which you are not seeking confidential treatment).

NHTSA is currently treating electronic submission as an acceptable method for submitting confidential business information to the agency under part 512. Please do not send a hardcopy of a request for confidential treatment to NHTSA's headquarters. The request should be sent to Dan Rabinovitz in the Office of the Chief Counsel at *Daniel.Rabinovitz@dot.gov.* You may either submit your request via email or request a secure file transfer link. If you are submitting the request via email, please also email a courtesy copy of the request to John Piazza at *john.piazza@dot.gov.*

Will the agency consider late comments?

We will consider all comments received before the close of business on the comment closing date indicated above under **DATES**. To the extent possible, we will also consider comments that the docket receives after that date. If the docket receives a comment too late for us to consider in developing a final rule (assuming that one is issued), we will consider that comment as an informal suggestion for future rulemaking action.

How can I read the comments submitted by other people?

You may read the comments received by the docket at the address given above under **ADDRESSES**. The hours of the docket are indicated above in the same location. You may also see the comments on the internet. To read the comments on the internet, go to *https://www.regulations.gov.* Follow the online instructions for accessing the dockets.

Please note that even after the comment closing date, NHTSA will continue to file relevant information in the docket as it becomes available. Further, some people may submit late comments. Accordingly, NHTSA recommends that you periodically check the docket for new material. You can arrange with the docket to be notified when others file comments in the docket. See *www.regulations.gov* for more information.

Issued under authority delegated in 49 CFR 1.95.

Jonathan Morrison,

Administrator.

[FR Doc. 2026–19370 Filed 9–21–26; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–59–P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 622

[Docket No. 260917–0005]

RIN 0648–BO36

Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of America, and South Atlantic; Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic; Regulatory Amendment 37

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Proposed rule; request for comments.

SUMMARY: NMFS seeks public comment on proposed regulations to implement Regulatory Amendment 37 under the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic (FMP). If implemented by NMFS, Regulatory Amendment 37 and this proposed rule would revise several management measures for black sea bass in South Atlantic Federal waters. The purpose of these proposed regulatory changes is to immediately address declining abundance and landings of black sea bass while stock assessment updates are completed and separate longer-term actions are developed.

DATES: Written comments must be received on or before October 22, 2026.

ADDRESSES: A plain language summary of this proposed rule is available at *https://www.regulations.gov/docket/NOAA-NMFS-2026-1651.* You may submit comments on this document, identified by NOAA–NMFS–2026–1651, by either of the following methods:

- *Electronic Submission:* Submit all electronic public comments via the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal. Go to *https://www.regulations.gov* and type NOAA–NMFS–2026–1651 in the Search box. Click on the ''Comment'' icon, complete the required fields, and enter or attach your comments.
- *Mail:* Submit written comments to Mary Vara, NMFS, Southeast Regional Office, Sustainable Fisheries Division, 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, FL 33701.

Instructions: Comments sent by any other method, to any other address or individual, or received after the end of the comment period will not be considered by NMFS. All comments received are a part of the public record and will generally be posted for public viewing on *https://www.regulations.gov* without change. All personal identifying information, confidential business information, or otherwise sensitive information submitted voluntarily by the sender will be publicly accessible. NMFS will accept anonymous comments. Enter ''N/A'' in the required fields if you wish to remain anonymous.

An electronic copy of Regulatory Amendment 37, which includes an environmental assessment, Regulatory Flexibility Act (RFA) analysis, and regulatory impact review, may be obtained from the Southeast Regional Office website at *https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/management-plan/south-atlantic-snapper-grouper-fishery-management-plan.*

The unique identification number for the environmental review for Regulatory Amendment 37 is EAXX–006–48–1SE–1776431448.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mary Vara, telephone: 727–824–5305, or email: *mary.vara@noaa.gov.*

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: NMFS, in collaboration with the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council), manages the South Atlantic snapper-grouper fishery, which includes black sea bass, in Federal waters under the FMP. The FMP was prepared by NMFS and the Council, and is implemented by NMFS through regulations at 50 CFR part 622 under the authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act).

