



# Northeast Region Bulletin

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Date Issued: 1/15/2012

## **2013 Atlantic Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish Specifications**

Butterfish quota increased by 1,698 mt and  
and butterfish mortality cap increased by 1,299 mt

*Effective Date: January 16, 2013*

The 2013 quotas for the Atlantic mackerel (mackerel), *Illex* squid, longfin squid and butterfish (MSB) fisheries are effective from January 16, 2013, through December 31, 2013.

### **This letter describes:**

- 2013 MSB Commercial and Recreational Quotas (page 1)
- Trimester Allocations and Closure Thresholds for the Longfin Squid, Butterfish, and the Butterfish Mortality Cap (page 2)
- New Butterfish regulations (page 2)
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- New Butterfish mortality cap regulations (page 5)
- Review of the Butterfish Mortality Cap Methodology (page 5)

A full summary of information about the various MSB permit categories and trip limits is available in the MSB information sheet (<http://www.nero.noaa.gov/nero/regs/info.html>).

### **2013 Commercial and Recreational Quotas:**

The table below shows the 2013 specifications for each species. The Atlantic mackerel quota is unchanged from 2012 and is being implemented for 3 years, from 2013 through 2015. The butterfish quota is being implemented for 2013 only, and is an increase of 1,698 mt over the 2012 quota (872 mt). The butterfish mortality cap is a 1,299-mt increase over the current 2012 cap level (3,165 mt).

<b>Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish 2013 Specifications (mt)</b>				
<b>Specifications</b>	<b>Mackerel</b>	<b>Butterfish</b>	<b><i>Illex</i></b>	<b>Longfin</b>
Allowable Biological Catch (ABC)	43,781	8,400	24,000	23,400
Annual Catch Limit (ACL)	43,781	8,400	N/A	N/A
Commercial Annual Catch Target (ACT)	34,907	7,560	N/A	N/A
Recreational ACT/Recreational Harvest Limit	2,443	N/A	N/A	N/A
Domestic Annual Harvest (DAH/quota)	33,821	2,570	22,915	22,049
Tier 3 Mackerel Allocation (7% of DAH)	2,368	N/A	N/A	N/A
Research Set Aside (RSA)	N/A	36	N/A	396
Butterfish Mortality Cap in longfin squid fishery				4,464

*For small entity compliance guides, this bulletin complies with section 212 of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement and Fairness Act of 1996. This notice is authorized by the Regional Administrator of the National Marine Fisheries Service, Northeast Region.*

## Trimester Allocations and Closure Thresholds for the Longfin Squid, Butterfish, and the Butterfish Mortality Cap

The following changes to the closure thresholds for the longfin squid fishery and the butterfish mortality cap are now effective:

The Trimester I longfin squid closure threshold will change on April 15 of each year from 90 to 95 percent to avoid 1-2 week closures at the end of a Trimester.
The Trimester II longfin squid closure threshold will change on August 15 of each year from 90 to 95 percent to avoid 1-2 week closures at the end of a Trimester.
The Trimester I butterfish mortality cap closure threshold will change on April 15 of each year from 80 to 90 percent to avoid 1-2 week closures at the end of a Trimester.
Trimester II of the butterfish mortality cap will be closed to the directed longfin squid fishery when 75 percent of the annual butterfish mortality cap is projected to be reached.

The table below describes trimester allocations and closure thresholds for longfin squid and the butterfish mortality cap (all allocations are in metric tons).

		<b>Trimester I</b> (Jan-Apr)	<b>Trimester II</b> (May-Aug)	<b>Trimester III</b> (Sep-Dec)
<b>Longfin squid</b> 22,049 mt total	<b>Allocation</b>	9,481	3,748	8,820
	<b>Closure Threshold</b>	8,532	3,373	20,947
	Directed Longfin Fishery	(90%*9,481)	(90%*3,748)	(95%*22,049)
<b>Butterfish Cap</b> 4,464 mt total	<b>Allocation</b>	2,902	147	1415
	<b>Closure Threshold</b>	2,322	3,348	4,018
	Directed Longfin Fishery	(80%*2,902)	(75%*4,464)	(90%*4,464)

The longfin squid fishery may be closed either if longfin landings are projected to reach the longfin closure threshold or if butterfish catch reaches the butterfish mortality cap closure threshold in any Trimester.

- During Trimester I, the directed longfin fishery will be closed if:
  - Longfin squid landings are projected to reach 8,532 mt (from January 1 to April 15) -OR-
  - Longfin squid landings are projected to reach 9,007 mt (from April 15 to April 30) -OR-
  - The butterfish mortality cap reaches 2,322 mt (from January 1 to April 15) -OR-
  - The butterfish mortality cap reaches 2,612mt (from April 15 to April 30)
- During Trimester II, the directed longfin fishery will be closed if:
  - Longfin squid landings are projected to reach 3,373 mt (from May 1 to August 15, unless this allocation is increased due to under-harvest in Trimester I) -OR-

- Longfin squid landings are projected to reach 3,561 mt (from August 15 to August 30, unless allocation is increased from Trimester I under-harvest) -OR-
- The butterfish mortality cap reaches 3,348 mt (75% of the annual butterfish mortality cap allocation)
- During Trimester III, the directed longfin fishery will be closed if:
  - Longfin squid landings are projected to reach 20,947 mt (annual threshold) -OR-
  - The butterfish mortality cap reaches 4,018 mt (annual threshold)

**New Butterfish Regulations:**

Due to the increase in the butterfish quota, and the potential for a directed butterfish fishery, the butterfish fishery will now operate under a 3-phase management system. The table below shows trip limits for limited access and incidental permit holders during each of the three phases. The trip limits during each phase are further explained in the text below the table. Each phase, and the trip limits associated with each phase, is detailed in the text that follows.

