2026 state quota. The revised bluefish quotas for 2026 are: New Jersey, 408,379 lb (185,238 kg); and North Carolina, 1,743,521 lb (790,848 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: September 9, 2026.

Shannon Bettridge,

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

[FR Doc. 2026–18623 Filed 9–10–26; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510–22–P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 648

[Docket No. 260908–0006]

RIN 0648–BM54

Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Greater Atlantic Region Catch Share Cost Recovery Program Updates

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

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: This final rule implements regulatory and administrative changes to improve the Greater Atlantic Region's Catch Share Cost Recovery Programs. These updates are intended to simplify regulations and reduce costs for the Atlantic Sea Scallop Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ), Golden Tilefish IFQ, and Atlantic Surfclam and Ocean Quahog Individual Transferable Quota (ITQ) fisheries. This action will result in improved administration and management of the Atlantic sea scallop, golden tilefish, and Atlantic surfclam and ocean quahog fisheries.

DATES: This rule is effective October 13, 2026.

ADDRESSES: Copies of the supporting documents for this rule are available from Sustainable Fisheries Division, Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office, 55 Great Republic Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Douglas Potts, Fishery Policy Analyst, *douglas.potts@noaa.gov*, (978) 281–9341.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

The Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office (GARFO) manages three Limited Access Privilege Programs (LAPP): (1) Limited Access General Category (LAGC) Atlantic Sea Scallop IFQ; (2) Golden Tilefish IFQ; and (3) Atlantic Surfclam and Ocean Quahog ITQ. The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act) requires the collection of fees to recover ''the actual costs directly related to the management, data collection, and enforcement'' of a LAPP (16 U.S.C. 1854(d)(2)(A)(i)). Permit holders in these three LAPPs must pay an annual cost recovery fee, based on the ex-vessel value of fish landed under the program. The fee may be up to, but cannot exceed, 3 percent of the ex-vessel value of the fish harvested under the LAPP (16 U.S.C 1854(d)(2)(B)). Permits cannot be renewed until the previous year's fee is paid (see 50 CFR 648.53(h)(4)(iii), 648.74(c)(6)(iii)(C)(1), and 648.294(h)(5)(vi)).

A proposed rule for this action was published in the **Federal Register** on May 1, 2026 (91 FR 23385), and public comments were accepted through June 1, 2026. Additional information on the developmental history and need for this action is contained in the proposed rule and is not repeated here.

This action waives fees under $25 to avoid the disproportionate costs associated with administering these bills. The cost of staff time spent working on billing for fees less than the U.S. Department of Treasury's $25 minimum threshold for debt collection significantly exceeds the value of the bills themselves, ultimately costing the fishing industry more in the subsequent billing cycle. The unbilled amounts below $25 will be rolled over into the following year's cost recovery accounting, so GARFO would still collect the total ''actual costs'' of the LAPPs as required by the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

This action also standardizes the billing timeline for GARFO, and payment periods for permit holders, across the regulations implementing the three LAPPs administered by GARFO. Setting a standard timeline for billing and payment periods will reduce uncertainty for members of the fishing industry and reduce the administrative burden on the agency. This action requires NMFS to send out bills within 6 months of the end of the cost recovery period and sets payments due within 30 days from the date bills are sent for all three LAPPs. Currently, Atlantic Surfclam and Ocean Quahog ITQ bills are due within 30 days, Golden Tilefish IFQ bills are due within 45 days, and Atlantic Sea Scallop IFQ bills are due within 60 days. Requiring payment within 30 days of the bill date, also known as ''Net 30,'' is standard practice across many industries. Providing 6 months from the end of the cost recovery period to send fee notices allows time for GARFO staff to compile the cost of managing the LAPPs as well as sufficient time to receive, review, and correct, if necessary, landings and price data from fishing vessels and dealers. The Atlantic Sea Scallop IFQ cost recovery year runs from October 1 through September 31, and GARFO would send out bills before the end of the following March. The cost recovery year for Golden Tilefish IFQ and Atlantic Surfclam and Ocean Quahog ITQ follows the calendar year, and GARFO would send out bills before the end of the following June.

Comments and Responses

We received three comments on the proposed rule. One comment expressed general support for the proposed action because it would improve efficiency without negatively impacting sustainability of the fisheries. Two of the comments received were not relevant to this rule and are, therefore, not discussed further.

Changes From the Proposed Rule

There are no changes from the proposed rule.

Classification

NMFS is issuing this rule pursuant to section 305(d) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act. The reason for using this regulatory authority is that this action addresses the agency's administration of the cost recovery provisions of the Atlantic Sea Scallop Fishery Management Plan (FMP), Golden Tilefish FMP, and Atlantic Surfclam and Ocean Quahog FMP to minimize agency inefficiencies and unnecessary costs for the industry. NMFS notified the New England Fishery Management Council and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council of its intention to implement these changes using this authority. Neither Council objected, nor did they express interest in addressing these issues through the Council process. The NMFS Assistant Administrator has determined that this final rule is consistent with the Atlantic Sea Scallop FMP, Golden Tilefish FMP, and Atlantic Surfclam and Ocean Quahog FMP, the Magnuson-Stevens Act, and other applicable law.

