

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 648

[Docket No. 020313058-2094-02; I.D. 062702E]

Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Spiny Dogfish Fishery; Commercial Quota Harvested for Period 1

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

ACTION: Closure; commercial quota for period 1.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces that the period 1 spiny dogfish commercial quota available to the coastal states from Maine through Florida has been harvested. Federally permitted commercial vessels may no longer land spiny dogfish for the duration of period 1 (through October 31, 2002). Regulations governing the spiny dogfish fishery require publication of this notification to advise the coastal states from Maine through Florida that the quota has been harvested and to advise vessel permit holders and dealer permit holders that no commercial quota is available for landing spiny dogfish in these states.

DATES: Effective 0001 hrs local time, July 1, 2002, through 2400 hrs local time, October 31, 2002.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Myles Raizin, Fishery Policy Analyst, at (978) 281-9104.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Regulations governing the spiny dogfish fishery are found at 50 CFR part 648.

The regulations require annual specification of a commercial quota, which is allocated into two quota periods based upon percentages of the annual quota. The period 1 commercial quota (May through October) is distributed to the coastal states from Maine through Florida as described in § 648.230.

The initial total commercial quota for spiny dogfish for the 2001 fishing year was 4,000,000 lb (1,814 mt) (67 FR 30614, May 7, 2002). The commercial quota is allocated into two periods (May 1 through October 31, and November 1 through April 30), with trip limits intended to preclude directed fishing. Quota period 1 was allocated 2,316,000 lb (1,050 mt) and quota period 2 was allocated 1,684,000 lb (764 mt) of the commercial quota, respectively.

The Administrator, Northeast Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator) monitors the commercial spiny dogfish quota for each quota period and, based upon dealer reports, state data and other available information, determines when the commercial quota has been harvested. NMFS is required to publish a notice in the **Federal Register** advising and notifying commercial vessels and dealer permit holders that, effective upon a specific date, the spiny dogfish commercial quota has been harvested and no commercial quota is available for landing spiny dogfish for the remainder of a given quota period. The Regional Administrator has determined, based upon dealer reports and other available information, that the 2002 commercial

period 1 quota for spiny dogfish has been harvested.

Section 648.4(b) provides that Federal spiny dogfish permit holders agree, as a condition of the permit, not to land spiny dogfish in any state after NMFS has published notification in the **Federal Register** that the commercial quota for the period has been harvested and that no commercial quota for the spiny dogfish fishery is available. The Regional Administrator has determined that period 1 for spiny dogfish no longer has commercial quota available. Therefore, effective 0001 hrs local time, July 1, 2002, landings of spiny dogfish in coastal states from Maine through Florida by vessels holding commercial Federal fisheries permits are prohibited through October 31, 2002, 2400 hrs local time. The fishing year 2002 quota period 2 for commercial spiny dogfish harvest will open on November 1, 2002. Effective July 1, 2002, federally permitted dealers are also advised that they may not purchase spiny dogfish from vessels issued federal spiny dogfish permits that land in coastal states from Maine through Florida.

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: June 27, 2002.

John H. Dunnigan,

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

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