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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 648

[Docket No. 190312234-9412-01]

RIN 0648-XX012

Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Summer Flounder Fishery; Quota

Transfers from NC to VA and ME to CT

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 North Carolina and Maine are transferring a portion of their respective 2019 commercial summer flounder quotas to the Commonwealth of Virginia and the State of Connecticut. These quota adjustments are 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 North Carolina, Virginia, Maine, and Connecticut.

DATES: Effective September 30, 2019, through December 31, 2019.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Laura Hansen, Fishery Management Specialist, (978) 281-9225.

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 revised 2019 allocations were published on May 17, 2019 (84 FR 22392).

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 12,500 lb (5,667 kg) of summer flounder commercial quota to Virginia through mutual agreement of the states. This transfer was requested to repay landings made by North Carolina-permitted vessels in Virginia under a safe harbor agreement. Maine is transferring 5,224 lb (2,369 kg) of summer flounder, its full 2019 allocation, to Connecticut through mutual agreements of the states. The revised summer flounder quotas for fishing year 2019 are now: North Carolina, 2,957,742 lb (1,341,609 kg); Virginia, 2,390,710 lb (1,084,407 kg); Maine, 0 lb (0 kg); and Connecticut, 253,119 lb (114,813 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: September 26, 2019.

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

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