The Magnuson-Stevens Act requires that NMFS and the regional fishery management councils prevent overfishing and continually achieve the optimum yield from federally managed fish stocks. These mandates are intended to ensure that fishery resources are managed for the greatest overall benefit to the Nation, particularly with respect to providing food production and recreational opportunities, and protecting marine ecosystems. To further this goal, the Magnuson-Stevens Act also requires fishery managers to minimize bycatch and bycatch mortality to the extent practicable.

This action is proposed under the statutory authority of the Magnuson-Steven Act, section 303(a)(1)(A) as necessary and appropriate for the conservation and management of the fishery to prevent overfishing and rebuild overfished stocks, and to promote the long-term health and stability of the fishery.

All weights described in this proposed rule are in round weight. The metric conversion for the imperial measurement used in this document is

1 pound (lb) equals approximately 0.45 kilograms.

Background

The snapper-grouper fishery includes the South Atlantic stock of black sea bass from 35°15.19′ N latitude, which is due east of Cape Hatteras Light, North Carolina, southward to the Council's jurisdictional boundary at the Florida Keys. Black sea bass occurring in Federal waters north of 35°15.19′ N latitude is a separate stock, which is managed under a different fishery management plan and regulations. Regulatory Amendment 37 and this proposed rule apply to South Atlantic black sea bass in Federal waters only and respond to declines in stock abundance and landings.

South Atlantic black sea bass was previously listed as overfished throughout the 2000s, a 10-year rebuilding plan was implemented in 2006, and the stock was rebuilt in 2013. Amendment 11 to the Snapper-Grouper FMP set the existing maximum sustainable yield (MSY) based proxies used to determine the overfishing and overfished status of black sea bass based on the fishing mortality rate and spawning stock biomass (SSB) that correspond with a reproductive capacity equal to 30 percent of the spawning potential ratio (SPR) of an unfished population ($SSB30\%_{SPR}$). In 2018, NMFS determined, based on the stock assessment completed the same year for South Atlantic black sea bass, Southeast Data, Assessment, and Review (SEDAR 56), that the stock was not undergoing overfishing and not overfished but was below the threshold of the SSB that can produce long-term MSY. In 2023, SEDAR 76 was completed using data through 2021. SEDAR 76 concluded that the stock was subject to overfishing and was overfished. Following the assessment, NMFS recommended that the Council develop measures to improve stock health, as well as a plan to rebuild the black sea bass stock.

Due to concerns from the Council and its Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) over assumptions of catch level projections in SEDAR 76, the SEDAR 76 Update was developed between 2023 and 2025. During this time, in March 2024, the Council initiated development of Amendment 56 to the FMP in preparation for catch level recommendations from the SEDAR 76 Update. In 2025, the SEDAR 76 Update was completed using data through 2023 and some additional modeling changes from SEDAR 76. The March 2025 SEDAR 76 Update found that the stock was overfished and overfishing was occurring. The Council's SSC provided an acceptable biological catch (ABC) recommendation, based on that update assessment. After reviewing the assessment and related ABC recommendation, the Council asked NMFS' Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC) to further investigate and consider updating several data inputs, including recreational catch estimates, which are expected to be revised in 2026. In response, the SEFSC is revising the SEDAR 76 Update assessment and is scheduled to bring these revisions before the SSC in late 2026, after which the Council will receive ABC advice and updated projections for longer-term advice. The Council paused work on Amendment 56 pending completion of the assessment revisions.

