



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Division of Marine Fisheries

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September 12, 2025
Marine Fisheries Advisory

INCREASE TO COMMERCIAL BLACK SEA BASS LIMITS EFFECTIVE SEPTEMBER 15

Effective Monday, September 15, the commercial black sea bass possession limits will increase from 500 pounds to 600 pounds for pot fishers and from 250 pounds to 300 pounds for hook and line fishers (and other non-trawl gear). This increase occurs automatically upon the Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) determining that more than 15% of the state's 2025 commercial black sea bass quota will remain available after September 14. Current quota monitoring information indicates that roughly 63% of the state's 2025 quota has been taken. Based on daily landings rates, DMF can project that more than 15% of the quota will remain on September 15, triggering these trip limit increases. The trip limit for trawlers remains 100 pounds.

Additionally, Fridays and Saturdays are added as open fishing days beginning September 15, allowing lawfully permitted commercial fishers to retain, possess, land, and sell black sea bass seven days per week. Unless otherwise notified, these changes will remain in effect throughout the remainder of the calendar year or until 100% of the annual quota is taken and the commercial fishery is closed for 2025. This occurs annually to accommodate additional fishing opportunities as safe weather windows for small boat fishers become sparser during the fall.

The recreational fishery for black sea bass closed on September 2 and the retention of black sea bass by recreational anglers is now prohibited. Accordingly, any person retaining, possessing, and landing black sea bass must hold a valid DMF-issued commercial fishing permit endorsed for black sea bass or black sea bass pots. It remains unlawful to mix commercial and recreational fishing trips. Therefore, if the retention of black sea bass is occurring under the authority of a commercial fishing permit, then all catch of all species by the permit holder or onboard the vessel must conform with the Commonwealth's commercial fishing rules.

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