

■ 2. In § 300.223, revise paragraphs (b)(2) and (b)(3)(i) to read as follows:

§ 300.223 Purse seine fishing restrictions.

* * * * *

(b) * * *

(2) The requirements of paragraph (b)(1) of this section shall apply:

(i) From July 1 through August 15, in each calendar year;

(ii) In any area of high seas, from December 1 through December 31, in each calendar year.

(3)(i) *Activating FADs for purse seine vessels.* A vessel owner, operator, or crew of a fishing vessel of the United States equipped with purse seine gear shall turn on the tracking equipment of an active FAD while the FAD is onboard the vessel and before it is deployed in the water in the Convention Area.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 648

[Docket No. 231215–0305; RTID 0648–XE235]

Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Summer Flounder Fishery; Quota Transfer From North Carolina to Rhode Island

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 2024 commercial summer flounder quota to the State of Rhode Island. 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 North Carolina and Rhode Island.

DATES: Effective August 28, 2024 through December 31, 2024.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Caroline Potter, Fishery Resource Management Specialist, (978) 281–9325.

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 the final 2024 allocations were published on December 21, 2023 (88 FR 88266).

The final rule implementing amendment 5 to the 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.

North Carolina is transferring 12,120 pounds (lb; 5,498 kilograms (kg)) to Rhode Island 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: North Carolina, 2,341,075 lb (1,061,894 kg); and Rhode Island, 1,394,426 lb (632,501 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) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, and is exempted from review under Executive Order 12866.

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

Dated: August 26, 2024.

Lindsay Fullenkamp,

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. 240826–0226; RTID 0648–XD769]

Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Northeast Multispecies Fishery; 2024–2026 Small-Mesh Multispecies Specifications

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

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: NMFS approves and implements final small-mesh multispecies specifications for the 2024 fishing year, and projected specifications for fishing years 2025 and 2026. This action is necessary to establish allowable harvest levels and other management measures consistent with the most recent scientific information. This rule informs the public of these final fishery specifications for the 2024 fishing year.

DATES: Effective September 30, 2024.

ADDRESSES: The New England Fishery Management Council prepared an environmental assessment (EA) for these specifications that describes the action and other considered alternatives. The EA provides: an analysis of the biological, economic, and social impacts of the preferred measures and other considered alternatives; a Regulatory Impact Review; and an economic analysis. Copies of these specifications, including the EA, Regulatory Flexibility Act Analyses, and other supporting documents for the action are available upon request from Dr. Cate O’Keefe, Executive Director, New England Fishery Management Council, 50 Water Street, Newburyport, MA 01950. These documents are also accessible via the internet at: <https://www.nefmc.org/library/2024-2026-small-mesh-multispecies-whiting-specifications>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Shannah Jaburek, Fishery Policy Analyst, (978) 282–8456.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

The New England Fishery Management Council (Council) manages the small-mesh multispecies fishery within the Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan (FMP). The small-mesh multispecies fishery is made up of three species of hakes that are