



# Southeast Fishery Bulletin

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## NOAA Fisheries Announces Changes to King Mackerel, Spanish Mackerel, and Cobia Regulations in the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic

### *Small Entity Compliance Guide*

A new rule effective March 1, 2015, will change regulations for king mackerel, Spanish mackerel, and cobia. The rule will:

- Eliminate the 500-pound trip limit that is effective when 75 percent of the respective quotas are landed for **king mackerel** in the Florida west coast Northern and Southern Subzones.
- Change the fishing year for **king mackerel** in the Florida west coast Northern Subzone to October-September beginning October 1, 2015. Currently, the fishing year is July-June.
- Allow transit of commercial vessels with king mackerel through areas closed to **king mackerel** fishing, if gear is appropriately stowed.
- Create Northern and Southern Zones for Atlantic migratory group **king and Spanish mackerel**, each with separate quotas. NOAA Fisheries will close each zone when the respective quota is met or expected to be met. The dividing line between the zones is at the North Carolina/South Carolina state line.
- Make administrative changes to the framework procedure for modifying management measures.
- Increase annual catch limits and catch targets for **cobia**.
- Create a Florida East Coast Zone for cobia to adjust for differences between the Councils' jurisdictional areas and the biological

distribution of the Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic stocks. This zone will have its own quota, and NOAA Fisheries will close the zone when the quota is met or expected to be met.

NOAA Fisheries, with the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic Fishery Management Councils, developed Amendment 20B to the management plan for king mackerel, Spanish mackerel, and cobia containing these management measures. The final rule implementing the regulations published in the *Federal Register* on January 27, 2015.

This bulletin serves as a Small Entity Compliance Guide, complying with section 212 of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996.

Electronic copies of the amendment, final rule, supporting materials, and frequently asked questions may be obtained from the NOAA Fisheries Web site

[http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable\\_fisheries/gulf\\_sa/cmp/2014/am20b/index.html](http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable_fisheries/gulf_sa/cmp/2014/am20b/index.html).

This bulletin provides only a summary of the information regarding the existing regulations. Any discrepancies between this bulletin and the regulations as published in the *Federal Register* will be resolved in favor of the *Federal Register*.