



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
NORTHEAST REGION
55 Great Republic Drive
Gloucester, MA 01930-2276

April 6, 2010

SMALL ENTITY COMPLIANCE GUIDE

Dear Black Sea Bass Party/Charter Permit Holder:

This letter is to inform you that NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is extending the black sea bass recreational closure of Federal waters of the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) an additional 39 days, until 11:59 p.m., May 21, 2010. This extension is necessary to ensure that recreational fishing does not begin before May 22, 2010, which is the fishing season start date recommended by both the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (Commission).

The process for developing black sea bass recreational management measures has been unusual for 2010. The recreational harvest level was increased by emergency action in February (75 FR 6586; February 10, 2010), the Council and Commission have recommended revised measures for 2010 that have different fishing season lengths and configurations, and final 2009 recreational landings data are not yet available for analysis. NMFS is in the process of conducting notice-and-comment rulemaking for the final 2010 black sea bass recreational management measures (i.e., minimum fish size, possession limit, and fishing season) and is mindful of the unusual circumstances, data limitations, and timing issues for the 2010 black sea bass recreational fishery. A proposed rule for the recreational management measures is expected to publish in the *Federal Register* in mid to late April. Fishery participants and interested parties are encouraged to comment on the proposed rule, when published.

This emergency rule extends the recreational black sea bass fishery closure in the EEZ from April 12, 2010, through 11:59 p.m., on May 21, 2010. Persons aboard a vessel for which a Federal charter/party permit for black sea bass has been issued must also abide by the closure provisions in state waters for the extension period.

You may also receive permit holder letters, including closure notices, by e-mail by clicking on Permit Holder Letters on our website at <http://www.nero.noaa.gov>.

Sincerely,

Patricia A. Kurkul
Regional Administrator

