



DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 622

[Docket No. 001005281-0369-02]

RIN 0648-XD717

Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic;
Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources of the Gulf of Mexico and
South Atlantic; Trip Limit Reduction

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National
Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Temporary rule; trip limit reduction.

SUMMARY: NMFS reduces the trip limit in the hook-and-line
component of the commercial sector for king mackerel in the
southern Florida west coast subzone to 500 lb (227 kg) of king
mackerel per day in or from the exclusive economic zone (EEZ).
This trip limit reduction is necessary to protect the king
mackerel resource in the Gulf of Mexico (Gulf).

DATES: This rule is effective 12:01 a.m., local time, January
24, 2015, through June 30, 2015, unless NMFS publishes a
superseding document in the Federal Register.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Susan Gerhart, NMFS Southeast
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SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The fishery for coastal migratory pelagic fish (king mackerel, Spanish mackerel, and cobia) is managed under the Fishery Management Plan for the Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources of the Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic Region (FMP). The FMP was prepared by the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic Fishery Management Councils (Councils) and is implemented under the authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act) by regulations at 50 CFR part 622.

The Gulf migratory group king mackerel is divided into western and eastern zones. The Gulf's eastern zone for king mackerel is further divided into the Florida west coast northern and southern subzones that have separate commercial quotas. The 2014 to 2015 fishing year quota for the hook-and-line component of the commercial sector in the southern Florida west coast subzone is 551,448 lb (250,133 kg) (50 CFR 622.384(b)(1)(i)(B)(1)) (76 FR 82058, December 29, 2011).

In accordance with 50 CFR 622.385(a)(2)(ii)(B)(2), from the date that 75 percent of the southern Florida west coast subzone's hook-and-line gear quota has been harvested until a closure of the subzone's commercial sector of the hook-and-line component has been effected or the fishing year ends, king

mackerel in or from the EEZ may be possessed on board or landed from a permitted vessel in amounts not exceeding 500 lb (227 kg) per day.

NMFS has projected that 75 percent of the hook-and-line gear quota for Gulf group king mackerel from the southern Florida west coast subzone will be harvested by January 24, 2015. Accordingly, a 500-lb (227-kg) trip limit applies to vessels in the hook-and-line component of the commercial sector for king mackerel in or from the EEZ in the southern Florida west coast subzone effective 12:01 a.m., local time, January 24, 2015. The 500-lb (227-kg) trip limit will remain in effect until the component closes or until the end of the current fishing year (June 30, 2015), whichever occurs first.

From November 1 through March 31, the southern subzone encompasses an area of the EEZ south of a line extending due west of the Lee and Collier County, FL, boundary on the Florida west coast, and south of a line extending due east of the Monroe and Miami-Dade County, FL, boundary on the Florida east coast, which includes the EEZ off Collier and Monroe Counties, FL. From April 1 through October 31, the southern subzone is reduced to the EEZ off Collier County, and the EEZ off Monroe County becomes part of the Atlantic migratory group area.

Classification

The Regional Administrator, Southeast Region, NMFS, has determined this temporary rule is necessary for the conservation and management of Gulf migratory group king mackerel and is consistent with the Magnuson-Stevens Act and other applicable laws.

This action is taken under 50 CFR 622.385(a)(2)(ii)(B) and 622.385(a)(2)(iii) and is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866.

These measures are exempt from the procedures of the Regulatory Flexibility Act because the temporary rule is issued without opportunity for prior notice and comment.

This action responds to the best scientific information available. The Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA (AA), finds that the need to immediately implement this trip limit reduction for the hook-and-line component of the commercial sector constitutes good cause to waive the requirements to provide prior notice and opportunity for public comment pursuant to the authority set forth in 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(B), because prior notice and opportunity for public comment on this temporary rule is unnecessary and contrary to the public interest. Such procedures are unnecessary because the commercial trip limit for hook-and-line gear at 50 CFR 622.385(a)(2)(ii)(B) has already been subject to notice and comment, and all that remains is

to notify the public of the trip limit reduction. They are contrary to the public interest because there is a need to immediately implement this action to protect the king mackerel resource, since the capacity of the fishing fleet allows for rapid harvest of the quota. Prior notice and opportunity for public comment on this action would require time and would potentially result in a harvest well in excess of the established quota.

For the aforementioned reasons, the AA also finds good cause to waive the 30-day delay in effectiveness of this action under 5 U.S.C. 553(d)(3).

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1801 et seq.

Dated: January 20, 2015.

Emily H. Menashes,
Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries,
National Marine Fisheries Service.

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