This final rule has been determined to be not significant for purposes of Executive Order 12866.

This final rule is considered to be an Executive Order 14192 deregulatory action.

A tribal summary impact statement under section (5)(b)(2)(B) and section (5)(c)(2) of Executive Order 13175 was not required for this final rule because this action does not impose substantial direct compliance costs on Indian tribal governments and this action does not preempt tribal law. A tribal summary impact statement is not required and has not been prepared.

The Senior Lead Counsel for Regulation of the Department of Commerce certified to the Chief Counsel for Advocacy of the Small Business Administration (SBA) during the proposed rule stage that this action would not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities. The factual basis for the certification was published in the proposed rule and is not repeated here. No comments were received regarding this certification. As a result, a final regulatory flexibility analysis was not required and none was prepared.

This final rule contains no information collection requirements under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995.

List of Subjects in 50 CFR Part 648

Fisheries, Fishing, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements.

Dated: September 8, 2026.

Samuel D. Rauch III,

Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, National Marine Fisheries Service.

For the reasons set out in the preamble, NMFS amends 50 CFR part 648 as follows:

PART 648—FISHERIES OF THE NORTHEASTERN UNITED STATES

■ 1. The authority citation for part 648 continues to read as follows:

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

■ 2. In § 648.53, revise paragraph (h)(4)(ii) to read as follows:

§ 648.53 Overfishing limit (OFL), acceptable biological catch (ABC), annual catch limits (ACL), annual catch targets (ACT), annual projected landings (APL), DAS allocations, and individual fishing quotas (IFQ).

* * * * *

(h) * * *

(4) * * *

(ii) *Fee Payment Procedure.* Within 6 months from the end of a cost recovery billing period, NMFS shall mail a cost recovery bill to each IFQ scallop permit holder. An IFQ scallop permit holder who has incurred a cost recovery fee must pay the fee to NMFS within 30 days from the date of mailing of the recovery bill. Cost recovery payments shall be made electronically via the Federal web portal, *https://www.pay.gov,* or other internet sites as designated by the Regional Administrator. Instructions for electronic payment shall be available on both the payment website and the paper bill. Payment options shall include payment via a credit card, as specified in the cost recovery bill, or via direct automated clearing house (ACH) withdrawal from a designated checking account. Payment by check may be authorized by NMFS if it has determined that electronic payment is not possible (for example, if the geographical area of an individual(s) is affected by catastrophic conditions).

* * * * *

■ 3. In § 648.74, revise paragraph (c)(5) introductory text to read as follows:

§ 648.74 Individual Transferable Quota (ITQ) Program.

* * * * *

(c) * * *

(5) *Fee payment and collection.* NMFS will send a bill to ITQ permit holders within 6 months from the end of a cost recovery billing period for any applicable ITQ cost recovery fee.

* * * * *

■ 4. In § 648.294, revise paragraph (h)(3) introductory text, and paragraph (h)(3)(i) to read as follows:

§ 648.294 Golden tilefish individual fishing quota (IFQ) program.

* * * * *

(h) * * *

(3) *Fee payment procedure.* NMFS will create an annual IFQ allocation bill for each cost recovery billing period and provide it to IFQ allocation permit holders with quota share within 6 months from the end of a cost recovery billing period. The bill will include information regarding the amount and value of IFQ allocation landed during the prior cost recovery billing period, and the associated cost recovery fees.

(i) *Payment due date.* An IFQ allocation permit holder who has incurred a cost recovery fee must pay the fee to NMFS within 30 days of the date of the bill.

* * * * *

[FR Doc. 2026–18607 Filed 9–10–26; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 260305–0066; RTID 0648–XF984]

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Blackspotted and Rougheye Rockfish in the Central Aleutian and Western Aleutian Districts of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area

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

ACTION: Temporary rule; closure.

SUMMARY: NMFS is prohibiting retention of blackspotted and rougheye rockfish in the Central Aleutian and Western Aleutian districts (CAI/WAI) of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area (BSAI). This action is necessary because the 2026 blackspotted and rougheye rockfish total allowable catch (TAC) in the CAI/WAI of the BSAI will soon be or has been reached.

DATES: Effective 1200 hours, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), September 9, 2026, through 2400 hours, A.l.t., December 31, 2026.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Steve Whitney, 907–206–6783.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: NMFS manages the groundfish fishery in the BSAI according to the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area (FMP) prepared and recommended by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council under authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens 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 2026 blackspotted and rougheye rockfish TAC in the CAI/WAI of the BSAI is 325 metric tons as established by the final 2026 and 2027 harvest specifications for groundfish in the BSAI (91 FR 11750, March 10, 2026).

The Regional Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS has determined that the 2026 blackspotted and rougheye rockfish TAC in the CAI/WAI of the BSAI will soon be or has been reached. Therefore, in accordance with § 679.20(d)(2), NMFS is prohibiting retention of blackspotted and rougheye rockfish in the CAI/WAI of the BSAI