

[FR Doc. E7-4416 Filed 3-9-07; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-05-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 230

[Docket No. 070302051-7051-01; I.D. 021607D]

Whaling Provisions; Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling Quotas

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

ACTION: Rule.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces the aboriginal subsistence whaling quota for bowhead whales, and other limitations deriving from regulations adopted at the 2002 Special Meeting of the International Whaling Commission (IWC). For 2007, the quota is 75 bowhead whales struck. This quota and other limitations will govern the harvest of bowhead whales by members of the Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission (AEWC).

DATES: Effective March 12, 2007.

ADDRESSES: Office of International Affairs, National Marine Fisheries Service, 1315 East West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Cheri McCarty, (301) 713-9090.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Aboriginal subsistence whaling in the United States is governed by the Whaling Convention Act (16 U.S.C. 916 *et seq.*). Regulations that implement the Act, found at 50 CFR 230.6, require the Secretary of Commerce (Secretary) to publish, at least annually, aboriginal subsistence whaling quotas and any other limitations on aboriginal subsistence whaling deriving from regulations of the IWC.

At the 2002 Special Meeting of the IWC, the Commission set quotas for aboriginal subsistence use of bowhead whales from the Bering-Chukchi-Beaufort Seas stock. The bowhead quota was based on a joint request by the United States and the Russian Federation, accompanied by documentation concerning the needs of two Native groups: Alaska Eskimos and Chukotka Natives in the Russian Far East.

This action by the IWC thus authorized aboriginal subsistence whaling by the AEWC for bowhead

whales. This aboriginal subsistence harvest is conducted in accordance with a cooperative agreement between NOAA and the AEWC.

The IWC set a 5-year block quota of 280 bowhead whales landed. For each of the years 2003 through 2007, the number of bowhead whales struck may not exceed 67, except that any unused portion of a strike quota from any year, including 15 unused strikes from the 1998 through 2002 quota, may be carried forward. No more than 15 strikes may be added to the strike quota for any one year. At the end of the 2006 harvest, there were 15 unused strikes available for carry-forward, so the combined strike quota for 2007 is 82 (67 + 15).

This arrangement ensures that the total quota of bowhead whales landed and struck in 2007 will not exceed the quotas set by the IWC. Under an arrangement between the United States and the Russian Federation, the Russian natives may use no more than seven strikes, and the Alaska Eskimos may use no more than 75 strikes.

NOAA is assigning 75 strikes to the Alaska Eskimos. The AEWC will allocate these strikes among the 10 villages whose cultural and subsistence needs have been documented in past requests for bowhead quotas from the IWC, and will ensure that its hunters use no more than 75 strikes.

Other Limitations

The IWC regulations, as well as the NOAA regulation at 50 CFR 230.4(c), forbid the taking of calves or any whale accompanied by a calf.

NOAA regulations (at 50 CFR 230.4) contain a number of other prohibitions relating to aboriginal subsistence whaling, some of which are summarized here. Only licensed whaling captains or crew under the control of those captains may engage in whaling. They must follow the provisions of the relevant cooperative agreement between NOAA and a Native American whaling organization. The aboriginal hunters must have adequate crew, supplies, and equipment. They may not receive money for participating in the hunt. No person may sell or offer for sale whale products from whales taken in the hunt, except for authentic articles of Native handicrafts. Captains may not continue to whale after the relevant quota is taken, after the season has been closed, or if their licenses have been suspended. They may not engage in whaling in a wasteful manner.

Dated: March 6, 2007.

William T. Hogarth,

Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. E7-4443 Filed 3-9-07; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-S

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 648

[Docket No. 061109296-7009-02; I.D. 030607B]

Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Atlantic Bluefish Fishery; Quota Transfer

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

ACTION: Temporary rule; inseason quota transfer.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces that the Commonwealth of Virginia is transferring 150,000 lb (68,039 kg) of commercial bluefish quota to the State of New York from its 2007 quota. By this action, NMFS adjusts the quotas and announces the revised commercial quota for each state involved.

DATES: Effective March 7, 2007 through December 31, 2007, unless NMFS publishes a superseding document in the **Federal Register**.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Douglas Potts, Fishery Management Specialist, (978) 281-9341, FAX (978) 281-9135.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Regulations governing the Atlantic bluefish fishery are found at 50 CFR part 648. The regulations require annual specification of a commercial quota that is apportioned among the coastal states from Florida through Maine. The process to set the annual commercial quota and the percent allocated to each state is described in § 648.160.

Two or more states, under mutual agreement and with the concurrence of the Administrator, Northeast Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator), can transfer or combine bluefish commercial quota under § 648.160(f). The Regional Administrator is required to consider the criteria set forth in § 648.160(f)(1) in the evaluation of requests for quota transfers or combinations.

Virginia has agreed to transfer 150,000 lb (68,039 kg) of its 2007 commercial quota to New York. The Regional Administrator has determined that the