



DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 648

[Docket No. 221223-0282; RTID 0648-XD195]

Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Summer Flounder Fishery; Quota Transfer from North Carolina to Virginia

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

ACTION: Notification of quota transfer.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces that the State of North Carolina is transferring a portion of its 2023 commercial summer flounder quota to the Commonwealth of Virginia. This adjustment to the 2023 fishing year quota 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 2023 commercial quotas for North Carolina and Virginia.

DATES: Effective August 17, 2023, through December 31, 2023.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Laura Deighan, Fishery Management Specialist, (978) 281-9184.

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 final 2023 allocations were published on January 3, 2023 (88 FR 11).

The final rule implementing Amendment 5 to the Summer Flounder Fishery

Management Plan (FMP), 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 three criteria in the evaluation of requests for quota transfers or combinations: the transfer or combinations would not preclude the overall annual quota from being fully harvested; the transfer addresses an unforeseen variation or contingency in the fishery; and the transfer is consistent with the objectives of the FMP and the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act). The Regional Administrator has determined these three criteria have been met for the transfer approved in this notification.

North Carolina is transferring 1,232 lb (559 kg) to Virginia through a mutual agreement between the states. This transfer was requested to repay landings made by an out-of-state permitted vessel under a safe harbor agreement. The revised summer flounder quotas for 2023 are North Carolina, 3,302,053 lb (1,497,786 kg), and Virginia, 2,744,463 lb (1,244,867 kg).

Classification

NMFS issues this action pursuant to section 305(d) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act. This action is required by 50 CFR 648.162(e)(1)(i) through (iii), which was issued pursuant to section 304(b), and is exempted from review under Executive Order 12866.

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

Dated: August 15, 2023

Kelly Denit,

Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries,

National Marine Fisheries Service.

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