

TO: BLACK SEA BASS INDUSTRY
FROM: VIRGINIA MARINE RESOURCES COMMISSION
RE: COMMERCIAL BLACK SEA BASS FISHERY
DATE: AUGUST 29, 2005

The Virginia Marine Resources Commission (VMRC) invites industry comment on issues pertaining to the offshore commercial black sea bass fishery. Also, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) has announced a decrease in the coastwide total allowable landings for black sea bass (see ASMFC Press Release below) for 2006.

VMRC has received requests from industry to amend the current black sea bass regulation section 4 VAC 20-950-46 E, in order to allow directed quota to be landed without the permit holder actually aboard the vessel landing the sea bass. Currently, 4 VAC 20-950-46 E states: Any permit described in this section must be in the possession of the permittee who is harvesting, possessing, or selling black sea bass. Failure of the permittee to have the appropriate permit in possession shall be a violation of this chapter.

The annual meeting with the Black Sea Bass Industry and VMRC Fisheries Management staff has been scheduled for Thursday, September 15, 2005 at 6:00 p.m. in the VMRC conference room.

Questions pertaining to this meeting can be directed to Joe Cimino at 757-247-8068.
Virginia Marine Resources Commission
2600 Washington Ave., 4th Floor, Conference Room
Newport News, VA 23607

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 12, 2005

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**ASMFC & MAFMC Approve 2006 TALs for
Bluefish, Scup and Black Sea Bass**

Philadelphia, PA – The Commission and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) met this week to finalize the total allowable landings (TAL) limits for bluefish, scup and black sea bass, and establish 2006 commercial management measures for the respective fisheries. The TALs are provided below in millions of pounds.

Species	2004 TAL	2005 TAL	2006 TAL
Bluefish	31.9	30.8	24.8
Black Sea Bass	8.0	8.2	8.0
Scup	16.5	16.5	16.27

The 2006 black sea bass quota decreased slightly from 8.2 million pounds in 2005 to 8.0 million pounds, due to a decrease in the survey index used to evaluate the stock. The Commission and Council approved increases in the minimum sizes for circular vents (now set at 2.5" in diameter) and the number of vents in traps and pots. All traps and pots will be required to have at least two vents in the parlor portion of the trap to help increase escapement of sub-legal fish. These changes must be implemented by January 1, 2007.