

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration****50 CFR Part 648**

[Docket No. 120201086-2418-02]

RIN 0648-XC235

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

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 North Carolina is transferring a portion of its 2012 commercial bluefish quota to the State of New Hampshire. By this action, NMFS adjusts the quotas and announces the revised commercial quota for each state involved.

DATES: Effective September 25, 2012, through December 31, 2012.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

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SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Regulations governing the bluefish fishery are found at 50 CFR part 648. The regulations require annual specification of a commercial quota that is apportioned among the coastal states from Florida through Maine. 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, which was published on July 26, 2000 (65 FR 45844), provided a mechanism for bluefish quota to be transferred from one state to another. Two or more states, under mutual agreement and with the concurrence of the Administrator, Northeast Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator), can transfer or combine bluefish commercial quota under § 648.162(e). The Regional Administrator is required to consider the criteria in § 648.162(e)(1) in the

evaluation of requests for quota transfers or combinations.

North Carolina has agreed to transfer 100,000 lb (45,359 kg) of its 2012 commercial quota to New Hampshire. This transfer was prompted by the diligent efforts of state officials in New Hampshire not to exceed the commercial bluefish quota. The Regional Administrator has determined that the criteria set forth in § 648.162(e)(1) have been met. The revised bluefish quotas for calendar year 2012 are: North Carolina, 3,207,827 lb (1,445,046 kg); and New Hampshire, 142,765 lb (64,757 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 20, 2012.

James P. Burgess,

Acting Deputy Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.

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