<b>Butterfish 3-Phase Management System</b>			
Phase	Limited Access Trip Limit		Incidental Trip Limit
	>3-inch mesh	<3-inch mesh	600 lb
1	Unlimited	2,500 lb	600 lb
2	5,000 lb	2,500 lb	600 lb
3	500 lb	500 lb	600 lb

**Phase 1:**

Phase 1 begins at the start of the butterfish fishing year on January 1.

During phase 1, the butterfish trip limits are:

- Unlimited for longfin squid/butterfish moratorium permit holders using mesh greater than or equal to 3 inches;
- 2,500 lb for longfin squid/butterfish moratorium permit holders using mesh less than 3 inches; and
- 600 lb for squid/butterfish incidental permits.

**Phase 2:** Once butterfish harvest reaches the trip limit reduction threshold to move from phase 1 to phase 2, the butterfish trip limits will be:

- 5,000 lb for longfin squid/butterfish moratorium permit holders using mesh size greater than or equal to 3-inches;
- 2,500 lb for longfin squid/butterfish moratorium permit holders using mesh less than 3 inches; and
- 600 lb for squid/butterfish incidental permits.

**Phase 3:** When butterfish harvest is projected to reach the trip hold reduction threshold to move from phase 2 to phase 3, the butterfish trip limit will be:

- 500 lb for all longfin squid/butterfish moratorium permit holders, regardless of mesh size;
- 600 lb for squid/mackerel/butterfish incidental permits.
- During Phase 3, we have the authority to change the butterfish trip limit to anything between 250 to 750 lb to avoid a quota overage.

The trip limit reduction thresholds to move from phase 1 to phase 2, and to move from phase 2 to phase 3, will change bi-monthly throughout the year as shown in the table below. We will publish a notice in the Federal Register and notify the butterfish fleet via Fisheries bulletin, Coast Guard radio, NOAA weather radio, vessel monitoring system (VMS) message, and on our website once the trip limit reduction threshold is reached, and a new phase begins.

<b>Butterfish Trip Limit Reduction Thresholds</b>				
	<b>Phase 2</b>		<b>Phase 3</b>	
<i>Months</i>	<i>Trip Limit Reduction Threshold (Percent of quota)</i>	<i>Corresponding Butterfish quota level (mt)</i>	<i>Trip Limit Reduction Threshold (Percent of quota)</i>	<i>Corresponding Butterfish quota level (mt)</i>
Jan - Feb	40	1,028	58	1,491
Mar-Apr	47	1,208	64	1,645
May-Jun	55	1,414	71	1,825
Jul-Aug	63	1,619	78	2,005
Sept-Oct	71	1,825	85	2,185
Nov-Dec	78	2,005	91	2,339

**Changes to the Longfin Squid Pre-Trip Notification Requirement:**

**New 48-hour pre-trip notification:** The longfin squid pre-trip observer notification requirement is changed from 72 to 48 hours, effective **February 15, 2013**, Vessels intending to land more than 2,501 lb of longfin squid must notify the observer program at least 48 hours, but no more than 10 days, in advance of a trip. Vessels can use one of the following notification methods:

- **Internet (preferred method)** - This should be the primary means of trip notification and trip changes. The PTNS website is available at <http://fish.nefsc.noaa.gov/PTNS/>. Vessels should log in using the same username (Permit Number) and password (PIN) as they use for Fish-On-Line.

- **Email** - This should be the secondary means of trip notification. The email address to submit trip notifications is [nefsc.ptns@noaa.gov](mailto:nefsc.ptns@noaa.gov). If utilizing the email method of notification please relay the following information clearly: Vessel permit number; Planned sail date and time; Fishery: longfin squid; Estimated trip duration in whole days; Port of sail; Phone number, if new to using the PTNS
- **Telephone** - This is the backup means of notification. The phone number is 1-855-FISHES1, effective March 11, 2011. The PTNS Coordinator is available at this number from 8:00AM to 5:00PM on business days. After business hours and on weekends and holidays, calls will be fielded by an answering service operator who is qualified to enter notifications, answer frequently asked questions, and help troubleshoot common PTNS issues. In emergency situations, the operator will immediately contact a NMFS representative for assistance. If utilizing the phone method of notification, please relay the following information clearly: Caller's name and phone number; Vessel permit number; Planned sail date and time; Fishery: longfin squid; Estimated trip duration in whole days; Port of sail

### **Review of the Butterfish Mortality Cap Methodology**

We recently conducted a review of the butterfish mortality cap methodology, which is based on a methodology used for a number of Northeast Region catch caps, and held a public meeting to discuss our analysis. Based on the results of our review, there will not be any changes to the butterfish mortality cap methodology for the 2013 fishing year. We are considering conducting a more detailed peer review of the methodology in 2013, and will investigate alternative strategies for stratifying the butterfish mortality cap by season or area at that time. Please see the 2013 butterfish mortality cap methodology document on our website for more information (<http://www.nero.noaa.gov/sfd/sfdsmb.html>).