While modifications to and subsequent review of the stock assessment are being conducted, NMFS recognizes the persistent, strong declines in biomass, abundance, fishery-independent indices, and landings, as reflected in the SEDAR 76 Update. To limit this decline in the short-term, the Council developed Regulatory Amendment 37 to: (1) reduce directed fishing mortality, and (2) increase spawning output and recruitment through a spawning season closure. NMFS has reviewed Regulatory Amendment 37 and pursuant to 304(b)(1)(A) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act now issues this proposed rule. To reduce directed fishing mortality, this proposed rule would establish annual catch targets (ACTs), revise AMs to limit commercial and recreational harvest to the new ACTs, and lower the recreational bag limit. Additionally, black sea bass and other winter spawning species in the South Atlantic such as gag and scamp are experiencing recruitment declines. Therefore, Regulatory Amendment 37 recommends that NMFS establish a seasonal spawning closure for both the commercial and recreational sectors during the months of February and March to protect spawning fish and increase stock recruitment.

Management Measures Contained in This Proposed Rule

NMFS seeks public comment on the following proposed management measures for black sea bass.

Commercial and Recreational ACTs

An ACL is the maximum amount of fish that can be harvested in a given year and is set at a level intended to ensure overfishing does not occur. An ACT is a management-focused target set below the ACL to create a buffer against overharvesting and account for management uncertainty. Currently, the South Atlantic black sea bass commercial ACL is 276,490 lb, and the recreational ACL is 366,510 lb. There are no sector ACTs currently in place for South Atlantic black sea bass. While landings have not reached or exceeded the current ACLs since the 2018 assessment, the stock's abundance estimates have continued to trend downward, indicating that fishing mortality needs to be lowered to increase the SSB of the black sea bass stock. Therefore, if implemented by NMFS, this proposed rule would establish commercial and recreational ACTs below the ACLs and recent harvest levels. ACTs for each sector would be set at 50 percent of the average annual landings for the 5 most recent years of available catch information as detailed in Regulatory Amendment 37. The commercial ACT would be 48,557 lb and the recreational ACT would be 63,143 lb.

Commercial Accountability Measures

The current in-season AM requires NMFS to close the commercial season if landings of black sea bass are projected to reach the commercial quota, which is equal to the commercial ACL, during a fishing year. This proposed rule would revise the commercial AMs so that the commercial season would close if NMFS projects that landings will reach the proposed commercial ACT during a fishing year. The current post-season AM to reduce the following year's commercial ACL by the amount of any overage would not change.

Under the proposed commercial ACT and AM, a commercial in-season closure could be triggered more frequently because the commercial ACT is likely to be met earlier during the season than the current commercial ACL. A commercial ACT set at 50 percent of recent landings could increase the occurrence of in-season commercial closures. In the short term, economic benefits would decrease. There could be long-term economic benefits to the commercial industry through improvements to the status of the black sea bass stock.

Recreational Accountability Measures

Under the current recreational AMs, NMFS sets the recreational season length based on when landings are projected to reach the recreational ACL and announces the end date for the recreational fishing season in the **Federal Register** before the recreational fishing year begins on April 1. This proposed rule would continue to require that NMFS project and announce the recreational season length; however, the projection would be based on when NMFS estimates recreational landings would reach the proposed recreational ACT.

Over the past 5 years, average recreational landings have only been about one-half of the recreational ACL. Since the recreational sector ACT is notably lower than the sector ACL currently in place, NMFS may announce shorter seasons in the future. This would reduce recreational landings relative to recent levels, which could be expected to reduce fishing mortality from harvest of black sea bass. The proposed ACTs would restrict landings which can result in decreased net economic benefits if harvest decreases. However, in the long term, the ACTs may contribute to improving the status of the black sea bass stock, which would allow for long-term economic benefits.

Seasonal Spawning Closure

Currently, there are no commercial or recreational seasonal spawning closures for black sea bass in or from South Atlantic Federal waters south of Cape Hatteras, North Carolina. However, commercial black sea bass pots are prohibited in certain areas from November 1 through April 30 to minimize gear interactions with migrating whales. This proposed rule would establish a seasonal spawning closure for both the commercial and recreational sectors during the months of February and March. During the spawning closure, the commercial sale, purchase, harvest, or possession of black sea bass in or from South Atlantic Federal waters south of Cape Hatteras, North Carolina, would be prohibited and the commercial trip limit would be zero. During the closed months, the recreational harvest or possession of black sea bass in or from South Atlantic Federal waters south of Cape Hatteras, North Carolina, would be prohibited and the bag and possession limits would be zero.

