



# COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

## Marine Resources Commission

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**April 10, 2026**

**TO: RECREATIONAL BLACK SEA BASS ANGLERS**

**FROM: VIRGINIA MARINE RESOURCES COMMISSION**

**RE: SEASON, POSSESSION LIMITS, AND SIZE MINIMUM WHEN FISHING IN FEDERAL WATERS**

### **Public Notice: Federal Waters Regulations for Black Sea Bass**

This notice is intended to clarify the regulations regarding the harvest of black sea bass from federal waters during the upcoming 2026 season. NOAA's process to approve the use of conservation equivalency for black sea bass has not been approved/completed. Therefore, if you have a federal black sea bass permit and are fishing in federal waters the following rules apply to all recreational anglers, charter boats, and headboat operators:

#### **-Minimum Size**

The minimum size for black sea bass harvested in Federal waters is 15 inches total length for:

- Recreational vessels
- Party boats with passengers or more than five crew
- Charter boats with more than three crew

#### **-Seasonal Restriction**

Recreational anglers and vessels without a federal moratorium permit may possess black sea bass only from May 15 through September 8.

#### **-Possession Limit**

Recreational anglers may possess no more than 5 black sea bass per trip in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

*An Agency of the Natural and Historic Resources Secretariat*

[www.mrc.virginia.gov](http://www.mrc.virginia.gov)

Telephone (757) 247-2200 Information and Emergency Hotline 1-800-541-4646

If you have questions, contact Alexa Galvan, at (757) 247-2069.

If you are interested to hear the information as it was communicated at the MAFMC, [please follow this link](#). The discussion starts around the 3:17 mark.