



JOSH STEIN  
*Governor*

D. REID WILSON  
*Secretary*

KATHY B. RAWLS  
*Director*

**FF-24-2026**

## **PROCLAMATION**

### **RE: BLACK SEA BASS – RECREATIONAL – NORTH OF CAPE HATTERAS – 2026 RECREATIONAL SEASON, SIZE, AND CREEL LIMITS**

**This proclamation supersedes Proclamation FF-20-2025, dated April 25, 2025. This proclamation establishes the 2026 season dates, size, and creel limits for the recreational black sea bass fishery north of Cape Hatteras effective at 12:01 A.M., May 1, 2026. The fishery will close at 11:59 P.M., December 31, 2026.**

Kathy B. Rawls, Director, Division of Marine Fisheries, hereby announces that effective at **12:01 A.M., May 1, 2026**, the following restrictions will apply to the recreational black sea bass fishery in Coastal Fishing Waters which includes the Atlantic Ocean **north of Cape Hatteras (35° 15.3'N. Latitude)**:

#### **I. SEASON**

It shall be unlawful to possess black sea bass for recreational purposes except from **12:01 A.M., May 1, 2026, through 11:59 P.M., December 31, 2026.**

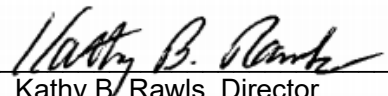
#### **II. SIZE AND CREEL LIMIT**

- A. It shall be unlawful to possess black sea bass less **than 13 inches total length** (excluding the caudal fin filament).
- B. It shall be unlawful to possess more than 15 black sea bass per person per day taken for recreational purposes.
- C. It shall be unlawful to possess black sea bass for recreational purposes from Coastal Fishing Waters which includes the Atlantic Ocean north of Cape Hatteras except during the seasons specified in Section I.

#### **III. GENERAL INFORMATION**

- A. This proclamation is issued under the authority of N.C.G.S. 113-134; 113-134.1; 113-170.4; 113-170.5; 113-182; 113-182.1; 113-221.1; 143B-289.52 and N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission Rule 15A NCAC 03M .0512.
- B. It is unlawful to violate the provisions of any proclamation issued by the Fisheries Director under their delegated authority pursuant to N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission Rule 15A NCAC 03H .0103.
- C. See <https://www.deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/marine-fisheries/rules-proclamations-and-size-and-bag-limits/fisheries-management-proclamations#currentprocs> to refer to those Snapper Grouper proclamations for regulations for the recreational black sea bass fishery south of Cape Hatteras.
- D. The intent of this proclamation is to maintain North Carolina's compliance with the requirements of the joint Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council/Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Fishery Management Plan.

- E. In accordance with N.C. General Statute 113-221.1(c), all persons who may be affected by proclamations issued by the Fisheries Director are under a duty to keep themselves informed of current proclamations.
- F. Contact N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries, P.O. Box 769, Morehead City, NC 28557; 252-515-5500 or 800-682-2632 for more information or visit the division website at <https://www.deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/marine-fisheries>.
- G. **This proclamation establishes the 2026 season dates, size, and creel limits for the recreational black sea bass fishery north of Cape Hatteras effective at 12:01 A.M., May 1, 2026. The fishery will close at 11:59 P.M., December 31, 2026.**

By:   
Kathy B. Rawls, Director  
DIVISION OF MARINE FISHERIES

April 16, 2026  
10:00 A.M.