Spawning season closures are intended to protect and increase the stock biomass by allowing fish to spawn without any fishing mortality from harvest (though there may still be some fishing mortality from fish that are caught and released). The months of February and March were chosen because they overlap with the peak spawning season for black sea bass (February-April), and closures for several other snapper grouper species, some of which are caught with black sea bass, also occur during these months. Including black sea bass in a closure with other snapper-grouper species could reduce discards.

Recreational Bag Limit

The current recreational bag limit for black sea bass, which applies to each person per day, is seven fish. This proposed rule would reduce the recreational bag limit to three fish. The bag limit applies to all anglers who harvest black sea bass from Federal waters south of Cape Hatteras, North Carolina, and for anglers on federally permitted charter and headboat vessels, regardless of whether black sea bass are harvested from state or Federal waters. Constraining recreational harvest by means of bag limits could result in positive long-term biological benefits by reducing fishing mortality.

Classification

Pursuant to section 304(b)(1)(A) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, the NMFS Assistant Administrator has determined that this proposed rule is consistent with Regulatory Amendment 37, the FMP, other provisions of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, and other applicable law, subject to further consideration after public comment.

This proposed rule has been determined to be not significant for purposes of Executive Order (E.O.) 12866.

An initial regulatory flexibility analysis (IRFA) was prepared, as required by section 603 of the RFA. The IRFA describes the economic impact this proposed rule, if adopted, would have on small entities. A description of the action, why it is being considered, and the legal basis for this action is contained in this **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section of the preamble. A summary of the IRFA follows. All monetary estimates in the following analysis are in 2024 dollars. A copy of this analysis is available from NMFS (see **ADDRESSES**).

The Magnuson-Stevens Act provides the statutory basis for this proposed rule. No duplicative, overlapping, or conflicting Federal rules have been identified. In addition, no new reporting, record-keeping, or other compliance requirements are introduced by this proposed rule.

This proposed rule would implement the following measures for South Atlantic black sea bass: (1) establish a commercial ACT of 48,557 lb and a recreational ACT of 63,143 lb; (2) revise the in-season AM for the commercial sector, such that if NMFS estimates that commercial landings will reach the commercial quota, set at the proposed commercial ACT, during a fishing year NMFS will close the commercial harvest for the remainder of the fishing year; (3) revise the in-season AM for the recreational sector, such that NMFS will project the length of the recreational fishing season based on when NMFS estimates the proposed recreational ACT will be met and announce the recreational fishing season end date in the **Federal Register** prior to the start of the recreational fishing year begins on April 1; (4) establish a commercial seasonal closure from February 1 through March 31 during which commercial sale, purchase, harvest, or possession of black sea bass in or from South Atlantic Federal waters south of Cape Hatteras, North Carolina, is prohibited and the commercial trip limit is zero; (5) establish a recreational seasonal closure from February 1 through March 31 during which recreational harvest or possession of black sea bass in or from South Atlantic Federal waters south of Cape Hatteras is prohibited and the bag limit is zero; and (6) reduce the recreational bag limit from seven to three fish per person per day.

Action 1 would apply to all commercial fishing businesses, for-hire fishing businesses, and recreational anglers that fish for black sea bass in Federal waters of the South Atlantic. Actions 2 and 4 would only apply to commercial fishing businesses. Finally, actions 3, 5, and 6 would only apply to for-hire fishing businesses and recreational anglers. None of the proposed changes would directly apply to federally permitted dealers. Any change in the supply of black sea bass available for purchase by dealers as a result of the proposed rule, and associated economic effects, would be an indirect effect of the proposed rule and would therefore fall outside the scope of the RFA.

