



Greater Atlantic Region Bulletin

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2014 Atlantic Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish Specifications

Butterfish trip limit increase, butterfish quota increase, changes to butterfish cap, and 236 mt catch cap on river herring and shad catch in the mackerel fishery established
Effective Date: April 4, 2014

The 2014 quotas for the Atlantic mackerel (mackerel), *Illex* squid, longfin squid and butterfish (MSB) fisheries are effective from April 4, 2014, through December 31, 2014.

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

Contact the Sustainable Fisheries Division at 978-281-9315 if you have any questions.

This letter describes

- The butterfish trip limit increase (page 1)
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Butterfish trip limit increase

Effective April 4, 2014, longfin squid/butterfish moratorium permit holders using greater than 3-inch mesh can again fish for, catch, possess, or land unlimited amounts of butterfish. Vessels using less than 3-inch mesh are limited to 2,500 lb of butterfish per trip or calendar day, and the incidental trip limit for butterfish remains 600 lb. Federally permitted dealers may also resume purchasing unlimited amounts of butterfish from federally permitted vessels.

On March 18, 2014, we determined butterfish harvest had reached the threshold to move from phase 1 to phase 2 of the directed butterfish fishery based on the 2013 butterfish quota, and notified vessels that the phase 2 possession limit was in effect (see page 4 for a description of the butterfish 3-phase system). Now, because of the increased 2014 butterfish quota, the butterfish fishery can return to phase 1.

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, Greater Atlantic Region.

2014 Commercial and Recreational Quotas

The table below shows the 2014 specifications for each species. The quotas for Atlantic mackerel and *Illex* squid are unchanged from 2013. We reduced the longfin squid quota by 239 mt from 2013 because of an increase in the 2014 Research Set Aside allocation for longfin squid. The butterfish quota increased by 630 mt over the 2013 quota (2,570 mt). The butterfish mortality cap is the same as it was in 2013.

Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish 2014 Specifications (mt)				
Specifications	Mackerel	Butterfish	<i>Illex</i>	Longfin
Allowable Biological Catch (ABC)	43,781	9,100	24,000	23,400
Annual Catch Limit (ACL)	43,781	9,100	N/A	N/A
Commercial Annual Catch Target (ACT)	34,907	8,190	N/A	N/A
Recreational ACT/Recreational Harvest Limit	2,443	N/A	N/A	N/A
Domestic Annual Harvest (DAH/quota)	33,821	3,200	22,915	21,810
Tier 3 Mackerel Allocation (7% of DAH)	2,368	N/A	N/A	N/A
Research Set Aside (RSA)	N/A	36	N/A	635
Butterfish Mortality Cap in longfin squid fishery				3,884

The river herring and shad cap on the mackerel fishery

Amendment 14 established a river herring and shad cap that requires the closure of the directed mackerel fishery if the river herring and shad cap is reached. For 2014, we have set the cap at 236 mt. Please go to www.nero.noaa.gov for a description of how we monitor the cap and determine catch.

All river herring and shad catch on trips that land over 20,000 lb mackerel after January 1, 2014, counts against the river herring and shad cap. The directed mackerel fishery will close if we project 95 percent of river herring and shad cap has been harvested.

Changes to the Butterfish Discard Cap on the Longfin Squid Fishery

NMFS adjusted the trimester butterfish discard cap allocations to match the longfin squid trimester allocations. Though the butterfish specifications are in effect as of April 4, 2014, the adjustments to the trimester allocations and the changes to the closure thresholds described below will go into effect on May 2, 2014.

In addition, NMFS will now issue longfin squid closures for each trimester when it is estimated that 95 percent of the butterfish discard cap has been taken. The table below describes how the new allocations relate to the longfin squid fishery.

The table below compares the old and new butterfish discard cap allocations, both applied to the 3,884 mt butterfish discard cap set for the 2014 fishing year.

	Old Allocations		New Allocations		Difference (mt)
	Percent	2014 Cap (mt)	Percent	2014 Cap (mt)	
Trimester I (Jan-Apr)	65	2,525	43	1,670	-855
Trimester II (May-Aug)	3.3	128	17	660	+532
Trimester III (Sep-Dec)	31.7	1,231	40	1,554	+323
TOTAL		3,884		3,884	

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

		Trimester I (Jan-Apr)	Trimester II (May-Aug)	Trimester III (Sep-Dec)
Longfin squid 21,810 mt total	Allocation	9,378	3,708	8,724
	Closure Threshold Directed Longfin Fishery	8,440 (90%*9,378)	3,337 (90%*3,708)	20,720 (95%*21,810)
Butterfish Cap 3,884 mt total	Allocation	1,670	660	1,231
	Closure Threshold Directed Longfin Fishery	1,587 (95%*1,670)	627 (95%*660)	3,690 (95%*3,884)

