



Greater Atlantic Region Bulletin

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Tilefish Permit Holders

2019-2021 Blueline Tilefish Specifications

Effective Date: February 12, 2019

NOAA Fisheries announces final specifications for the 2019-2021 Mid-Atlantic blueline tilefish fishery. These measures apply in federal waters north of the Virginia/North Carolina border (36.550278 N Latitude). The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council manages blueline tilefish south of this line under its [Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan](#).

Table 1 shows the specifications recommended by the Mid-Atlantic Council and implemented by this final rule. The 2019 commercial and recreational TALs represent a 15-percent increase from 2018.

Table 1. Blueline Tilefish Specifications (pounds)

	2018	2019-2021
ABC – North of Cape Hatteras	NA	179,500
ABC – North of NC/VA line	87,031	100,520
Recreational ACL	63,533	73,380
Commercial ACL	23,498	27,140
Recreational TAL	62,262	71,912
Commercial TAL	23,263	26,869

COMMERCIAL MEASURES

The commercial possession limit is increased from 300 to 500 lb per trip. When 70 percent of the commercial TAL has been landed, the Regional Administrator will reduce the possession limit to 300 lb per trip. If 100 percent of the commercial TAL is landed, the fishery will be closed and commercial vessels will not be allowed to land blueline tilefish to the remainder of the year.

RECREATIONAL MEASURES

No changes are being made to the recreational fishery beyond the increase to the recreational TAL (Table 1). The recreational fishery is open from May 1 through October 31 of each year, and closed from November 1 through April 30. The bag limit for blueline tilefish depends on the type of fishing vessel being used. On a private boat, each angler may keep three blueline tilefish. On U.S. Coast Guard uninspected for-hire vessels (charter boats), each angler may keep five

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blueline tilefish. On U.S. Coast Guard inspected for-hire vessels (party boats), each angler may keep seven blueline tilefish.

<i>Frequently Asked Questions</i>	
What about blueline tilefish caught south of the Virginia/North Carolina border?	The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council manages blueline tilefish south of this line under its Snapper-Grouper Fishery Management Plan . Please contact the NMFS Southeast Regional Office for questions about requirements like permits, possession limits, or other management measures in that region.
Are these specifications subject to change in 2020 or 2021?	The Mid-Atlantic Council has recommended quotas remain constant over this three-year period. However, the Council will review the performance of the fishery each year and may choose to modify measures if the fishery is not performing as expected.
How will I know if the 2020 or 2021 specifications change?	Each year we will publish a notice in the <i>Federal Register</i> to finalize the specifications for the upcoming fishing year and issue announcements of the final specifications through bulletins like this one.
Why are the quotas going up?	The increase is based on the results of the stock assessment. More detail about how the Council used the assessment results to develop the quotas is in the November 19, 2018, proposed rule (83 FR 58219)

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