



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Marine Resources Commission
2600 Washington Avenue
Third Floor
Newport News, Virginia 23607

Molly Joseph Ward
Secretary of Natural Resources

John M.R. Bull
Commissioner

NOTICE

The Virginia Marine Resources Commission invites public comment on the establishment of amendments to the regulations, as proposed below. By March 13, 2017, the proposed draft regulations may be viewed at the Virginia Marine Resources Commission, 2600 Washington Avenue, Newport News, Virginia.

In accordance with Section 28.2-209 of the Code of Virginia, a public hearing on the proposed amendments to these regulations will be held no earlier than 12:00 noon, on Tuesday, March 28, 2017, at the Virginia Marine Resources Commission, 2600 Washington Avenue, Newport News, Virginia. Public comments on the proposals should be provided to Robert L. O'Reilly, VMRC Fisheries Management Division, 2600 Washington Avenue, 3rd Floor, Newport News, Virginia 23607, by 12:00 p.m., Monday, March 27, 2017.

I. Chapter 4 VAC 20-510-10 et seq., "Pertaining to Amberjack and Cobia"

The Commission will consider amendments to the recreational cobia fishery management measures for the 2017 fishing season. Chapter 4 VAC 20-510-10 et seq., "Pertaining to Amberjack and Cobia," provides the management measures for the recreational cobia fishery.

The 2016 recreational management measures included a one fish per person possession limit; a 40-inch total length minimum possession size limit; a two fish per daily vessel limit, allowing only one of the two fish to be 50 inches or greater in total length. The 2016 recreational fishing season closed on August 30. In 2016 there was a prohibition on gaffing cobia.

The Commission will consider various conservation options for the 2017 recreational cobia fishery, as shown below, except that the personal possession limit of one cobia shall be maintained in 2017. The Commission may choose one or more of the following management options but can also adopt any alternatives to the examples of management options provides below:

- A. No change to the 2016 management measures for the 2017 fishing season;
- B. Establish a daily vessel limit of 1, 2, 3, or 4 cobia;
- C. Establish a 2017 recreational cobia fishing season start date. Examples are June 1 or June 15. There was no specified season start date previously;

An Agency of the Natural Resources Secretariat

www.mrc.virginia.gov

Telephone (757) 247-2200 (757) 247-2292 V/TDD Information and Emergency Hotline 1-800-541-4646 V/TDD

- D. Establish a season closure in 2017. Examples are August 15 or August 30. In 2016 the season closure occurred on August 30;
- E. Modify the 2016 minimum possession size limit of 40 inches total length, for the 2017 recreational cobia fishery; and,
- F. Modify the 2016 prohibition on gaffing cobia.

The purpose of these amendment options is to address substantial overages of the 2015 and 2016 Atlantic migratory group (Georgia through New York) annual catch limit that was established to promote stock health.

II. Chapter 4 VAC 20-950-10 et seq., "Pertaining to Black Sea Bass"

The Commission proposes to make amendments to Chapter 4 VAC 20-950-10 et seq. "Pertaining to Black Sea Bass," to establish the commercial back sea bass fishery quota for 2017.

The purpose of the amendment is to comply with the interstate management plan for this species.

III. Chapter 4 VAC 20-252-10 et seq., "Pertaining to the Taking of Striped Bass," Chapter 4 VAC 20-510-10 et seq., "Pertaining to Amberjack and Cobia," and Chapter 4 VAC 20-1120-10 et seq., "Pertaining to Tilefish and Groupers"

The Commission proposes to make amendments to Chapter 4 VAC 20-252-10 et seq., "Pertaining to the Taking of Striped Bass," Chapter 4 VAC 20-510-10 et seq., "Pertaining to Amberjack and Cobia," and Chapter 4 VAC 20-1120-10 et seq., "Pertaining to Tilefish and Groupers," to simplify the permitting process for the mandatory recreational reporting for charter and trophy striped bass, cobia, tilefish and groupers.

The purpose of this amendment is to promote efficiency in the utilization of these fishery resources.

VMRC DOES NOT DISCRIMINATE AGAINST INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES; THEREFORE, IF YOU ARE IN NEED OF REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS BECAUSE OF A DISABILITY, PLEASE ADVISE JANE MCCROSKEY (757-247-2215) NO LATER THAN FIVE WORK DAYS PRIOR TO THE MEETING DATE AND IDENTIFY YOUR NEEDS.