
Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council

PRESS RELEASE



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2010 Black Sea Bass Quota Reconsidered

A joint meeting of the Mid-Atlantic Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's Black Sea Bass Monitoring Committee was held on January 8, 2010 (via Webinar) in response to the following motion passed by the Council at its December 2009 meeting in Wilmington, Delaware:

“Move that as outlined by the Executive Committee at the October Council meeting, convene a joint meeting of the Scientific and Statistical Committee and Monitoring Committee to share available data and relevant information as it pertains to the 2010 black sea bass recommendations for purposes of allowing the Regional Administrator to consider whether it would be appropriate to move forward with an emergency action based on final SSC review.”

After lengthy discussions with the Black Sea Bass Monitoring Committee, the SSC reconsidered its original 2010 acceptable biological catch (ABC) recommendation of 2.71 million pounds (with an associated 2.30 million lb TAL) agreed by consensus to increase its ABC recommendation for black sea bass for 2010 to 4.5 million pounds (a 1.79 million pound increase in ABC for the 2010 black sea bass fishery).

Upon receipt of the SSC report (http://www.mafmc.org/press/2010/SSC_Report_bsb.pdf) from the SSC Chairman (Dr. John Boreman), Council Chairman Richard B. Robins, Jr, on behalf of the Council, requested that the Secretary consider an emergency action to increase the 2010 total allowable catch (TAC) for black sea bass to 4.5 million pounds (http://mafmc.org/press/2010/Kurkul_bsb_letter.pdf). The SSC's increased ABC recommendation can be reasonably expected to alleviate significant, negative social and economic impacts relative to the initial ABC recommendation. The SSC report indicated that the TAC and total allowable landings (TAL) levels associated with its revised ABC recommendation would be 4.5 million pounds and 3.7 million pounds, respectively. The report also calls specific attention to the issue of management uncertainty related to the recreational catch overages experienced in 2009. In light of the SSC's findings and the subsequent request for an emergency action to increase the 2010 quota for black sea bass, the Council will be discussing potential changes to management measures for the species at its February 11, 2010 meeting in Cambridge, Maryland in order to provide final Council recommendations for black sea bass for the 2010 season.