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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 648

[Docket No. 140117052-4402-02]

RIN 0648-XE156

Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Scup Fishery; Adjustment to the 2015 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 2015 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, 2015, through December 31, 2015.

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 2015, the initial Winter II quota is 3,384,470 lb (1,535 mt), and the best available landings information indicates that 2,084,256 lb (945 mt) of the Winter I quota remains unused. The 2015 Winter I quota was 9,578,008 lb (4,344 mt). Consistent with the intent of Framework 3, the full amount of unused 2015 Winter I quota is transferred to Winter II, resulting in a revised 2015 Winter II quota of 5,468,726 lb (2,481 mt). Because the amount transferred is greater than 2,000,000 lb (907 mt), the per trip possession limit will increase from 12,000 lb (5,443 kg) to 18,000 lb (8,165 kg) during the Winter II quota period, consistent with the final rule that increased the Winter II trip limit, published on May 22, 2014 (79 FR 29371).

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.

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

Dated: September 16, 2015

Alan D. Risenhoover,
Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries,
National Marine Fisheries Service.

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