



Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management

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DEM ANNOUNCES CHANGES TO RECREATIONAL BLACK SEA BASS FISHERY

New Regulations Increase Season Length, Possession Limit

PROVIDENCE – The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM) has extended the season and increased the fall possession limit for the 2018 recreational black sea bass fishery.

The new rules add nine days to the beginning of the season and ends the fall closure that was in place in 2017, giving an additional 31 days that were closed last year. **The season is now open from June 24 through December 31.** During the first sub-period, June 24 to August 31, the possession limit remains at three fish per person, per day. The possession limit for the second sub-period, from September 1 through December 31, has increased to seven fish per person, per day. The minimum size for the entire season remains at 15 inches.



*Black sea bass (Centropristis striata) /
Image courtesy Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Council*

The changes reflect the robust status of [the black sea bass](#) stock in the Northern Region of the Atlantic Ocean. On May 3, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) approved revised measures for the 2018 recreational black sea bass fishery in response to an appeal brought by Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New York to secure additional access to this abundant resource. The states argued that ASMFC's action under Addendum XXX of the Interstate Management Plan for black sea bass, adopted in February, incorrectly applied technical data and was inconsistent with the Black Sea Bass Fishery Management Plan. With ASMFC's OK, Rhode Island and neighboring states in the Northern Region are liberalizing regulations for the recreational black sea bass fishery from what was originally proposed by the Addendum. Black sea bass is an important sportfish in Rhode Island; as its population has grown in local waters, so too has its popularity as a recreational fishery.

Rhode Island is well known for its spectacular recreational opportunities. **According to the Outdoor Industry Association, outdoor recreation in Rhode Island generates \$2.4 billion in consumer spending and supports 24,000 jobs.** As part of a larger recreational invitation, local fishing plays an important role in connecting people with nature, promoting health, attracting tourism, and supporting a treasured tradition for Rhode

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Island families. According to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, there are approximately 175,000 recreational anglers (age 16+) in Rhode Island. And recreational fishing contributes more than \$130 million to the economy each year.

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-30-