



MID-ATLANTIC
FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 19, 2014

PRESS CONTACT: Mary Clark
(302) 674-2331 (ext. 261)

Council Initiates Action to Open Black Sea Bass Fishery in Wave 1

During last week's meeting in Freehold, New Jersey, the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council initiated a framework to consider opening the recreational black sea bass fishery earlier in the year in 2015. One option the Council will consider is opening the fishery during Wave 1 (January and February) to approved for-hire (party/charter) operators. The Council will also consider opening the fishery to all anglers in federal waters on May 1—nearly three weeks before next year's scheduled opening date.

"We initiated this action in response to input from many of our stakeholders and advisors," said Council Chairman Rick Robins. "Black sea bass is an important recreational fishery in the Mid-Atlantic, and these adjustments to the timing of the season could have significant benefits for the recreational community."

During the discussion at last week's meeting, the Council noted that few recreational fisheries are open early in the year and that moving up the May opening date for black sea bass could have substantial social and economic impacts for private and for-hire fishermen alike, as well as the businesses that service those fishermen.

Since recreational fishing data is not currently collected during Wave 1, the Council will examine a range of measures to ensure that catch during Wave 1 is accurately estimated and accounted for, including electronic submission of log books on a weekly basis and pre-trip notification to the observer program. Council staff is preparing a range of options for the Council to consider at the August meeting.