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ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

DIVISION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

Notice of Administrative Change

Marine Fisheries

Modification of Recreational Scup Season and Possession Limits and Recreational Black Sea Bass Season, Size and Possession Limits

N.J.A.C. 7:25-18.1

Take Notice that, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:25-18.1(p), the Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Protection (Commissioner), with the approval of the New Jersey Marine Fisheries Council (Council) at its March 2, 2023, meeting, has modified season and possession limits for the recreational scup fishery and season, minimum size and possession limits of the recreational black sea bass fishery. The actions for scup and black sea bass have been taken to comply with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC) management plan.

At their December meeting, the ASMFC's Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Management Board (Board), jointly with the MAFMC, approved a 10 percent coastwide reduction in both recreational black sea bass and scup harvest, compared to 2022. Each region was required to submit conservation equivalency proposals for adjustments to scup and black sea bass recreational measures to achieve these changes in harvest. On March 2, 2023, the Board approved the State of New Jersey's conservation equivalency proposal methodology for the 2023

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scup and black sea bass recreational seasons

(https://asmfc.org/files/Meetings/SFlounderScupBSBboardMarch2023/SFlounderScupBSB_Board_Materials_March2023.pdf).

The current black sea bass open season is May 17 – June 19 with a 10-fish possession limit and a 13-inch size limit; July 1 – August 31 with a 2-fish possession limit and a 13-inch size limit, October 7 – October 26 with a 10-fish possession limit and a 13-inch size limit, and November 1 – December 31 with a 15-fish possession limit and a 13-inch size limit. The current scup open season is January 1 – December 31 with a 50 fish possession limit and 10-inch size limit. In accordance with the ASMFC's and MAFMC's actions and the ASMFC's Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Fishery Management Plan, the Council approved changing the 2023 Black Sea Bass measures to an open season of May 17 – June 19 with a 10-fish possession limit and a 12.5-inch size limit; July 1 – August 31 with a 1-fish possession limit and a 12.5-inch size limit, October 1 – October 31 with a 10-fish possession limit and a 12.5-inch size limit, and November 1 – December 31 with a 15-fish possession limit and a 12.5-inch size limit. The accompanying scup options are an open season from August 1-December 31 with a 30-fish possession limit and a 10-inch size limit.

These changes will be reflected in the Division of Fish and Wildlife Rules at N.J.A.C. 7:25-18.1(c). As required in N.J.A.C. 7:25-18.1(p), changes to N.J.A.C. 7:25-18.1 will be published in the New Jersey Register, and the New Jersey Fish and Wildlife Marine Digest, on the New Jersey Fish and Wildlife website, and distributed through a news release to individuals included on the NJ Fish and Wildlife email distribution list.

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Full text of the changed rule follows (additions indicated in boldface **thus**, deletions indicated in brackets [thus]):

7:25-18.1 Size, season, and possession limits

(a – b) (No change.)

(c) A person angling with a hand line or with a rod and line or using a bait net or spearfishing shall not have in his or her possession any species listed below less than the minimum length, nor shall such person take in any one day or possess more than the possession limits as provided below, nor shall such person possess any species listed below during the closed season for that species. Exceptions to this section as may be provided elsewhere in this subchapter shall be subject to the specific provisions of any such section. Fish length shall measure from the tip of the snout to the tip of the tail (total length), except as noted below:

<u>Species</u>	<u>Minimum Size In Inches</u>	<u>Open Season</u>	<u>Possession Limit</u>
• • •			
Black Sea Bass	[13] 12.5	May 17--June 19	10
		July 1--Aug. 31	[2] 1
		Oct. [7] 1 --Oct. [26] 31	10

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Nov. 1--Dec. 31

15

• • •

Scup (Porgy) 10

[Jan. 1]**Aug. 1**—Dec. 31

[50]**30**

1. – 6. (No change.)

(d) – (r) (No change.)