



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Division of Marine Fisheries

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Marine Fisheries Advisory

2020 Black Sea Bass Recreational For-Hire Season Extended

Massachusetts for-hire fishing operations will be able to take patrons recreationally fishing for black sea bass for an extended season this fall. This season, which was scheduled to end on September 9, will now extend through October 9 for the for-hire fishery. The established bag limit of 5 fish and minimum size of 15" will apply. This seasonal extension is being offered to offset the delayed season start required of for-hire fishing businesses this spring due to COVID-19 safety measures. The last day for anglers fishing from shore or private vessel to retain black sea bass will remain September 8.

The Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) was given approval by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission to extend the recreational black sea bass season for anglers fishing aboard charter and head boats through a conservation equivalency proposal. As such, the 31 days added to the end of the for-hire season are projected to result in the same amount of harvest that likely would have occurred aboard for-hire vessels during the seven days that the fleet was prohibited from fishing for black sea bass this spring (May 18–May 24). More days are being added to the end of the season than were closed in the beginning of the season because black sea bass catch rates are at their peak in spring when the fish are nearshore, aggregated, and aggressively feeding and interest in the fishery is at its highest.

DMF is issuing [permit conditions](#) to holders of 2020 MA Charter Boat and Head Boat permits to authorize this seasonal extension. Access is limited to those individuals who obtained one of these 2020 for-hire permits prior to August 6, the date our proposal was approved by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. This seasonal adjustment applies only to the recreational for-hire fishery because DMF did not prohibit fishing from shore or private vessel this spring the same as it did from for-hire vessels. The recreational black sea bass season will revert to May 18–September 8 for all modes in 2021, unless subsequently changed by DMF.

A directory of MA Charter Boats and Head Boats can be found in our Saltwater Fishing Guide at: <http://www.eregulations.com/massachusetts/fishing/saltwater/charter-head-boats/>.