



Greater Atlantic Region Bulletin

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Commercial and For-Hire Blueline Tilefish Fishermen Establishment of a Control Date in the Blueline Tilefish Fishery *Effective Date: December 14, 2015*

At the request of the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, we published a notice on December 14, 2015, establishing that date as a control date for the commercial and party/charter sectors of the blueline tilefish fishery north of the Virginia/North Carolina border. By establishing the control date, we are notifying the public that the Council may consider an action to limit the number of participants in the fishery in the future.

The control date, by itself, does not affect you at this time. The Council could use it as a reference point as it considers how to limit the number of participants in the commercial and for-hire recreational sectors of the blueline tilefish fishery. The Council may consider landings or activity in the fishery before and after the control date differently. In developing a future action, the Council may choose to use qualification criteria that do not rely on the new control date. The Council may also choose to take no further action to control entry or access to the blueline tilefish fishery.

The Council’s initial request for a control date included commercial, party/charter (i.e., for-hire), and private recreational anglers. However, we have no current information that could be used to distinguish private angler participation in this fishery before and after a control date. Therefore, the control date would not provide meaningful notification or guidance to private recreational anglers. The Council is free to develop management measures for private anglers, including potential options to limit access to this fishery, if it so chooses. We will work with the Council in developing future measures it deems necessary for the management of this fishery.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who does this apply to?	The control date applies to any commercial fisherman or party/charter vessel owner who has caught blueline tilefish north of the Virginia/North Carolina border.
What do I need to do?	Typically, Councils use landings history and/or permit history as qualifications for limited entry programs. Therefore, we recommend you find and keep all documents associated with your previous landings of blueline tilefish, including dealer slips/receipts and logbook pages from trips on which you landed blueline tilefish from Federal waters. The Council may use any range of fishing years in a future action, so you should preserve all blueline tilefish-related documents that you have.

For small entity compliance guides, this bulletin complies with section 212 of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement and Fairness Act of 1996. This notice is authorized by the Regional Administrator of the National Marine Fisheries Service, Greater Atlantic Region.

<p>What about private anglers?</p>	<p>As mentioned above, this control date does not apply to private anglers. However, the Council has expressed some interest in potentially developing some form of limited-entry program for private anglers in the future. We encourage any interested parties to stay abreast of any future blue-line tilefish management actions developed and considered by the Council.</p>
<p>Can I comment on this control date?</p>	<p>Yes! You can submit comments on this control date through February 12, 2016. If the Council considers a future action to limit the number of participants in this fishery, there will be additional opportunities to comment through the Council process, and through any subsequent proposed rule.</p>
<p>How can I submit a comment?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go to www.regulations.gov and search for docket “NOAA-NMFS-2015-0139.” Once you find the docket, click the “Comment Now!” icon, complete the required fields, and enter or attach your comments. • You may also send written comments to: John K. Bullard, Regional Administrator, National Marine Fisheries Service, 55 Great Republic Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930. Mark the outside of the envelope, “Comments on Blue-line Tilefish Control Date.”