

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Laura Deighan, Fishery Management Specialist, (978) 281-9184.

**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 2022 allocations were published on February 2, 2022 (87 FR 5739).

The final rule implementing Amendment 1 to the Bluefish Fishery Management Plan (FMP) published in the **Federal Register** on July 26, 2000 (65 FR 45844), and provided a mechanism for transferring bluefish 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)(1)(i) through (iii). The Regional Administrator must approve any such transfer based on the criteria in § 648.162(e). In evaluating requests to transfer a quota or combine quotas, the Regional Administrator shall consider whether: The transfer or combinations would preclude the overall annual quota from being fully harvested; the transfer addresses an unforeseen variation or contingency in the fishery; and the transfer is consistent with the objectives of the FMP and the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

Virginia is transferring 40,000 lb (18,144 kg) to New York and 40,000 lb (18,144 kg) to Rhode Island through mutual agreement of the states. These transfers were requested to ensure that New York and Rhode Island would not exceed their 2022 state quotas. The revised bluefish quotas for 2022 are: Virginia, 309,802 lb (140,524 kg); New York, 454,693 lb (206,254 kg); and Rhode Island, 294,956 lb (133,790 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: July 15, 2022.

**Jennifer M. Wallace,**

*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 679**

**[Docket No. 220223-0054; RTID 0648-XC083]**

**Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Several Groundfish Species in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area**

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

**ACTION:** Temporary rule; apportionment of reserves; request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** NMFS apportions amounts of the non-specified reserve to the initial total allowable catch (ITAC) of Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands (BSAI) Kamchatka flounder and Central Aleutian Islands and Western Aleutian Islands (CAI/WAI) blackspotted/rougheye rockfish. This action is necessary to allow the fisheries to continue operating. It is intended to promote the goals and objectives of the fishery management plan for the BSAI management area.

**DATES:** Effective July 15, 2022, through 2400 hours, Alaska local time, December 31, 2022. Comments must be received at the following address no later than 4:30 p.m., Alaska local time, August 4, 2022.

**ADDRESSES:** You may submit comments on this document, identified by docket number NOAA-NMFS-2022-0076, by any of the following methods:

*Electronic Submission:* Submit all electronic public comments via the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal. Go to <https://www.regulations.gov> and enter NOAA-NMFS-2022-0076 in the Search box. Click on the "Comment" icon, complete the required fields, and enter or attach your comments.

*Mail:* Submit written comments to Anne Marie Eich, Acting Assistant Regional Administrator, Sustainable Fisheries Division, Alaska Region NMFS. Mail comments to P.O. Box 21668, Juneau, AK 99802-1668.

*Instructions:* Comments sent by any other method, to any other address or individual, or received after the end of

the comment period, may not be considered by NMFS. All comments received are a part of the public record and will generally be posted for public viewing on [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov) without change. All personal identifying information (e.g., name, address, etc.), confidential business information, or otherwise sensitive information submitted voluntarily by the sender will be publicly accessible. NMFS will accept anonymous comments (enter "N/A" in the required fields if you wish to remain anonymous).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Steve Whitney, 907-586-7228.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** NMFS manages the groundfish fishery in the BSAI exclusive economic zone according to the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish of the BSAI Management Area (FMP) prepared by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council under authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. Regulations governing fishing by U.S. vessels in accordance with the FMP appear at subpart H of 50 CFR part 600 and 50 CFR part 679.

The 2022 ITAC of BSAI Kamchatka flounder was established as 7,832 metric tons (mt) and the 2022 ITAC of CAI/WAI blackspotted/rougheye rockfish was established as 150 mt by the final 2022 and 2023 harvest specifications for groundfish of the BSAI (87 FR 11626, March 2, 2022). In accordance with § 679.20(a)(3) the Regional Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS, has reviewed the most current available data and finds that the ITACs for BSAI Kamchatka flounder and CAI/WAI blackspotted/rougheye rockfish need to be supplemented from the non-specified reserve to promote efficiency in the utilization of fishery resources in the BSAI and allow fishing operations to continue.

Therefore, in accordance with § 679.20(b)(3), NMFS apportions from the non-specified reserve of groundfish to ITACs in the BSAI management area as follows: 1,382 mt to BSAI Kamchatka flounder and 27 mt to CAI/WAI blackspotted/rougheye rockfish. These apportionments are consistent with § 679.20(b)(1)(i) and do not result in overfishing of any target species because the revised ITACs and total allowable catches (TACs) are equal to or less than the specifications of the acceptable biological catch in the final 2022 and 2023 harvest specifications for groundfish in the BSAI (87 FR 11626, March 2, 2022).

The harvest specification for the 2022 ITACs and TACs included in the harvest

specifications for groundfish in the BSAI are revised as follows 9,214 mt for BSAI Kamchatka flounder and 177 mt for CAI/WAI blackspotted/rougheye rockfish

#### Classification

NMFS issues this action pursuant to section 305(d) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act. This action is required by 50 CFR part 679, which was issued pursuant to section 304(b), 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 on this action, as notice and comment

would be impracticable and contrary to the public interest, as it would prevent NMFS from responding to the most recent fisheries data in a timely fashion and would delay the apportionment of the non-specified reserves of groundfish to the BSAI Kamchatka flounder and CAI/WAI blackspotted/rougheye rockfish. NMFS was unable to publish a notice providing time for public comment because the most recent, relevant data only became available as of June 25, 2022.

The Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA also finds good cause to waive the 30-day delay in the effective date of this action under 5

U.S.C. 553(d)(3). This finding is based upon the reasons provided above for waiver of prior notice and opportunity for public comment.

Under § 679.20(b)(3)(iii), interested persons are invited to submit written comments on this action (see **ADDRESSES**) until August 4, 2022.

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

Dated: July 15, 2022.

**Jennifer M. Wallace,**

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

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