The RFA requires NMFS to describe the impact of the proposed rule on small entities (5 U.S.C. 603). Small entities include small businesses, small organizations, and small governmental jurisdictions (5 U.S.C. 601(3)–(6)). Recreational anglers are not businesses, organizations, or governmental jurisdictions, so they are outside the scope of this analysis.

Any fishing vessel that harvests and sells any of the snapper-grouper species from South Atlantic Federal waters must have a valid South Atlantic commercial snapper-grouper permit, which is a limited access permit. In 2024, there were 508 valid or renewable South Atlantic snapper-grouper unlimited permits and 86 valid or renewable 225-lb (102-kg) trip-limited permits. On average from 2019 through 2023, there were 148 federally permitted commercial vessels with reported landings of South Atlantic black sea bass. Ex-vessel revenue from landings of black sea bass averaged $291,690 during this period, representing 2.9 percent of total ex-vessel revenue for the vessels that harvested black sea bass. The average total revenue per vessel from 2019 through 2023 was $67,329. For commercial vessels that harvest black sea bass in the South Atlantic, NMFS estimates that economic profits are −$1,279 or −1.9 percent of annual gross revenue, on average. However, a negative economic profit does not automatically mean a vessel is losing money, running a negative cash flow, or operating at an accounting loss. Standard accounting tracks real cash coming in and going out. Economic profit goes a step further by including implicit costs, such as the unpaid value of the owner's time compared to what they could earn in their next best alternative. A negative economic profit simply means the business owner is earning less than they theoretically might in a different job or investment. The maximum annual revenue from all species reported by a single vessel that harvested black sea bass from 2019 through 2023 was $445,119.

Although this proposed rule would apply to for-hire vessels, it would not be expected to have any direct effects on these entities. From 2019 through 2023, there were an average of 3,918 charter vessels that targeted black sea bass in the South Atlantic, which accounts for just under 3 percent of all recreational target trips for black sea bass. In contrast, an average of 45,952 charter vessel trips had landings of black sea bass from 2019 through 2023 (almost 12 times the number of target trips). This indicates that black sea bass are an incidentally harvested species and for-hire vessels do not typically sell targeted trips for these fish. Therefore, NMFS does not expect the proposed changes to the black sea bass management measures to directly alter the services sold by these vessels. Any change in demand for these fishing services, and associated economic effects, as a result of this proposed rule would be a consequence of a change in anglers' behavior, secondary to any direct effect on anglers and, therefore, an indirect effect of the proposed rule. This indirect effect would fall outside the scope of the RFA. In summary, only the impacts on commercial fishing businesses will be discussed.

For RFA purposes only, NMFS has established a small business size standard for businesses, including their affiliates, whose primary industry is commercial fishing (see 50 CFR 200.2). A business primarily engaged in commercial fishing (North American Industry Classification System code 11411) is classified as a small business if it is independently owned and operated, is not dominant in its field of operation (including its affiliates), and has combined annual receipts not in excess of $11 million for all its affiliated operations worldwide. All of the commercial fishing businesses directly regulated by this proposed rule are believed to be small entities based on the NMFS size standard.

As stated earlier, this proposed rule would establish a commercial ACT of 48,557 lb and would revise the in-season AM for the commercial sector, such that if NMFS estimates that commercial landings will reach the commercial quota, set at the proposed commercial ACT, during a fishing year NMFS will close the commercial harvest of black sea bass for the remainder of the fishing year. Currently, the commercial AMs are triggered if NMFS estimates that landings during a fishing year will reach the commercial ACL of 276,490 lb. When taken together, the proposed commercial ACT and revisions to the commercial AM would result in a reduction in landings of 41,150 lb and a reduction in ex-vessel revenue of $155,959 annually relative to the status quo, as based on average commercial landings from 2019 through 2023. Divided by the average number of vessels that harvested black sea bass from 2019 through 2023, this results in an annual decrease in ex-vessel revenue of $1,054 per vessel (approximately 1.6 percent of average annual per vessel gross revenue). Based on the assumed −1.9 percent economic profit rate for black sea bass vessels, average annual economic profits per vessel would increase by $20. In practical terms, because harvesting less fish reduces operating expenses (including implicit costs), the resulting cost savings would slightly outweigh the lost sales revenue. Individual fishing businesses, however, may experience varying levels of economic effects, depending on their fishing practices, operating characteristics, and profit maximization strategies.

