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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 648

[Docket No.200623-0167]

RTID 0648-XA381

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

Transfer from VA to RI

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

ACTION: Notification; quota transfer.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces that the Commonwealth of Virginia is transferring a portion of its 2020 commercial bluefish quota to the State of Rhode Island. This quota adjustment is necessary to comply with the Atlantic Bluefish Fishery Management Plan quota transfer provisions. This announcement informs the public of the revised commercial bluefish quotas for Virginia and Rhode Island.

DATES: Effective [*insert date of filing for public inspection with the Office of the Federal Register*], through December 31, 2020.

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

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 2020 allocations were published on June 29, 2020 (85 FR 38794).

The final rule implementing Amendment 1 to the Bluefish Fishery Management Plan (FMP) published in the **Federal Register** on July 26, 2000 (65 FR 45844), and provided a mechanism for transferring bluefish 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)(1)(i) through (iii). The Regional Administrator must first approve any such transfer based on the criteria in § 648.162(e). 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 Act.

Virginia is transferring 50,000 lb (22,680 kg) of bluefish commercial quota to Rhode Island through mutual agreement of the states. This transfer was requested to ensure that Rhode Island would not exceed its 2020 state quota. The revised bluefish quotas for 2020 are: Virginia, 278,682 lb (126,408 kg) and Rhode Island, 238,366 lb (108,121 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 19, 2020.

Jennifer M. Wallace,

Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries,

National Marine Fisheries Service.

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