



# Greater Atlantic Region Bulletin

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## **Tilefish Permit Holders** 2015-2017 Commercial Tilefish Quotas

*Effective Date: November 1, 2014*

NOAA’s National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has published final specifications for the 2015, 2016, and 2017 tilefish fishing years. The catch limits and total allowable landings (TAL) outlined below become effective at the start of the 2015 fishing year on November 1, 2014. Tilefish Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) shareholders will receive their 2015 quota allocation based on the new TAL.

	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>
<b>Overfishing Limit (OFL)</b>	989 mt	1,063 mt	1,091 mt
<b>Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC)</b>	801 mt	861 mt	861 mt
<b>Annual Catch Limit (ACL)</b>	801 mt	861 mt	861 mt
<b>Total Allowable Landings (TAL)</b>	796 mt	856 mt	856 mt

### **Division of the TAL:**

<b>Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) Fishery</b>	1,667,136 lb	1,792,799 lb	1,792,799 lb
<b>Incidental Fishery</b>	87,744 lb	94,357 lb	94,357 lb

### *Frequently Asked Questions:*

<b>Is the tilefish stock healthy?</b>	Yes, the new stock assessment that was completed in January 2014 determined the tilefish stock is not subject to overfishing and is now fully rebuilt to the target spawning stock biomass. The new tilefish assessment used a new population model, which is a definite improvement from the previous assessments of this stock.
<b>If the stock is healthy, why is the quota going down?</b>	The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council uses a formal tiered risk policy to determine the appropriate buffer between the OFL and the ABC to account for uncertainty and ensure that stocks are not overfished. In this case, the Council’s Science and Statistical Committee (SSC) classified the improved assessment as Tier 3,

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	<p>where the previous tilefish assessment was Tier 4. However, the change in assessment level led the SSC to apply a different requirement of the Council's risk policy for setting ABC relative to the OFL. This resulted in a lower recommended ABC and, therefore, a lower harvest quota.</p>
<p><b>Does this action change the incidental landing limit for vessels without IFQ?</b></p>	<p>No. The incidental possession limit remains 458 lb of head-on gutted tilefish per trip (equivalent to 500 lb whole weight fish). However, the total amount of tilefish allocated to the incidental fishery is lower in 2015. It is possible that incidental catch may reach the incidental quota. If that happens, the incidental fishery would be closed.</p>
<p><b>Does this change the recreational possession limit?</b></p>	<p>No. The recreational possession limit remains at 8 fish per angler per trip.</p>

Please visit [www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/sustainable/species/tilefish](http://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/sustainable/species/tilefish) for more information on this fishery. If you have any questions, please contact Sustainable Fisheries at 978-281-9315.