Additionally, the proposed rule would establish a commercial seasonal closure from February 1 through March 31 during which the commercial sale, purchase, harvest, or possession of black sea bass in or from South Atlantic Federal waters south of Cape Hatteras, North Carolina, would be prohibited and the commercial trip limit would be zero. Although this closure would reduce commercial fishing opportunities during the year, overall landings would still be expected to achieve the proposed ACT and thus no additional negative economic effects are estimated.

The following discussion describes the significant alternatives to the proposed rule that were not selected by NMFS.

One alternative, the no action alternative, was considered for the proposed action to establish a commercial ACT of 48,557 lb and a recreational ACT of 63,143 lb for South Atlantic black sea bass. This alternative would not establish ACTs and the harvest of black sea bass would continue to be managed under the existing total and sector ACLs, which have not been fully harvested by either sector for several years and presumably would continue to not be fully utilized. Thus, there would be no change in economic benefits to commercial fishing businesses under this alternative. This alternative was not selected because the benefits of reducing fishing mortality and increasing black sea bass population levels through implementation of the proposed ACTs would outweigh the costs of the associated reduction in harvest.

One alternative, the no action alternative, was considered for the proposed action to revise the commercial AMs such that if NMFS estimates that commercial landings of South Atlantic black sea bass will reach the commercial quota, set at the proposed commercial ACT, NMFS will close the commercial harvest of black sea bass for the remainder of the fishing year. This alternative would not revise the AMs and therefore an in-season closure would be triggered when landings are estimated to reach the ACL during a fishing year, as opposed to the proposed ACT. Because this alternative would not modify existing management measures, it would not be expected to alter current harvest levels or result in economic effects relative to the status quo. This alternative was not selected because the proposed revisions to the commercial AMs are required for the proposed ACT to be effective at reducing fishing mortality of black sea bass. Absent the revisions to the AMs, the proposed ACT would be unenforceable.

Finally, one alternative and two sub-alternatives were considered for the proposed action to establish a commercial seasonal closure for black sea bass in or from South Atlantic Federal waters south of Cape Hatteras, North Carolina during February 1 through March 31. The first alternative, the no action alternative, would not implement a seasonal spawning closure for black sea bass and would therefore not affect commercial harvest or result in direct economic effects. This alternative was not selected because it forgoes the benefits of a spawning closure, specifically, increased reproduction and recruitment necessary to restore the black sea bass stock biomass to a level that would allow for MSY.

The first sub-alternative to the proposed action to implement a February 1 through March 31 commercial seasonal closure for black sea bass in or from South Atlantic Federal waters south of Cape Hatteras would establish a commercial seasonal closure from January 1 through January 31 in the same area as the proposed spawning closure. The second sub-alternative would establish a commercial seasonal closure from April 1 through April 30 in the same area as the proposed spawning closure. These sub-alternatives were considered both individually and in combination with the proposed seasonal closure, such that the closure could occur during any combination of the months from January through April. Considered individually, each sub-alternative would not be expected to result in economic effects because total harvest would be the same as under the proposed seasonal closure and capped at the proposed ACT. If these sub-alternatives were combined with the proposed seasonal closure, they could result in a reduction in landings, ex-vessel revenue, and economic profits relative to the status quo, should a portion of the commercial ACT go unharvested. However, even if all of January through April were closed, effort could still shift to open harvest months, which would eliminate or reduce such losses. Quantified effects estimates for such combinations of closed months are not available. Neither of the two sub-alternatives were selected because the proposed February 1 through March 31 seasonal closure would best balance the benefits of spawning protection with the needs of the commercial sector to maintain access to the fishery during critical times of the year, especially January.

