**ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

**FISH AND WILDLIFE**

**Notice of Administrative Changes**

**Marine Fisheries**

**Modification of Recreational Cobia Possession Limit**

**N.J.A.C. 7:25-18.1**

**Take notice** that, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:25-18.1(p), the Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP or Department), with the approval of the New Jersey Marine Fisheries Council (Council) at its July 10, 2025, meeting, has modified the recreational possession limits cobia. These actions have been taken to comply with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) management plan for cobia.

At its January 9, 2025 meeting, the Council approved increasing the recreational cobia vessel possession limit from one fish to two-fish per vessel. The new measure was implemented through notice on March 10, 2025 to comply with the ASMFC Coastal Pelagics Management Board (Board) approved Addendum II to Amendment 1 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Atlantic Migratory Group Cobia (see https://asmfc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/AtlCobia\_AddendumII\_August2024.pdf). However, the notice inadvertently neglected to modify the one-fish per person possession limit, which was approved in Amendment 1 to the Interstate FMP for Atlantic Migratory Group Cobia in 2019. Since New Jersey’s vessel possession limit was already one fish at that time, and cobia are ordinarily caught offshore, the per person possession limit was inconsequential and never implemented. Now that the vessel limit has increased to two-fish per vessel, New Jersey is required to modify the recreational cobia rules to include the one-fish per person possession limit. Accordingly, the Council approved the recreational cobia fishery possession limit of one fish per person.

These changes will be reflected in the Fish and Wildlife rules at N.J.A.C. 7:25-18.1(c). As required in N.J.A.C. 7:25-18.1(p), changes to N.J.A.C. 7:25-18.1(c) are published in the New Jersey Marine Digest, the New Jersey Register, on the Department’s website, through email, when provided, to commercial license holders, and in the NJDEP Fish & Wildlife commercial regulation publication.

**Full text** of the changed rule follows (additions indicated in boldface **thus**, deletions indicated in brackets [thus]):

SUBCHAPTER 18. MARINE FISHERIES

7:25-18.1 Size, season, and possession limits

(a) – (b) (No change.)

(c) A person angling with a hand line or with a rod and line or using a bait net or spearfishing shall not have in his or her possession any species listed below less than the minimum length, nor shall such person take in any one day or possess more than the possession limits as provided below, nor shall such person possess any species listed below during the closed season for that species. Exceptions to this section as may be provided elsewhere in this subchapter shall be subject to the specific provisions of any such section. Fish length shall measure from the tip of the snout to the tip of the tail (total length), except as noted below:

Species Minimum Size In Inches Open Season Possession Limit

. . .

Cobia 43 Jan. 1 – Dec. 31 **1 per person,** 2 per vessel

. . .

(d) – (r) (No change.)

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Shawn M. LaTourette, Commissioner

Department of Environmental Protection