



The following Southeast Fishery Bulletin from NOAA Fisheries Southeast Regional Office is provided as a courtesy to our subscribers.

SOUTHEAST FISHERY BULLETIN (Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic)

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Susan Gerhart
727-824-5305

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Reminder of Boundary Shifts, Commercial Quotas, and Trip Limits for King Mackerel

King mackerel are divided into two migratory groups: the Gulf of Mexico (Gulf) and Atlantic groups. The groups are divided into zones and subzones, and each group, zone, and subzone may have a separate quota and trip limit. Currently, the boundary between the Gulf and Atlantic groups shifts north on November 1 and south on April 1 of each year. Please see maps and charts on page 2.

NOAA Fisheries is reviewing an amendment to the fishery management plan that would eliminate the boundary shift and set a permanent management boundary between the two migratory groups at the Miami-Dade/Monroe County line. If approved, this change should be implemented before the next boundary shift on April 1, 2017. The amendment would make other management changes for king mackerel, including changes to the trip limits on the Florida east coast. An additional Southeast Fishery Bulletin will be sent out if those changes are approved.

Gulf Group King Mackerel Zones and Subzones

Western Zone

The Western Zone includes waters off Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama and has a trip limit of 3,000 pounds per day year-round. This zone closed October 14, 2016, and will reopen July 1, 2017. If a quota increase is approved, the zone may reopen in spring.

Florida West Coast

The west coast is divided into Northern and Southern Subzones.

The Northern Subzone extends east and south from the Florida/Alabama state line to the Lee/Collier County line. This subzone opened October 1 and remains open at this time.

From November through March, the Southern Subzone extends south and east from the Lee/Collier County line to the Miami-Dade/Monroe County line. With the April boundary shift between the Gulf and Atlantic groups to the Monroe/Collier County line, the Southern Subzone for the Gulf group is reduced to the area off Collier County, and Monroe County becomes part of the Atlantic group. The quota for the Southern Subzone is divided equally between the hook-and-line and gillnet components. The hook-and-line component opened July 1, 2016, and remains open at this time. The gillnet component is closed and will open January 17, 2017.

Both the Northern and Southern Subzones have a hook-and-line trip limit of 1,250 pounds per day. The gillnet component in the Southern Subzone has a trip limit of 45,000 pounds per day.

Florida East Coast (Mixing Zone)

From November through March, fish harvested south of the Flagler/Volusia County line to the Miami-Dade/Monroe County line are considered to be Gulf group king mackerel. The trip limit for this Florida East Coast Subzone during this time period is 50 fish per day, until March 1, when the trip limit increases to 75 fish per day, if 70 percent of the quota has not been reached.

Atlantic Group King Mackerel Zones

Northern Zone

The Northern Zone is from the North Carolina/South Carolina state line north to the intersection point of New York, Connecticut, and Rhode Island. This area has a 3,500-pound per day trip limit year-round.

Southern Zone

From November through March, the Southern Zone extends from the North Carolina/South Carolina state line south to the Flagler/Volusia County line. South of the Flagler/Volusia County line, fish are considered to be part of the Gulf group during this time (see above).

From April through October, the Southern Zone is from the North Carolina/South Carolina state line south to the Monroe/Collier County line on Florida's west coast, which is the boundary between the Gulf and Atlantic groups during that period.

King Mackerel Migratory Group/ Zone



East Ocean Basemap Sources: Esri, DeLorme, GEBCO, NOAA/NOEC, and other contributors

Gulf Fishery News

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Gulf of Mexico
Fishery Management
Council

*Protecting our marine
resources*

4107 W. Spruce Street
Suite 200
Tampa, Florida 33607
Phone: 813.348.1630
Fax: 813.348.1711

www.gulfcouncil.org

Gulf Council Hosts Release Mortality Symposium

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council) recently hosted a Release Mortality Symposium with the goal of reducing discard mortality from recreational fishing efforts. The objective of the meeting was to create an action plan for the recreational fishery to promote the use of barotrauma mitigation tools, enhance data collection efforts, and incorporate the results into stock assessments and management. Reducing discard mortality could allow for increased harvest and would address numerous National Standards of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act).



Photo: Angela Collins, FWC

During the Symposium, the discussion focused on the reduction of release mortality as a whole. Private, charter, and head-boat groups uniformly recommended that anglers should retain flexibility to choose the best release mortality mitigation measures for their circumstances and asked for best practice recommendations to guide angler choice.

Symposium participants recommended that current monitoring programs that collect data relevant to discards and discard mortality should ask for consistent information on discards including the number, species, mitigation technique used, condition upon release, and depth of capture. Additionally, current gaps in discard data were identified and prioritized. Finally, achieving consistent messaging to anglers was recommended.



Photo: Angela Collins, FWC

The Outreach and Education Technical Committee recommended that the Gulf Council remain the point agency for communicating the best practices on handling and release of reef fish in the Gulf. The "Fishing for Our Future" website (see page 3) will be periodically updated with new research, recommendations, and best practices messaging. In the future, it was recommended that this website be branded as its own organization and enhanced with the addition of content that could be used by influencers.

The full Symposium report can be found [here](#). The Council wrote a letter to the Open Ocean Restoration Trustee Implementation Group requesting that they consider the outcomes of this Symposium as they initiate work on their Post-Release Mortality Reduction project in the Gulf.

Boundaries	Coordinates	
Intersection point of New York, Connecticut, and Rhode Island	41o18'16.249" N lat. / 71o54'28.477" W long.	
North Carolina/South Carolina state line	a line extending in a direction of 135°34'55" from true north beginning at 33°51'07.9" N lat. and 78°32'32.6" W long.	
Flagler/Volusia County line	29°25' N lat.	Winter Council boundary
Volusia/Brevard County line	28°47.8' N lat.	
Miami-Dade/Monroe County line	25°20.4' N lat.	
Monroe/Collier County line	25o48' N lat.	Summer Council

		boundary
Lee/Collier County line	26°19.8' N lat.	
Florida/Alabama state line	87°31.1' W long.	

2016/2017 Commercial Quotas for King Mackerel (pounds)	
Gulf Group	
Western Zone	1,071,360
Eastern Zone	
Florida West Coast Northern Subzone	178,848
Florida West Coast Southern Subzone (hook-and-line)	551,448
Florida West Coast Southern Subzone (gillnet)	551,448
Florida East Coast Subzone	1,102,896
Atlantic Group	
Northern Zone (includes gillnets north of Cape Lookout, NC)	1,292,040
Southern Zone	2,587,960

*Quotas will change if Amendment 26 is approved.

NOAA Fisheries Southeast is pleased to announce the introduction of our Text Message Alert Program. The program will allow you to sign up to receive important fishery related alerts via text message. Text alerts you may receive include immediate fishery openings and closures, and any significant changes to fishing regulations that happen quickly.

How to opt-in

Sign up for related alerts for one or more of the following groups. Standard message & data rates may apply. You may opt-out at any time.

- Gulf of Mexico Recreational Fisheries: Text GULFRECFISH to 888777
- Gulf of Mexico Commercial Fisheries: Text GULFCOMMFISH to 888777
- South Atlantic Recreational Fisheries: Text SATLRECFISH to 888777
- South Atlantic Commercial Fisheries: Text SATLCOMMFISH to 888777
- Caribbean Fisheries: Text CARIBFISH to 888777

About Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council is one of eight regional Fishery Management Councils established by the Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976. The Council prepares fishery management plans, which are designed to manage fishery resources within the 200-mile limit of the Gulf of Mexico.



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Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

[Emily Muehlstein](#)

Outreach Specialist

888-833-1844 ext. 238

