



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

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October 14, 2014

FB14-077

Western Gulf of Mexico Closing to King Mackerel Commercial Fishing

NOAA Fisheries will close the western zone of the Gulf of Mexico to commercial fishing for king mackerel **effective 12:00 noon (local time) October 17, 2014**. The commercial quota of 1,071,360 pounds for this zone is projected to be reached by this date. The Western Zone is in federal waters from the U.S./Mexico border to the Alabama/Florida boundary. Gulf states (Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama) are expected to close adjoining state waters at the same time. The closure will remain in effect until the end of the fishing year, June 30, 2015.

During the closure, no commercial fisherman may fish for or keep king mackerel in or from the closed zone. There is an exception for people aboard a vessel that has a charter/headboat permit for coastal migratory pelagic fish and a commercial king mackerel permit. Those people may keep the two-fish per person daily king mackerel bag limit from

the closed zone, if the vessel is operating as a charter vessel or headboat. Vessels are considered to be operating as a charter vessel or headboat when they carry a passenger who pays a fee or when more than three people are aboard, including operator and crew.

During the closure, no king mackerel caught in the closed zone may be bought, sold, or traded. This includes recreational and tournament-caught fish. King mackerel that were traded or sold before the closure and held in cold storage by a dealer or processor may still be sold.

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/sustainable_fisheries/policy_branch/index.html.