

Gary Frazer,

Acting Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 648

[Docket No. 231215–0305; RTID 0648–XE515]

Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Summer Flounder Fishery; 2024 Commercial Quota Harvested for the State of Connecticut

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

ACTION: Temporary rule; closure.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces that the 2024 summer flounder commercial quota allocated to the State of Connecticut has been harvested. Vessels issued a commercial Federal fisheries permit for the summer flounder fishery may not land summer flounder in Connecticut for the remainder of calendar year 2024, unless additional quota becomes available through a transfer from another state. Regulations governing the summer flounder fishery require publication of this notification to advise Connecticut that the quota has been harvested, and to advise vessel permit holders and dealer permit holders that no Federal commercial quota is available for landing summer flounder in Connecticut.

DATES: Effective 0001 hours December 10, 2024, through 2400 hours December 31, 2024.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Matthew Rigdon, (978) 281–9336, or matthew.rigdon@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Regulations governing the summer flounder fishery are found at 50 CFR 648.100 through 648.111. The regulations require annual specification of a commercial quota that is apportioned on a percentage basis 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.

The commercial quota for summer flounder for 2024 was set equal to 8,789,830 pounds (lb; 3,987,000 kilograms (kg)) (88 FR 88266, December 23, 2023). The amount allocated to

vessels landing summer flounder in Connecticut is 198,394 lb (89,990 kg).

The NMFS Regional Administrator for the Greater Atlantic Region monitors the state commercial landings and determines when a state's commercial quota has been harvested. NMFS is required to publish notification in the **Federal Register** advising and notifying commercial vessels and dealer permit holders that, effective upon a specific date, the state's commercial quota has been harvested and no commercial quota is available for landing summer flounder in that state. Based on dealer reports and other available information, the Regional Administrator has determined that the available quota has been harvested. The Marine Fisheries Program of the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection determined that its 2024 commercial summer flounder quota has been harvested and closed the state fishery on December 1, 2024. This action promotes consistency between state and Federal management measures.

The regulations at 50 CFR 648.14(n) prohibit federally permitted vessels from landing summer flounder for sale in a state, and prohibit all persons from purchasing or otherwise receiving summer flounder for a commercial purpose after the effective date published in the **Federal Register** notification that commercial quota is no longer available in that state. Therefore, effective 0001 hours on December 10, 2024, landing of summer flounder in Connecticut by vessels holding Federal summer flounder commercial fishery permits is prohibited for the remainder of the 2024 calendar year, unless additional quota becomes available through a transfer and is announced in the **Federal Register**. Effective 0001 hours on December 10, 2024, federally permitted dealers are also notified that they may not purchase summer flounder from federally permitted vessels that land in Connecticut for the remainder of the calendar year, or until additional quota becomes available through a transfer from another state.

Classification

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

The Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA, finds good cause pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(B) to waive prior notice and the opportunity for public comment because it would be contrary to the public interest. This action closes the commercial summer flounder fishery for Connecticut until January 1, 2025, under current regulations. The regulations at 50 CFR

648.103(b) require such action to ensure that summer flounder vessels do not exceed quotas allocated to the states. If implementation of this closure was delayed to solicit prior public comment, the quota for this fishing year will be exceeded, thereby undermining the conservation objectives of the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Fishery Management Plan. The Assistant Administrator further finds, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553(d)(3), good cause to waive the 30-day delayed effectiveness period for the reason stated above.

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

Dated: December 4, 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. 241203–0308]

RTID 0648–XE226

Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; 2025 Specifications for the Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass, and Bluefish Fisheries

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

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces 2025 specifications for the summer flounder, scup, black sea bass, and bluefish fisheries. The implementing regulations for the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Fishery Management Plan (FMP) and the Bluefish Fishery Management Plan require us to publish specifications for the upcoming fishing year for each of these species. The specifications for these species are intended to establish allowable harvest levels that will prevent overfishing, consistent with the most recent scientific information, for the 2025 fishing year.

DATES: This rule is effective January 1, 2025.

ADDRESSES: A Supplemental Information Report (SIR) was prepared for the 2025 black sea bass specifications. An Environmental Assessment (EA) was prepared for the