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[FR Doc. E9-21049 Filed 8-31-09; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 648

[Docket No. 0809251266-81485-02]

RIN 0648-XR11

Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Summer Flounder Fishery; Commercial Quota Harvested for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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

ACTION: Temporary rule; closure.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces that the 2009 summer flounder commercial quota allocated to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has been harvested. Vessels issued a commercial Federal fisheries permit for the summer flounder fishery may not land summer flounder in Massachusetts for the remainder of calendar year 2009, unless additional quota becomes available through a transfer from another state. Regulations governing the summer flounder fishery require publication of this notification to advise Massachusetts that the quota has been harvested and to advise vessel permit holders and dealer permit holders that no commercial quota is available for landing summer flounder in Massachusetts.

DATES: Effective 0001 hours, September 1, 2009, through 2400 hours, December 31, 2009.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Sarah Bland, Fishery Management Specialist, (978) 281-9257.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Regulations governing the summer flounder fishery are found at 50 CFR part 648. The regulations require annual specification of a commercial quota that is apportioned on a percentage basis among the coastal states from North Carolina through Maine. The process to set the annual commercial quota and the percent allocated to each state is described in § 648.100.

The initial total commercial quota for summer flounder for the 2009 calendar year was set equal to 11,070,001 lb (5,021 mt) (74 FR 29, January 2, 2009). The percent allocated to vessels landing

summer flounder in Massachusetts is 6.82046 percent, resulting in a commercial quota of 755,025 lb (342 mt). The 2009 allocation was reduced to 702,614 lb (319 mt) when research set-aside and 2008 quota overages were deducted.

Section 648.101(b) requires the Administrator, Northeast Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator), to monitor state commercial quotas and to determine when a state's commercial quota has been harvested. NMFS then publishes a notification in the **Federal Register** to advise the state and to notify Federal vessel 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. The Regional Administrator has determined, based upon dealer reports and other available information, that Massachusetts has harvested its quota for 2009.

The regulations at § 648.4(b) provide that Federal permit holders agree, as a condition of the permit, not to land summer flounder in any state that the Regional Administrator has determined no longer has commercial quota available. Therefore, effective 0001 hours, September 1, 2009, further landings of summer flounder in Massachusetts by vessels holding summer flounder commercial Federal fisheries permits are prohibited for the remainder of the 2009 calendar year, unless additional quota becomes available through a transfer and is announced in the **Federal Register**. Effective 0001 hours, September 1, 2009, federally permitted dealers are also notified that they may not purchase summer flounder from federally permitted vessels that land in Massachusetts 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.

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

Dated: August 27, 2009.

James P. Burgess,

Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.
[FR Doc. E9-21052 Filed 8-27-09; 4:15 pm]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-S

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 679

RIN 0648-XL60

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Loan Program for Crab Quota Share; Amendment 33

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

ACTION: Final rule; agency decision.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces the approval of Amendment 33 to the Fishery Management Plan for Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands King and Tanner Crabs (FMP). Amendment 33 amends the FMP to allow NMFS to reduce the amount of fees collected under the Crab Rationalization Program to the amount needed to finance the Federal loan program for quota share purchase. The amendment provides NMFS with the flexibility to reserve only the amount of fees necessary to support the loan program, including no fees if none are needed. This FMP amendment does not require modifications to Federal regulations.

DATES: This agency decision is effective on August 24, 2009.

ADDRESSES: Electronic copies of Amendment 33 and the Categorical Exclusion for this action may be obtained from the NMFS Alaska Region website at <http://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jeff Hartman, 907-586-7442.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act) requires that each regional fishery management council submit any fishery management plan amendment it prepares to NMFS for review and approval, disapproval, or partial approval by the Secretary of Commerce. The Magnuson-Stevens Act also requires that NMFS, upon receiving a fisheries management plan amendment, immediately publish a notice in the **Federal Register** announcing that the amendment is available for public review and comment.

In April 2008, the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) unanimously recommended Amendment 33, and on May 19, 2009, submitted Amendment 33 to the Fishery Management Plan for Bering Sea/

Aleutian Islands King and Tanner Crabs (FMP) to NMFS. The notice of availability (NOA) for Amendment 33 was published in the **Federal Register** on June 1, 2009 (74 FR 26183). The public comment period closed on July 31, 2009. NMFS received no comments on the proposed amendment.

Amendment 33 allows NMFS to reduce the amount of fees collected under the Crab Rationalization Program to the amount needed to finance the Federal loan program for quota share

purchase. This action allows NMFS to reserve only the amount of fees necessary to support the loan program, including no fees if none are needed. This action is necessary to ensure that fishery participants do not pay fees for loan program financing in excess of the fees needed to support the loan program. For more information on Amendment 33 a detailed description is available in the NOA.

A Categorical Exclusion was prepared for Amendment 33 concluding that the

amendment will not result individually or cumulatively in significant impacts on the quality of the human environment (see **ADDRESSES**).

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

Dated: August 24, 2009.

James W. Balsiger,

*Acting Assistant Administrator for Fisheries,
National Marine Fisheries Service.*

[FR Doc. E9-21074 Filed 8-31-09; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-S