

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
**The Maryland Department of Natural Resources**  
**Fishing and Boating Services**

*2026 Recreational Black Sea Bass Fishery — Effective 4/19/2026*

**WHAT THIS NOTICE DOES**

The Secretary of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources announces the recreational season, catch limit, and minimum size for black sea bass. This notice supersedes all previous public notices opening or closing the recreational black sea bass fishery. Effective 12:01 a.m. April 19, 2026:

**SEASON**

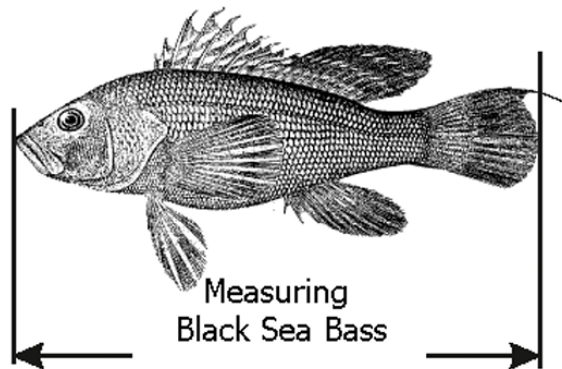
- In State waters, the season is open May 1, 2026, through December 31, 2026. It is closed all other dates.
- In federal waters, the season is open May 15, 2026 through September 30, 2026. It is closed all other dates.

**CATCH LIMIT**

- In State waters, anglers may keep up to 15 black sea bass per person per day.
- In federal waters, anglers may keep up to 5 black sea bass per person per day.

**MINIMUM SIZE**

- In State waters, the minimum size is 12-1/2 inches, excluding the tail filament.
- In federal waters, the minimum size is 15 inches, excluding the tail filament.



**DEFINITIONS**

“Federal waters” are all waters of the Atlantic Ocean beginning three nautical miles from the coast and extending to 200 miles from the coast.

“State waters” are all waters of the Chesapeake Bay and its tidal tributaries, as well as all waters of the Atlantic Ocean within three nautical miles of the coast, its coastal bays and their tributaries.

### **WHY THIS IS NECESSARY**

This action is necessary to implement the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Fishery Management Plan. The rules in federal waters differing from the rules in State waters is due to the delayed approval of the Recreational Measures Setting Process Framework by NOAA (See Federal Waters Management below).

### **WHO THIS NOTICE AFFECTS**

- This applies to all individuals who catch black sea bass recreationally.
- Please note: If you have a federal Black Sea Bass - Charter/Party permit, you must follow the more restrictive federal rules even if you are fishing in State waters.

### **FEDERAL WATERS MANAGEMENT**

NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service may modify or waive the measures that apply to federal waters. An updated notice will be issued if NOAA makes changes to the rules that apply to black sea bass in federal waters.

### **AUTHORITY**

Code of Maryland Regulations 08.02.05.21

Josh Kurtz  
Secretary of Natural Resources