

POSSIBLE CHANGES TO REGULATIONS FOR BLACK SEA BASS Commercial Fishery

What will this proposal do?

Black sea bass traps or pots must contain a ghost panel affixed to the trap or pot with degradable fasteners and hinges. The opening to be covered by the ghost panel must measure at least 3 inches by 6 inches. The department needs to add the size of the opening to regulation.

Why is this change necessary?

Black sea bass is managed jointly by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council under Amendment 13 to the Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Fishery Management Plan (August 2002) and its subsequent addenda (Addenda XII-XXXII). The objectives of the fishery management plan are to reduce fishing mortality to assure 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 original fishery management plan for black sea bass was approved in 1996. The plan requires a ghost panel opening covered by a 3"x 6" panel affixed with degradable fasteners. Maryland regulations currently do not have the size requirement for the opening, which is out of compliance with ASMFC.

This is a housekeeping change that will ensure our compliance with the management plan.

Who will this affect?

Commercial harvesters that black sea bass from the Atlantic Ocean. This requirement has been in place for more than 20 years in federal waters. Black sea bass pots are not fished in state waters and therefore fishermen are already following this rule with pots in federal waters. Fishermen follow the more restrictive rules when fishing in state and federal waters.

When will this be effective?

The change is expected to be effective in early 2020.

Has this change be discussed with Advisory Commissions?

Yes. The change was scoped at the Sport Fisheries Advisory Commission meeting on July 23, 2019 and at the Tidal Fisheries Advisory Commission meeting on July 25, 2019. The commissioners did not have comments about the change.

Additional Information

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission Fishery Management Plan

<http://www.asmfc.org/uploads/file/BlackSeaBassFMPOctober1996.pdf>

Federal Regulations [https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/retrieveECFR?gp=&SID=9f5bb83d0dd1bf6af01d7baf383b29c0&r=SUBPART&n=50y12.0.1.1.5.9#se50.12.648_1144)

[bin/retrieveECFR?gp=&SID=9f5bb83d0dd1bf6af01d7baf383b29c0&r=SUBPART&n=50y12.0.1.1.5.9#se50.12.648_1144](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/retrieveECFR?gp=&SID=9f5bb83d0dd1bf6af01d7baf383b29c0&r=SUBPART&n=50y12.0.1.1.5.9#se50.12.648_1144)