,614	87,993	154,196**	87,140	6,762	3,992,627
2019			526,594	517,033	515,601	1,577,042	831,241	43,435	129,432**	230,844	6,267	4,377,489
2020		1,983	575,802	615,661	407,300	1,274,047	812,080	140,894	80,986***	274,629	44,475	4,227,857
2021		2,722	1,212,386	509,132	837,490	928,474	1,929,157	355,694	212,050**	444,313	4,171	6,435,589
2022		176	386,198	289,706	375,464	1,300,984	1,479,757	199,340	158,822**	342,624	32,117	4,565,188

*Harvest is from north of Hatteras.

**Virginia participated in the February 2018-2021 black sea bass recreational fishery, and the February harvest estimate is not included in the state total for 2018-2021.

Figure 1. Black Sea Bass Total Recreational Harvest, Discards, and Percent Released for Maine through Virginia*, 1981-2022. The black line represents the percent of black sea bass that are caught and released out of the total catch (harvest + discards). Source: MRIP, June 2023. Note that this figure includes live and dead discards. It is assumed that 15% of all recreational black sea bass discards die.



*Discard estimates for NC north of Cape Hatteras for 2022 are not yet available.

Table 7. 2022 Black Sea Bass Recreational Management Measures by State

STATE	Size Limit	Possession Limit	Open Season
MAINE	13"	10 fish	May 19-September 21; October 18-December 31
NEW HAMPSHIRE	13"	10 fish	January-December 31
MASSACHUSETTS	16"	4 fish	May 21-September 4
RHODE ISLAND Private & Shore	16"	2 fish	May 22-August 31
		3 fish	September 1-December 31
RI For-Hire		2 fish	June 18-August 31
		6 fish	September 1-December 31
CONNECTICUT Private & Shore	16"	5 fish	May 19-December 1
CT (Authorized For-Hire monitoring program vessels)		5 fish	May 19-August 31
		7 fish	September 1-December 31
NEW YORK	16"	3 fish	June 23-August 31
		6 fish	September 1-December 31
NEW JERSEY	13"	10 fish	May 17-June 19
		2 fish	July 1-August 31
		10 fish	October 7-October 26
		15 fish	November 1-December 31
DELAWARE	13"	15 fish	May 15-December 11
MARYLAND			
VIRGINIA			
NORTH CAROLINA North of Cape Hatteras (N of 35° 15'N)			