



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

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NOAA Fisheries Announces New Regulations - Modifications to Gulf of Mexico Headboat Reporting Requirements Small Entity Compliance Guide

On February 3, 2014, NOAA Fisheries published a final rule to modify federally permitted headboat reporting requirements. The most notable changes involve how and when reports must be submitted. The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council submitted the action to NOAA Fisheries for review, approval, and implementation. Regulations in the final rule are effective on March 5, 2014.

Purpose of the Rule

The rule modifies the data reporting requirements for federally permitted headboats in the Gulf of Mexico to ensure effort, landings, and discard information of federally managed fish are recorded accurately and in a timely manner. The intent of the rule is to ensure annual catch limits are not exceeded.

What are the reporting requirement changes?

- 1) The rule requires federally permitted headboats to submit fishing records to the Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC) on a weekly basis, or at intervals shorter than a week if notified by the SEFSC Research Director. The current requirement is to submit fishing records on a monthly basis.

- 2) The rule changes the current method of submitting reports. Previously they were submitted by mail, now they will be submitted electronically (i.e., computer or internet).
- 3) Federally permitted headboat owners and operators who are delinquent in submitting reports are not allowed to fish until all required reports have been submitted. This requirement should help to improve compliance with data reporting within the recreational sector.

Electronic copies of the final rule and supporting documents may be obtained from the federal e-Rulemaking Portal at www.regulations.gov, and the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council's Web site at <http://www.gulfcouncil.org>.

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

This summary is not a substitute for the actual regulations. We encourage you to read the full text of the regulations, available at:

<http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/>.