

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 648

[Docket No. 061109296-7009-02]

RIN 0648-XE07

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

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

ACTION: Temporary rule; inseason quota transfer.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces that the State of Delaware is transferring commercial bluefish quota to the State of Rhode Island from its 2007 quota. By this action, NMFS adjusts the quotas and announces the revised commercial quota for each state involved.

DATES: Effective November 21, 2007, through December 31, 2007.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Emily Bryant, Fishery Management Specialist, (978) 281-9244, fax (978) 281-9135.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Regulations governing the Atlantic 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 is described in § 648.160.

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 § 648.160(f). The Regional Administrator is required to consider the criteria set forth in § 648.160(f)(1) in the evaluation of requests for quota transfers or combinations.

Delaware has agreed to transfer 80,000 lb (36,287 kg) of its 2007 commercial quota to Rhode Island. The Regional Administrator has determined that the criteria set forth in § 648.160(f)(1) have been met. The revised bluefish quotas for calendar year 2007 are: Rhode Island, 663,790 lb (301,090 kg); and Delaware, 81,055 lb (36,766 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: November 21, 2007.

Emily Menashes,

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

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 648

[Docket No. 061109296-7009-02]

RIN 0648-XD64

Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Atlantic Bluefish Fishery; Commercial Quota Harvested for New York

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

ACTION: Temporary rule; closure.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces that the 2007 Atlantic bluefish commercial quota allocated to the State of New York has been harvested. Vessels issued a commercial Federal fisheries permit for the Atlantic bluefish fishery may not land bluefish in New York for the remainder of calendar year 2007, unless additional quota becomes available through a transfer from another state. Regulations governing the Atlantic bluefish fishery require publication of this notification to advise New York that the quota has been harvested and to advise vessel permit holders and dealer permit holders that no commercial quota is available for landing bluefish in New York.

DATES: Effective 0001 hours, November 27, 2007, through 2400 hours, December 31, 2007.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Emily Bryant, Fishery Management Specialist, (978) 281-9244.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Regulations governing the Atlantic bluefish fishery are found at 50 CFR part 648. The regulations require annual specification of a commercial quota that is apportioned on a percentage basis among the coastal states from Florida through Maine. The process to set the annual commercial quota and the percent allocated to each state is described in § 648.160.

The initial total commercial quota for Atlantic bluefish for the 2007 calendar year was set equal to 8,688,760 lb (3,941 mt) (72 FR 4458, January 31, 2007). The percent allocated to vessels landing

bluefish in New York is 10.3851 percent, resulting in a commercial quota of 902,336 lb (409,927 kg). The 2007 allocation was reduced to 884,278 lb (401,106 kg) when research set-aside was deducted and after the 2006 overages had been applied.

Subsequently, during the 2007 fishing year, New York received two transfers of bluefish quota from Virginia in the amounts of 150,000 lb (68,039 kg) (72 FR 10934) and 200,000 lb (90,718 kg) (72 FR 62416). These transfers increased New York's bluefish quota allocation to 1,234,278 lb (559,859 kg).

Section 648.161(b) requires the Administrator, Northeast Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator) to monitor state commercial quotas and to determine when a state's commercial quota has been harvested. NMFS then publishes a notification in the **Federal Register** to advise the state and to notify Federal vessel and dealer permit holders that, effective upon a specific date, the state's commercial quota has been harvested and no commercial quota is available for landing bluefish in that state. The Regional Administrator has determined, based upon dealer reports and other available information, that New York has harvested its quota for 2007.

The regulations at § 648.4(b) provide that Federal permit holders agree, as a condition of the permit, not to land bluefish in any state that the Regional Administrator has determined no longer has commercial quota available. Therefore, effective 0001 hours, November 27, 2007, further landings of bluefish in New York by vessels holding bluefish commercial Federal fisheries permits are prohibited for the remainder of the 2007 calendar year, unless additional quota becomes available through a transfer and is announced in the **Federal Register**. Effective 0001 hours, November 27, 2007, federally permitted dealers are also notified that they may not purchase bluefish from federally permitted vessels that land in New York for the remainder of the calendar year, or until additional quota becomes available through a transfer from another state.

Classification

This action is required by 50 CFR part 648 and is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866.

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

Dated: November 21, 2007.

Emily H. Menashes,

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

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