

comment, and a 30-day delay in effectiveness, prevents the immediate closure of the GOM Cod Trimester 1 TAC Area. Delaying the effective date of a closure increases the likelihood that the common pool fishery will exceed its quota of GOM cod to the detriment of this stock, which could undermine management objectives of the Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan. Additionally, an overage of the common pool quota could cause negative economic impacts to the common pool fishery as a result of overage paybacks in a future trimester or fishing year.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*

Dated: August 16, 2016.

Emily H. Menashes,
Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.
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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 648

[Docket No. 150903814-5999-02]

RIN 0648-XE755

Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Scup Fishery; Adjustment to the 2016 Winter II Quota

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Temporary rule; inseason adjustment.

SUMMARY: NMFS adjusts the 2016 Winter II commercial scup quota. This action complies with Framework Adjustment 3 to the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Fishery Management Plan, which established a process to allow the rollover of unused commercial scup quota from the Winter I period to the Winter II period.

DATES: Effective November 1, 2016, through December 31, 2016.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Reid Lichwell, Fishery Management Specialist, (978) 281-9112.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: NMFS published a final rule in the **Federal Register** on November 3, 2003 (68 FR 62250), implementing a process to roll over unused Winter I commercial scup quota (January 1 through April 30) to be added to the Winter II period quota (November 1 through December 31). This framework also allows adjustment

of the commercial possession limit for the Winter II period dependent on the amount of quota rolled over from the Winter I period.

For 2016, the initial Winter II quota is 3,262,554 lb (1,480 mt), and the best available landings information indicates that 3,192,389 lb (1,448 mt) remain of the Winter I quota of 9,232,987 lb (4,188 mt). Consistent with the intent of Framework 3, the full amount of unused 2016 Winter I quota would be transferred to Winter II, resulting in a revised 2016 Winter II quota of 6,454,943 lb (2,928 mt). Because the amount transferred is greater than 2,000,000 lb (907 mt), the possession limit per trip will increase from 12,000 lb (5,443 kg) to 18,000 lb (8,165 kg), as outlined in the final rule that established the 2016 specifications, published on December 28, 2015 (80 FR 80689).

Classification

This action is required by 50 CFR part 648 and is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866.

The Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA (AA), has determined good cause exists pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(B) to waive prior notice and the opportunity for public comment on this in-season adjustment because it is impracticable and contrary to the public interest. The landings data upon which this action is based are not available on a real-time basis and, consequently, were compiled only a short time before the determination was made that this action is warranted. If implementation of this in-season action is delayed to solicit prior public comment, the objective of the fishery management plan to achieve the optimum yield from the fishery could be compromised; deteriorating weather conditions during the latter part of the fishing year will reduce fishing effort and could prevent the annual quota from being fully harvested. This would conflict with the agency's legal obligation under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act to achieve the optimum yield from a fishery on a continuing basis, resulting in a negative economic impact on vessels permitted to fish in this fishery. Moreover, the rollover process and potential changes in trip limits were already outlined in the 2016 to 2018 specifications published December 28, 2015, that were provided for notice and comment rulemaking. No comments were received on either part.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*

Dated: August 17, 2016.

Emily H. Menashes,
Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.
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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 648

[Docket No. 150903814-5999-02]

RIN 0648-XE810

Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Summer Flounder Fishery; Commercial Quota Harvested for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Temporary rule; closure.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces that the 2016 summer flounder commercial quota allocated to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has been harvested. Vessels issued a commercial Federal fisheries permit for the summer flounder fishery may not land summer flounder in Massachusetts for the remainder of calendar year 2016, unless additional quota becomes available through a transfer from another state. Regulations governing the summer flounder fishery require publication of this notification to advise Massachusetts that the quota has been harvested and to advise vessel permit holders and dealer permit holders that no Federal commercial quota is available for landing summer flounder in Massachusetts.

DATES: Effective 0001 hours, August 19, 2016, through December 31, 2016.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Reid Lichwell, (978) 281-9112, or Reid.Lichwell@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Regulations governing the summer flounder fishery are found at 50 CFR part 648. The regulations require annual specification of a commercial quota that is apportioned on a percentage basis among the coastal states from North Carolina through Maine. The process to set the annual commercial quota and the percent allocated to each state is described in § 648.102.

