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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 648

[Docket No. 170828822-70999-04]

RIN 0648-XG669

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 Commonwealth of Virginia is transferring a portion of its 2018 commercial summer flounder quota to the State of Connecticut. This quota adjustment is necessary to comply with the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Fishery Management Plan quota transfer provisions. This announcement informs the public of the revised commercial quotas for Virginia and Connecticut.

DATES: Effective December 14, 2018, through December 31, 2018.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Cynthia Ferrio, 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 2018 allocations were published on December 22, 2017 (82 FR 60682), and corrected January 30, 2018 (83 FR 4165).

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.

Virginia is transferring 20,000 lb (9,072 kg) of summer flounder commercial quota to Connecticut through mutual agreement of the states. Based on the initial quotas published in the 2018 Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Specifications and subsequent adjustments, the revised summer flounder quotas for calendar year 2018 are now: Virginia, 1,351,972 lb (613,244 kg); and Connecticut, 167,768 lb (76,098 kg).

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: December 11, 2018.

Jennifer M. Wallace,
Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries,
National Marine Fisheries Service.

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