

DECLARATION OF EMERGENCY

Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Wildlife and Fisheries Commission

2018-2019 King Mackerel Commercial Season Closure

The commercial king mackerel season in Louisiana waters was previously closed on October 5, 2018. At its November 2018 meeting, the Wildlife and Fisheries Commission authorized the secretary of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries to modify the commercial king mackerel season should he be notified of a reopening in adjacent federal waters by NOAA Fisheries. The commercial season was subsequently reopened on November 12, 2018.

In accordance with the emergency provisions of R.S. 49:953, which allows the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and the Wildlife and Fisheries Commission to use seasonal rules to set finfish seasons, R.S. 56:326.3 which provides that the Wildlife and Fisheries Commission may set seasons for saltwater finfish, and the authority given to the secretary of the department by the commission at its November 2018 meeting and in LAC 76:VII.327.E.6 to close the 2018-2019 commercial king mackerel season in Louisiana state waters when he is informed by NOAA Fisheries that the designated portion of the commercial king mackerel quota for the Gulf of Mexico has been filled, or was projected to be filled, the secretary hereby declares:

Effective 12:01 a.m., December 5, 2018, the commercial fishery for king mackerel in Louisiana waters will close and remain closed through June 30, 2019. Nothing herein shall preclude the legal harvest of king mackerel by legally licensed recreational fisherman. Effective with this closure, no person shall commercially harvest, possess, purchase, barter, trade, sell or attempt to purchase, barter, trade or sell king mackerel within or without Louisiana waters. Effective with this closure, no person shall possess king mackerel in excess of a daily bag limit within or without Louisiana waters. The prohibition on sale/purchase of king mackerel during the closure does not apply to king mackerel that were legally harvested, landed ashore, and sold prior to the effective date of the closure and were held in cold storage by a dealer or processor provided appropriate records in accordance with R.S. 56:306.5 and 56:306.6 are properly maintained.

The secretary has been notified by NOAA Fisheries that the commercial king mackerel quota for the western Gulf of Mexico has been projected to be reached. Compatible season regulations in State waters are preferable to provide effective rules and efficient enforcement for the fishery and avoid quota overruns.

Jack Montoucet
Secretary