The initial commercial quota for summer flounder for the 2016 calendar year was set equal to 8,124,035 lb (3,684,997 kg) (80 FR 80689, December

28, 2015). The percent allocated to vessels landing summer flounder in Massachusetts is 6.82046 percent, resulting in an initial commercial quota of 554,097 lb (251,334 kg). This allocation was adjusted to 577,777 lb (262,075 kg) after Massachusetts received quota transfers from the states of Virginia and North Carolina.

The Administrator, Greater Atlantic Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator), monitors the state commercial landings and determines when a state's commercial quota has been harvested. NMFS is required to publish notification in the **Federal Register** advising and notifying commercial vessels and dealer permit holders that, effective upon a specific date, the state's commercial quota has been harvested and no commercial quota is no longer available to landing summer flounder in that state. The Regional Administrator has determined, based upon dealer reports and other available information, that the 2016 Massachusetts commercial summer flounder quota will be harvested by August 12, 2016.

Section 648.4(b) provides that Federal permit holders agree, as a condition of the permit, not to land summer flounder in any state that the Regional Administrator has determined no longer has commercial quota available. Therefore, effective 0001 hours, August 19, 2016, landings of summer flounder in Massachusetts by vessels holding summer flounder commercial Federal fisheries permits are prohibited for the remainder of the 2016 calendar year, unless additional quota becomes available through a transfer and is announced in the **Federal Register**. Effective 0001 hours, August 19, 2016, federally permitted dealers are also notified that they may not purchase summer flounder from federally permitted vessels that land in Massachusetts for the remainder of the calendar year, or unless additional quota becomes available through a transfer from another state.

Classification

This action is required by 50 CFR part 648 and is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866.

The Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA (AA), finds good cause pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(B) to waive prior notice and the opportunity for public comment because it would be contrary to the public interest. This action closes the summer flounder fishery for Massachusetts until January 1, 2017, under current regulations. The regulations at § 648.103(b) require such action to ensure that summer flounder vessels do not exceed quotas allocated to the states. If implementation of this closure was delayed to solicit prior public comment, the quota for this fishing year would be exceeded, thereby undermining the conservation objectives of the Summer Flounder Fishery Management Plan. The AA further finds, good cause to waive the 30-day delayed effectiveness period, as outline in 5 U.S.C. 553(d)(3), for the reason stated above.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*

Dated: August 17, 2016.

Emily H. Menashes,
Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.
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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 648

[Docket No. 151130999-6225-01]

RIN 0648-XE802

Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Atlantic Bluefish Fishery; Quota Transfer

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Temporary rule; quota transfer.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces that the states of Florida and Delaware and the Commonwealth of Virginia are transferring portions of their 2016 commercial bluefish quota to the

Commonwealth of Massachusetts. These quota adjustments are necessary to comply with the Atlantic Bluefish Fishery Management Plan quota transfer provision. This announcement informs the public of the revised commercial quotas.

DATES: Effective August 19, 2016, through December 31, 2016.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Reid Lichwell, Fishery Management Specialist, (978) 281-9112.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Regulations governing the Atlantic bluefish fishery are found in 50 CFR 648.160 through 648.167. The regulations require annual specification of a commercial quota that is apportioned among the coastal states from Maine through Florida. The process to set the annual commercial quota and the percent allocated to each state are described in § 648.162.

The final rule implementing Amendment 1 to the Bluefish Fishery Management Plan published in the **Federal Register** on July 26, 2000 (65 FR 45844), provided a mechanism for transferring bluefish quota from one state to another. Two or more states, under mutual agreement and with the concurrence of the Administrator, Greater Atlantic Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator), can transfer or combine bluefish commercial quota under § 648.162(e)(1)(i) through (iii). The Regional Administrator is required to consider the criteria in § 648.162(e) in the evaluation of requests for quota transfers or combinations.

The transfers and the final revised quotas are shown in Table 1. These quota transfers were requested by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to ensure that its 2016 quota would not be exceeded. The Regional Administrator has determined that the criteria set forth in § 648.162(e)(1)(i) through (iii) have been met. The quotas in Table 1 are based on the final rule implementing the 2016-2018 Atlantic Bluefish Specifications that became effective August 4, 2016 (81 FR 18559), and any subsequent approved state transfers.

TABLE 1—ATLANTIC BLUEFISH TRANSFERS, BY STATE

State	Transfer		Final 2016 quota	
	lb	kg	lb	kg
Massachusetts	150,000	68,039	478,096	216,861
Delaware	– 50,000	– 22,679	41,746	18,935
Virginia	– 50,000	– 22,679	450,287	204,246
Florida	– 50,000	– 22,679	341,394	154,853