This proposed rule contains no information collection requirements under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995.

List of Subjects in 50 CFR Part 622

Commercial, Fisheries, Fishing, Recreational, Snapper-grouper, South Atlantic.

Dated: September 17, 2026.

Samuel D. Rauch III,

Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, National Marine Fisheries Service.

For the reasons set out in the preamble, NMFS proposes to amend 50 CFR part 622 as follows:

PART 622—FISHERIES OF THE CARIBBEAN, GULF OF AMERICA, AND SOUTH ATLANTIC

■ 1. The authority citation for part 622 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*

■ 2. Amend § 622.183, by adding paragraph (b)(12) to read as follows:

§ 622.183 Area and seasonal closures.

* * * * *

(b) * * *

(12) *Black sea bass spawning season closure.* The commercial and recreational harvest, possession, sale, or purchase of black sea bass in or from the South Atlantic EEZ is prohibited each year from February 1 through March 31. As specified by table 1 to § 622.1, footnote 2, commercial and recreational management of black sea bass in the South Atlantic EEZ applies south of 35°15.19′ N latitude, the latitude of Cape Hatteras Light, North Carolina.

■ 3. Amend § 622.187, by revising paragraph (b)(7) to read as follows:

§ 622.187 Bag and possession limits.

* * * * *

(b) * * *

(7) *Black sea bass*—3.

* * * * *

■ 4. Amend § 622.190, by revising paragraph (a)(5) to read as follows:

§ 622.190 Quotas.

* * * * *

(a) * * *

(5) *Black sea bass*—41,150 lb (18,665 kg) in gutted weight or 48,557 lb (22,025 kg) in round weight.

* * * * *

■ 5. Amend § 622.193, by revising the section heading and by revising paragraph (e) to read as follows:

§ 622.193 Annual catch limits (ACLs), annual catch targets (ACTs), and accountability measures (AMs).

* * * * *

(e) *Black sea bass*—(1) *Commercial sector.* (i) The commercial ACL is 234,314 lb (106,283 kg) in gutted weight or 276,490 lb (125,414 kg) in round weight.

(ii) The commercial ACT is set equal to the commercial quota specified in § 622.190(a)(5).

(iii) If NMFS estimates that commercial landings will reach the commercial quota specified in § 622.190(a)(5) during the fishing year, the AA will file a notification with the Office of the Federal Register to close the commercial sector for the remainder of the fishing year.

(iv) If commercial landings exceed the commercial ACL specified in paragraph (e)(1)(i) of this section during the fishing year, the AA will file a notification with the Office of the Federal Register, at or near the beginning of the following fishing year to reduce the commercial ACL for that following year by the amount of the commercial ACL overage in the prior fishing year, unless NMFS determines that no overage adjustment is necessary based on the best scientific information available.

(2) *Recreational sector.* (i) The recreational ACL is 310,602 lb (140,887 kg) in gutted weight or 366,510 lb (166,246 kg) in round weight.

(ii) The recreational ACT is 53,511 lb (24,272 kg) in gutted weight or 63,143 lb (28,641 kg) in round weight.

(iii) NMFS will project the length of the recreational fishing season based on when NMFS projects the recreational ACT specified in paragraph (e)(2)(ii) of this section is expected to be met and announce the recreational fishing season end date in the **Federal Register** prior to the start of the recreational fishing year on April 1. On and after the effective date of the recreational closure notification, the bag and possession limits for black sea bass in or from the South Atlantic EEZ are zero. The bag and possession limits apply in the South Atlantic on a vessel for which a valid Federal charter vessel/headboat permit for South Atlantic snapper-grouper has been issued, and applies to such species harvested in state or Federal waters.

* * * * *

[FR Doc. 2026–19341 Filed 9–21–26; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510–22–P