



Greater Atlantic Region Bulletin

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Atlantic Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish Fishery **Butterfish regulation summary** 2018

This letter is to remind vessels of the current butterfish regulations to improve use of the available resource. The butterfish fishery is managed by an overall yearly quota, permits, trip limits, and area restrictions, as briefly described below. A full summary of the regulations can be found at: www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/sustainable/species/msb/index.html.

How you can use your permit: Butterfish Possession Limits

Permit	Trip Limits (butterfish can only be landed once/day)
SMB 1 Longfin/Butterfish Moratorium	Unlimited when using greater than 3-inch codend mesh, or 5,000 lb when using less than 3-inch codend mesh
SMB 3 Squid/Butterfish Incidental	600 lb
SMB 2 Charter Party	Unlimited while carrying passengers for hire, but fish may not be sold

These additional restrictions could go into place: Directed Fishery Closures

We will implement the following closures (reduction in possession limits), as necessary:

- **Directed butterfish fishery:** We will reduce butterfish possession limits for butterfish moratorium permits to 5,000 lb/trip when the directed fishery closure limit is caught and then to 600 lb/trip when the full commercial quota is caught.
- **Directed longfin squid fishery:** We will reduce longfin squid possession limits for all longfin squid permits when either most of the longfin squid quota has been caught in a trimester (90 or 95 percent, depending on timing), or when 95 percent of the butterfish catch cap has been caught in any trimester.

The butterfish catch cap in the longfin squid fishery:

Trimester	Percent	Pounds
I (January – April)	43	3,681,720
II (May – August)	17	145,505
III (September – December)	40	3,425,984

Please see our quota monitoring page for more information on the directed butterfish fishery and the butterfish catch cap monitoring:

www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/aps/monitoring/butterfish.html

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.

Area management: Fishery Restricted Areas and Closure Areas

Area	Dates	Gear restrictions	Transit restrictions
Oceanographer Canyon Lydonia Canyon Frank R. Lautenberg Deep-Sea Coral Protection Areas	January 1 – December 31	Bottom trawl gear prohibited	Transit allowed if bottom trawl gear is stowed and not available for immediate use. While transiting the Deep-Sea Coral Protection Areas, gear must be out of the water, but does not have to be stowed.
Northern Scup Gear Restricted Area (GRA)	November 1 – December 31	Minimum mesh size of 5.0-inch diamond mesh	Transit allowed if codends less than 5.0 inches are stowed and not available for immediate use.
Southern Scup Gear Restricted Area (GRA)	January 1 – March 15		

You can find the boundaries of these areas on our GARFO GIS website:

www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/educational_resources/gis

Butterfish Q & A

What happens if the ACL is exceeded?	If the butterfish ACL is exceeded, then excess catch will be deducted from the following year.
Why aren't the weekly butterfish quota monitoring reports being made public?	Posting butterfish landings may reveal how much butterfish is landed or purchased by one entity, which would be inconsistent with our legal requirements to protect confidential information. We will post butterfish landings once the catch reaches 75% of the annual quota so you can plan operations.
How will the squid capacity amendment affect my butterfish permit?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Permit holders that currently possess a longfin squid/butterfish moratorium permit (SMB1) would requalify for either a SMB1A (unlimited longfin squid possession) or a SMB1B (5,000 lb longfin squid possession limit) permit. 2. All vessels currently issued a SMB1 permit would be issued a SMB6 permit – a new and separate butterfish moratorium permit with possession limits similar to the current longfin squid moratorium permit (unlimited/5,000 lb per trip). 3. The incidental permit possession limit for butterfish would remain at 600 lb, while the longfin squid possession limit would be reduced to 250 lb.
What are the proposed 2018 quota levels?	We are working on finalizing the annual quotas for 2018 and will publish them in the <i>Federal Register</i> and send a separate bulletin shortly.