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

- During Trimester I, the directed longfin fishery will be closed if:
 - Longfin squid landings are projected to reach 8,440 mt (from January 1 to April 15) -OR-
 - Longfin squid landings are projected to reach 8,909 mt (from April 15 to April 30) -OR-
 - The butterfish discard cap reaches 1,587 mt (from January 1 to April 15)
- During Trimester II, the directed longfin fishery will be closed if:
 - Longfin squid landings are projected to reach 3,337 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 3,523 mt (from August 15 to August 30, unless allocation is increased from Trimester I under-harvest) -OR-
 - The butterfish discard cap reaches 627 mt
- During Trimester III, the directed longfin fishery will be closed if:
 - Longfin squid landings are projected to reach 20,720 mt (annual threshold) -OR-
 - The butterfish discard cap reaches 3,690 mt (annual threshold)

Butterfish 3-Phase System

The butterfish fishery operates 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.

One change this year is that the phase 3 butterfish possession limit is increased for limited access permit holders. Last year, the Phase 3 trip limit for all limited access permit holders was 500 lb. Starting in 2014, the Phase 3 possession limit for limited access permit holders is increased to 600 lb to be consistent with the current incidental butterfish trip limit.

Butterfish 3-Phase Management System			
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	600 lb	600 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:

- 600 lb for all longfin squid/butterfish moratorium permit holders AND squid/mackerel/butterfish incidental permit holders, regardless of mesh size;
- 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.

Butterfish Trip Limit Reduction Thresholds				
	Phase 2		Phase 3	
<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	52	1,658	66	2,121
Mar-Apr	57	1,838	71	2,275
May-Jun	64	2,044	77	2,455
Jul-Aug	70	2,249	82	2,635
Sept-Oct	77	2,455	88	2,815
Nov-Dec	82	2,635	93	2,969

Late-year Butterfish Quota Transfer Option

NMFS may now transfer, in either direction, up to 50 percent of unused butterfish quota between butterfish landings and the discard cap for the longfin squid fishery. Near the end of each fishing year, we will make projections of the likely trajectories of butterfish landings and the butterfish discard cap. If it looks like either the butterfish landings or the butterfish discard cap are approaching their closure thresholds, and the other fishery appears unlikely to be affected if some of the available quota were taken away, we may transfer up to 50 percent of the total butterfish landings allocation or total discard cap quota to optimize the use of the overall butterfish quota. We would make the transfer before November 15 each fishing year, and will announce the upcoming transfer to industry in advance of the transfer.

New Trimester II Post-Closure Longfin Squid Possession Limit for vessels targeting *Illex* Squid

NMFS has increased the Trimester II post-closure possession limit for longfin squid from 2,500 lb to 15,000 lb for vessels targeting *Illex* squid in order to reduce regulatory discarding.

If you can answer yes to all of the following questions, your vessel can possess up to 15,000 lb of longfin squid while targeting *Illex* squid after a Trimester II longfin squid closure:

- Does your vessel have BOTH a longfin squid/butterfish moratorium permit AND an *Illex* squid moratorium permit?
- Is it Trimester II and has the longfin squid fishery been closed?
- Are you on a directed *Illex* squid trip (i.e. possess more 10,000 lb of *Illex* squid)?
- Are you fishing seaward of the *Illex* Exemption Line (coordinates on page 6 and at § 648.23 (a)(3))?

Once landward of the *Illex* Exemption line, you must properly stow your fishing gear in order to possess over 2,500 lb of longfin squid.

Coordinates for the *Illex* exemption line (found in the regulations at § 648.23 (a)(3))

Point	N. lat.	W. long.
M0	43°58.0'	[¹]
M1	43°58.0'	67°22.0'
M2	43°50.0'	68°35.0'
M3	43°30.0'	69°40.0'
M4	43°20.0'	70°00.0'
M5	42°45.0'	70°10.0'
M6	42°13.0'	69°55.0'
M7	41°00.0'	69°00.0'
M8	41°45.0'	68°15.0'
M9	42°10.0'	67°10.0' [²]
M10	41°18.6'	66°24.8' [²]
M11	40°55.5'	66°38.0'
M12	40°45.5'	68°00.0'
M13	40°37.0'	68°00.0'
M14	40°30.0'	69°00.0'
M15	40°22.7'	69°00.0'
M16	40°18.7'	69°40.0'
M17	40°21.0'	71°03.0'
M18	39°41.0'	72°32.0'
M19	38°47.0'	73°11.0'
M20	38°04.0'	74°06.0'
M21	37°08.0'	74°46.0'
M22	36°00.0'	74°52.0'
M23	35°45.0'	74°53.0'
M24	35°28.0'	74°52.0'
M25	35°28.0'	[³]

[¹] The intersection of 43°58.0'N. latitude and the U.S.-Canada Maritime Boundary.

[²] Points M9 and M10 are intended to fall along and are connected by the US-Canada Maritime Boundary.

[³] The intersection of 35°28.0'N. latitude and the outward limit of the U.S. EEZ.