Atlantic Sector for Black Sea Bass in the South Closure of the 2011–2012 Commercial Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic; Mexico, and South Atlantic; Snapper-Rin 0648–XA552 50 CFR Part 622 Administration SUMMARY: NMFS closes the commercial sector for black sea bass in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of the South Atlantic. NMFS has determined that the quota for the commercial sector for black sea bass will have been reached by July 15, 2011. This closure is necessary to protect the black sea bass resource. DATES: Closure is effective 12:01 a.m., local time, July 15, 2011, through 12:01 a.m., local time, on June 1, 2012. FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Catherine Bruger, telephone 727–824–5305, fax 727–824–5308, e-mail Catherine.Bruger@noaa.gov. SUMMARY: NMFS closes the commercial sector for black sea bass in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of the South Atlantic. NMFS has determined that the quota for the commercial sector for black sea bass will have been reached by July 15, 2011. This closure is necessary to protect the black sea bass resource. The quota for that species or species group is reached, or is projected to be reached, by filing a notification to that effect with the Office of the Federal Register. Based on current statistics, NMFS has determined that the available commercial quota of 309,000 lb (140,160 kg) for black sea bass will be reached on or before July 15, 2011. Accordingly, NMFS is closing the commercial sector for black sea bass in the South Atlantic EEZ from 12:01 a.m., local time, on July 15, 2011, through 12:01 a.m., local time, on June 1, 2012. The operator of a vessel with a valid commercial vessel permit for snapper-grouper having black sea bass onboard must have landed and bartered, traded, or sold such black sea bass prior to 12:01 a.m., local time, July 15, 2011. During the closure, the bag limit and possession limits specified in 50 CFR 622.39(d)(1)(vii) and (d)(2), respectively, apply to all harvest or possession of black sea bass in or from the South Atlantic EEZ, and the sale or purchase of black sea bass taken from the EEZ is prohibited. The prohibition on sale or purchase does not apply to sale or purchase of black sea bass that were harvested, landed ashore, and sold prior to 12:01 a.m., local time, July 15, 2011, and were held in cold storage by a dealer or processor. For a person on board a vessel for which a Federal commercial or charter vessel/headboat permit for the South Atlantic snapper-grouper fishery has been issued, the sale and purchase provisions of the commercial closure for black sea bass would apply regardless of whether the fish are harvested in state or Federal waters, as specified in 50 CFR 622.42(e)(5)(iii). Classification This action responds to the best available information recently obtained from the fishery. The Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA (AA), finds that the need to immediately implement this action to close the commercial sector to the harvest of black sea bass constitutes good cause to waive the requirements to provide prior notice and opportunity for public comment pursuant to the authority set forth in 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(B), as such procedures would be unnecessary and contrary to the public interest. Such procedures would be unnecessary because the rule itself already has been subject to notice and comment, and all that remains is to notify the public of the closure. Allowing prior notice and opportunity for public comment is contrary to the public interest because of the need to immediately implement this action to protect the black sea bass stock because the capacity of the fishing fleet allows for rapid harvest of the quota. Prior notice and opportunity for public comment would require time and would potentially result in a harvest contrary to the public interest set forth in 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(B). Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1801 et seq. Dated: July 8, 2011. Margo Schulze-Haugen, Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.