



## South Atlantic Fishery Bulletin

*Bringing Fishing News to You*



COBIA

*Rachycentron canadum*

**FB17-044**

**FISHERY BULLETIN ISSUE DATE:** August 4, 2017

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### **Actions to Modify Management of Atlantic Cobia (Georgia through New York)**

#### **KEY MESSAGE:**

NOAA Fisheries announces a final rule to change the following management measures for Atlantic Cobia (Georgia through New York):

- increase the recreational minimum size limit
- reduce the recreational bag limit
- establish a recreational vessel limit
- establish a commercial trip limit
- modify the recreational accountability measure

#### **WHEN RULE WILL TAKE EFFECT:**

- The management measures will be effective September 5, 2017.

#### **WHAT THIS MEANS:**

- For the Atlantic cobia **recreational** sector, the minimum size limit will increase from 33 inches fork length to 36 inches fork length.
- The **recreational** bag limit will be modified to one fish per person per day, or six fish per vessel per day, whichever is more restrictive.
- The rule will also modify the accountability measure for the **recreational** sector. If the recreational and total catch limits (commercial and recreational combined) are exceeded, NOAA Fisheries will reduce the vessel limit, and if necessary, shorten the following season.

- For the Atlantic cobia **commercial** sector, the rule will implement a commercial trip limit of two fish per person per day, or six fish per vessel per day, whichever is more restrictive.
- This final rule is the result of Framework Amendment 4 recommended to NOAA Fisheries by the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic Fishery Management Councils.
- These actions are expected to reduce the likelihood of exceeding the recreational and commercial Atlantic cobia catch limits in future years.

**FORMAL FEDERAL REGISTER NAME/NUMBER:** 82 FR 36344, published August 4, 2017

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

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)**

### **Where do these regulations apply?**

- These regulations apply to the Atlantic group cobia, which extends from Georgia through New York.

### **Why are these changes needed?**

- In 2015 and 2016, recreational landings for Atlantic cobia exceeded the recreational catch limit and the total annual catch limit. The current accountability measure reduces the length of the following recreational season by the amount necessary to ensure recreational landings achieve the recreational annual catch target, but do not exceed the recreational catch limit.
- Based on the accountability measure, the recreational Atlantic cobia sector was closed in federal waters on June 20, 2016, and January 24, 2017.
- The actions in Framework Amendment 4 are intended to reduce the likelihood of exceeding the total annual catch limit and triggering the accountability measures in the future, thus preventing or minimizing future recreational fishery closures.

### **Where can I find more information on Framework Amendment 4 and these new Atlantic cobia regulations?**

- Contact NOAA Fisheries, Southeast Regional Office

**By Mail:** Karla Gore  
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- Framework Amendment 4 may be found online at the NOAA Fisheries Southeast Regional Office Web site at: [http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable\\_fisheries/gulf\\_sa/cmp/2016/framework\\_am4/index.html](http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable_fisheries/gulf_sa/cmp/2016/framework_am4/index.html).
- Additional information on management of cobia in the South Atlantic may be found at: [http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable\\_fisheries/gulf\\_sa/cmp/index.html](http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable_fisheries/gulf_sa/cmp/index.html).

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