



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
NORTHEAST REGION
One Blackburn Drive
Gloucester, MA 01930-2298

March 5, 2003

SMALL ENTITY COMPLIANCE GUIDE

Dear Permit Holder:

NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) has issued a final rule to implement measures contained in Amendment 13 to the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Fishery Management Plan (Amendment 13). NOAA Fisheries approved Amendment 13 on behalf of the Secretary of Commerce on January 29, 2003. The measures contained in the final rule are effective on **March 31, 2003**.

The final rule: (1) Establishes an annual (calendar year) coastwide quota for the commercial black sea bass fishery to replace the current quarterly quota allocation system; and (2) allows vessels to retain their Northeast Region Black Sea Bass Permit during a Federal fishery closure. Previously, vessels issued both a Northeast Region Black Sea Bass Permit and a Southeast Region Snapper/Grouper Permit were required to relinquish their Northeast Region Black Sea Bass Permits for 6 months if they wanted to continue to fish for black sea bass south of Cape Hatteras, North Carolina, under their Snapper/Grouper Permits during a Federal black sea bass fishery closure.

This letter does not contain all the regulatory provisions that pertain to these species, and consequently, has no legal force or effect. A copy of the regulations can be obtained through a link to the Office of the Federal Register at NERO's website: <http://www.nero.nmfs.gov>.

This small entity compliance guide complies with Section 212 of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris Mantzaris".

for Patricia A. Kurkul
Regional Administrator

