

through December season by September 29, 2024. Accordingly, the commercial sector for South Atlantic snowy grouper is closed starting on September 29, 2024, and remains closed through December 31, 2024.

The operator of a vessel with a valid commercial vessel permit for South Atlantic snapper-grouper having snowy grouper on board must have landed and bartered, traded, or sold such snowy grouper before September 29, 2024. During the commercial closure, the sale or purchase of snowy grouper taken from South Atlantic Federal waters is prohibited. The prohibition on sale or purchase does not apply to the sale or purchase of snowy grouper that were harvested, landed ashore, and sold before September 29, 2024, and were held in cold storage by a dealer or processor. The recreational harvest of snowy grouper is also closed for the rest of 2024 [50 CFR 622.183(b)(8)], and therefore, the bag and possession limits of snowy grouper harvested in or from the South Atlantic are zero.

For a person on a vessel issued a valid Federal commercial or charter vessel/headboat permit for South Atlantic snapper-grouper, the bag and possession limits and the sale and purchase provisions during the commercial closure for snowy grouper apply regardless of whether the fish are harvested in State or Federal waters, as specified in 50 CFR 622.190(c)(1)(ii).

#### Classification

NMFS issues this action pursuant to section 305(d) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act. This action is required by 50 CFR 622.193(b)(1), which was issued pursuant to section 304(b) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, and is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866.

Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(B), there is good cause to waive prior notice and an opportunity for public comment as such procedures are unnecessary and contrary to the public interest. Such procedures are unnecessary because the regulations associated with the commercial quota and accountability measures for South Atlantic snowy grouper have already been subject to notice and comment, and all that remains is to notify the public of the commercial closure for the remainder of the July through December fishing season this year. Prior notice and opportunity for public comment on this action is contrary to the public interest

because of the need to immediately implement the commercial closure to protect South Atlantic snowy grouper, because the capacity of the fishing fleet allows for rapid harvest of the commercial quota. Prior notice and opportunity for public comment would require time and would potentially result in a harvest that exceeds the commercial quota.

For the reasons just stated, there is good cause under 5 U.S.C. 553(d)(3) to waive the 30-day delay in the effective date of this action.

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

Dated: September 24, 2024.

**Karen H. Abrams,**

*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. 231221-0314; RTID 0648-XE335]**

#### Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Atlantic Bluefish Fishery; Quota Transfer From New Jersey to North Carolina

**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 New Jersey is transferring a portion of their 2024 commercial bluefish quota to the State of North Carolina. This quota adjustment is necessary to comply with the Atlantic Bluefish Fishery Management Plan (FMP) quota transfer provisions. This announcement informs the public of the revised 2024 commercial bluefish quotas for New Jersey and North Carolina.

**DATES:** Effective September 26, 2024, through December 31, 2024.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Matthew Rigdon, Fishery Management Specialist, (978) 281-9336.

**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 2024 allocations were published on January 2, 2024 (89 FR 34).

The final rule implementing amendment 1 to the FMP, as published in the **Federal Register** on July 26, 2000 (65 FR 45844), provided a mechanism for transferring bluefish 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 request approval to transfer or combine bluefish commercial quota under § 648.162(e). The Regional Administrator is required to consider three criteria in the evaluation of requests for quota transfers or combinations: (1) the transfers 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 criteria have been met for the transfers approved in this notification.

New Jersey is transferring 100,000 lb (45,359 kg) to North Carolina through mutual agreement of the states. This transfer was requested to ensure North Carolina would not exceed its 2024 state quota. The revised bluefish quotas for 2024 are: New Jersey, 148,898 lb (67,539 kg) and North Carolina, 965,996 lb (438,168 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: September 24, 2024.

**Karen H. Abrams,**

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

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