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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 648

[Docket No. 151130999-6225-01]

RIN 0648-XE949

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

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

ACTION: Temporary rule; approval of quota transfers.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces its approval of two transfers of 2016 commercial bluefish quota from the States of New Hampshire and North Carolina to the State of New York. The approval of these transfers complies with the Atlantic Bluefish Fishery Management Plan quota transfer provision. This announcement also informs the public of the revised commercial quotas for New Hampshire, North Carolina, and New York.

DATES: Effective [*Insert date of filing for public inspection at the Office of the Federal Register*], through December 31, 2016.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Reid Lichwell, Fishery Management Specialist, (978) 281-9112.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Regulations governing the Atlantic bluefish fishery are found in 50 CFR 648.160 through

648.167. The 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 are described in § 648.162.

The final rule implementing Amendment 1 to the Bluefish Fishery Management Plan published in the **Federal Register** on July 26, 2000 (65 FR 45844), and provided a mechanism for transferring commercial bluefish quota from one state to another. Two or more states, under mutual agreement and with the concurrence of the Administrator, Greater Atlantic Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator), can request approval of a transfer of bluefish commercial quota under § 648.162(e)(1)(i) through (iii). The Regional Administrator must first approve any such transfers based on the criteria in § 648.162(e).

New Hampshire has agreed to transfer 20,000 lb (9,072 kg), and North Carolina 50,000 lb (22,680 kg) of their 2016 commercial bluefish quotas to New York. These states have certified that the transfers meet all pertinent state requirements. These quota transfers were requested by New York to ensure that its 2016 quota would not be exceeded. The Regional Administrator has approved these quota transfers based on his determination that the criteria set forth in § 648.162(e)(1)(i) through (iii) have been met. The revised bluefish quotas for calendar year 2016 are: New Hampshire, 247 lb (112 kg); North Carolina, 1,341,100 lb (608,313kg) and New York, 747, 289 lb (338,965 kg). These quota adjustments revise the quotas specified in the final rule implementing the 2016-2018 Atlantic Bluefish Specifications published on August 4, 2016 (81 FR 51370), and reflect all subsequent commercial bluefish quota transfers completed to date. For information of previous transfers for fishing year 2016 visit the Greater Atlantic Region's quota monitoring page at <http://go.usa.gov/xZT8H>.

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: October 21, 2016

Emily H. Menashes,
Acting Director,
Office of Sustainable Fisheries,
National Marine Fisheries Service.

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