



DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 648

[Docket No. 241203-0308; RTID 0648-XG045]

Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Atlantic Bluefish Fishery; Quota

Transfer from New Jersey to North Carolina

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 New Jersey is transferring a portion of their 2026 commercial bluefish quota to the State of North Carolina. This quota adjustment is necessary to comply with the Atlantic Bluefish Fishery Management Plan (FMP) quota transfer provisions. This announcement informs the public of the revised 2026 commercial bluefish quotas for New Jersey and North Carolina.

DATES: Effective [INSERT DATE OF FILING FOR PUBLIC INSPECTION WITH THE OFFICE OF THE *FEDERAL REGISTER*] through December 31, 2026.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Matthew Rigdon, Fishery Management Specialist, (978) 281-9336.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Regulations governing the Atlantic bluefish fishery are found in 50 CFR 648.160 through 648.167. These regulations require annual specification of a commercial quota that is apportioned among the coastal states from Maine through Florida. The process to set the annual commercial quota and the percent allocated to each state is described in § 648.162, and the final 2026 allocations were published on February 19, 2026 (91 FR 7896).

The final rule implementing amendment 1 to the FMP, as published in the

Federal Register on July 26, 2000 (65 FR 45844), provided a mechanism for transferring bluefish 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 request approval to transfer or combine bluefish commercial quota under § 648.162(e). The Regional Administrator is required to consider three criteria in the evaluation of requests for quota transfers or combinations: (1) the transfers would not preclude the overall annual quota from being fully harvested; (2) the transfers address an unforeseen variation or contingency in the fishery; and (3) the transfers are 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 criteria have been met for the transfers approved in this notification.

New Jersey is transferring 250,000 pounds (lb) (113,398 kilograms (kg)) of Atlantic bluefish to North Carolina through mutual agreement of the states. This transfer was requested to ensure North Carolina would not exceed its 2026 state quota. The revised bluefish quotas for 2026 are: New Jersey, 408,379 lb (185,238 kg); and North Carolina, 1,743,521 lb (790,848 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: September 9, 2026.

Shannon Bettridge,

Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries,

National Marine Fisheries Service.

