



Greater Atlantic Region Bulletin

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ADJUSTMENTS TO THE SKATE BAIT FISHERY

Framework Adjustment 4

Effective Date: March 15, 2018

We approved and implemented Framework Adjustment 4 to the Northeast Skate Complex Fishery Management Plan measures to reduce the risk of the skate bait fishery from effectively closing down as it did in fishing year 2016. The measures de-couple the skate wing and bait inseason trip limit adjustments to better control the catch of skate bait and to provide a more consistent supply of skate bait to the lobster fishery.

Specifically, the final rule for Framework Adjustment 4 establishes the following measures that become effective March 15, 2018:

- Reduce the skate bait Season 3 (November 1 – April 30) possession limit from 25,000 lb to 12,000 lb;
- Reduce the skate bait Season 3 total allowable landings (TAL) threshold trigger from 90 to 80 percent of the annual TAL;
- Establish an 8,000-lb incidental possession limit for skate bait when a seasonal threshold trigger is reached;
- Close the skate bait fishery when 100 percent of the quota is projected to be harvested; and
- Clarify that if we determine that an in-season possession limit reduction could prohibit the skate bait fishery from achieving its annual TAL, then we may remove the in-season reduction and reinstate the standard possession limit.

A summary of the skate bait fishery seasons and possession limits is provided in Table 1.

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.

Table 1. Skate Bait Fishery Seasons

Season		Percentage of Skate Bait TAL	Possession limit	Trigger for implementing an inseason possession limit adjustment	Incidental possession limit for skate bait once a trigger has been reached
1	May 1 – July 31	30.8%	25,000 pounds	90% of seasonal TAL	8,000 pounds
2	August 1 – October 31	37.1%	25,000 pounds	90% of seasonal TAL	8,000 pounds
3	November 1 – April 30	Remainder of Skate Bait TAL	12,000 pounds	80% of annual TAL	8,000 pounds

Learn more about [bait fishery regulations](#).