



Contact: Maggie Mooney-Seus
978-281-9175

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 30, 2009

**NOAA to Close Recreational Fishery for Black Sea Bass for Six Months
Due to Overharvest**

NOAA announced today the temporary closure of the black sea bass recreational fishery in federal waters north of Cape Hatteras, N.C., for 180 days in response to recent landings data that showed recreational fishermen may catch more than double their annual quota by the end of the year. The closure will commence Monday, October 5, 2009.

Landings data and scientific analyses show recreational fishermen have reached their quota and could exceed their 1.14 million pound harvest limit by as much as 84 to 225 percent if the recreational fishery is not closed.

An independent body of federal and university scientists recently determined that the black sea bass stock has been rebuilt. However, both the scientists and the Science and Statistical Committee of the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council have cautioned against increasing fishing of this stock for several reasons, including the complex and poorly understood reproductive cycle, and limited information on life span and important habitats for this species. The Council recommends catch limits for black sea bass in federal waters.

NOAA understands and predicts changes in the Earth's environment, from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and conserves and manages our coastal and marine resources. Visit <http://www.noaa.gov>.