



**BILLING CODE 3510-22-P**

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

**50 CFR Part 648**

**[Docket No. 161017970-6999-02]**

**RIN 0648-XF408**

**Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Summer Flounder 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 State of North Carolina is transferring a portion of its 2017 commercial summer flounder quota to the Commonwealth of Virginia. This quota adjustment is necessary to comply with the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Fishery Management Plan quota transfer provision. This announcement informs the public of the revised commercial quotas for North Carolina and Virginia.

**DATES:** Effective [*Insert date of filing for public inspection with the Office of the Federal Register*], through December 31, 2017.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Cynthia Hanson, Fishery Management Specialist, (978)-281-9180.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

Regulations governing the summer flounder fishery are found in 50 CFR 648.100 through

648.110. These regulations require annual specification of a commercial quota that is apportioned among the coastal states from Maine through North Carolina. The process to set the annual commercial quota and the percent allocated to each state is described in § 648.102, and the initial 2017 allocations were published on December 22, 2016 (81 FR 93842).

The final rule implementing Amendment 5 to the Summer Flounder Fishery Management Plan, as published in the **Federal Register** on December 17, 1993 (58 FR 65936), provided a mechanism for transferring summer flounder commercial quota from one state to another. Two or more states, under mutual agreement and with the concurrence of the NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Administrator, can transfer or combine summer flounder commercial quota under § 648.102(c)(2). The Regional Administrator is required to consider the criteria in § 648.102(c)(2)(i)(A) through (C) in the evaluation of requests for quota transfers or combinations.

North Carolina is transferring 2,510 lb (1,139 kg) of summer flounder commercial quota to Virginia. This transfer was requested by North Carolina to repay landings by a North Carolina-permitted vessel that landed in Virginia under a safe harbor agreement.

The revised summer flounder quotas for calendar year 2017 are now: North Carolina, 1,539,693 lb (698,393 kg); and Virginia, 1,219,912 lb (553,343 kg); based on the initial quotas published in the 2017 Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Specifications and subsequent transfers.

**Classification**

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

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

Dated: May 12, 2017.

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National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 2017-10005 Filed: 5/15/2017 11:15 am; Publication Date: 5/18/2017]