



# The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

## Division of Marine Fisheries

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### **New State Waters Groundfish Management Measures for 2022**

DMF is making several changes—described below—to the state waters groundfish management program for 2022. For additional information on these regulatory adjustments, you can review the agency’s [recommendation](#) to the Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission (MFAC) and a [summary](#) of the January MFAC meeting.

#### *Late April Commercial Groundfish Closure to Protect Spawning Cod*

Foremost, DMF is implementing an April 15 – April 30 commercial groundfish closure within all state waters south from the Massachusetts-New Hampshire maritime border to 42°00’ N latitude (Plymouth) west of 70°30’ W longitude ([see map](#)). This closure is designed to provide broad-scale protections to observed aggregations of springtime spawning cod and other groundfish species. The closure applies to all gear types capable of catching groundfish (e.g., hook and line, trawl, gillnet) with an exception for shellfish dredge gear.

#### *Rescinding April Conditional Commercial Groundfish Closure*

DMF is rescinding the April 1 – April 30 conditional groundfish closure between Plymouth and Marblehead. This conditional closure was implemented in 2019. Its purpose was to serve as a fail-safe and prevent the state-waters groundfish fishery from exceeding federally allocated groundfish set asides for state waters and potentially triggering accountability measures that would impact the federal groundfish fishery. Annually, DMF would analyze state waters groundfish landings for the current federal fishing year (May 1 – April 30) and determine if an April closure was necessary, and if not, DMF would rescind the closure. With the new late April commercial groundfish closure to protect spawning cod, as well as the expansion of the seasonal gillnet closure to protect right whales (see [Advisory](#)), the conditional closure is now largely redundant.

#### *Trip Limit Adjustments*

DMF is increasing the state waters trip limits for Gulf of Maine cod from 200 pounds to 400 pounds and Gulf of Maine yellowtail flounder from 250 pounds to 350 pounds. The expansion of the seasonal gillnet closure to protect right whales and the late-April commercial groundfish closure to protect spawning cod is going to limit state waters groundfish landings. Accordingly, these trip limit adjustments are designed to provide the small number of vessels participating in the state waters groundfish fishery with additional opportunities to harvest and land available allocations of groundfish at times and places where spawning cod and right whales are less of a concern. Both stocks have been underutilized in state waters in recent years.

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