

Areas 1B and 2 open on January 1 and Area 1A opens on June 1. The adjustments in this action reduce catch in Areas 1A and 1B and increase catch in Area 2. Putting in place the adjusted specifications as soon as possible will provide the fleet with an opportunity to develop their business plans in sufficient time to avoid an overharvest in Areas 1A and 1B and facilitate the harvest of additional catch in Area 2.

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

This final rule does not contain a collection-of-information requirement for purposes of the Paperwork Reduction Act.

Because prior notice and opportunity for public comment are not required for this rule by 5 U.S.C. 553, or any other law, the analytical requirements of the Regulatory Flexibility Act, 5 U.S.C. 601 *et seq.*, are inapplicable.

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

Dated: February 28, 2024.

Samuel D. Rauch III,

Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, National Marine Fisheries Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 648

[Docket No. 231215-0305; RTID 0648-XD770]

Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Summer Flounder Fishery; Quota Transfer From Virginia to Massachusetts

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

ACTION: Temporary rule; quota transfer.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces that the Commonwealth of Virginia is transferring a portion of its 2024 commercial summer flounder quota to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. This adjustment to the 2024 fishing year quota is necessary to comply with the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Fishery Management Plan (FMP) quota transfer provisions. This announcement informs the public of the revised 2024 commercial quotas for Virginia and Massachusetts.

DATES: Effective March 1, 2024, through December 31, 2024.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Laura Deighan, Fishery Management Specialist, (978) 281-9184.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Regulations governing the summer flounder fishery are found in 50 CFR 648.100 through 648.111. These regulations require annual specification of a commercial quota that is apportioned among the coastal states from Maine through North Carolina. The process to set the annual commercial quota and the percent allocated to each state is described in § 648.102 and final 2024 allocations were published on December 21, 2023 (88 FR 88266).

The final rule implementing amendment 5 to the Summer Flounder FMP, as published in the **Federal Register** on December 17, 1993 (58 FR 65936), provided a mechanism for transferring summer flounder 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 transfer or combine summer flounder commercial quota under § 648.102(c)(2). The Regional Administrator is required to consider three criteria in the evaluation of requests for quota transfers or combinations: (1) the transfers or combinations 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 three criteria have been met for the transfer approved in this notification.

Virginia is transferring 8,186 pounds (lb; 3,713 kilograms (kg)) to Massachusetts through a mutual agreement between the States. This transfer was requested to repay landings made by an out-of-state permitted vessel under a safe harbor agreement. The revised summer flounder quotas for 2024 are: Virginia, 1,879,801 lb (852,663 kg); and Massachusetts, 607,693 lb (275,645 kg).

Classification

NMFS issues this action pursuant to section 305(d) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act. This action is required by 50 CFR 648.102(c)(2)(i) through (iv), 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: February 28, 2024.

Everett Wayne Baxter,

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

[FR Doc. 2024-04524 Filed 3-1-24; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 240227-0061; RTID 0648-XD436]

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Gulf of Alaska; Final 2024 and 2025 Harvest Specifications for Groundfish

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

ACTION: Final rule; harvest specifications and closures.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces final 2024 and 2025 harvest specifications, apportionments, and Pacific halibut prohibited species catch limits for the groundfish fishery of the Gulf of Alaska (GOA). This action is necessary to establish harvest limits for groundfish during the remainder of the 2024 and the start of the 2025 fishing years and to accomplish the goals and objectives of the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish of the Gulf of Alaska (FMP). The 2024 harvest specifications supersede those previously set in the final 2023 and 2024 harvest specifications, and the 2025 harvest specifications will be superseded in early 2025 when the final 2025 and 2026 harvest specifications are published. The intended effect of this action is to conserve and manage the groundfish resources in the GOA in accordance with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act).

DATES: Harvest specifications and closures are effective at 1200 hours, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), March 4, 2024, through 2400 hours, A.l.t., December 31, 2025.

ADDRESSES: Electronic copies of the Final Alaska Groundfish Harvest Specifications Environmental Impact Statement (Final EIS), Record of Decision (ROD), and the annual Supplementary Information Reports (SIRs) to the EIS prepared for this action are available from <https://www.regulations.gov>. The 2023 Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation