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Director

# Commonwealth of Massachusetts

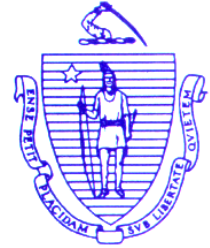
## Division of Marine Fisheries

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March 29, 2016

Marine Fisheries Advisory

### **EMERGENCY REGULATIONS FOR RECREATIONAL GOM COD AND HADDOCK**

Effective May 1, 2016 new rules will govern the manner and times of recreational fishing for Gulf of Maine (GOM) cod and haddock (Table 1). The Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) is taking action in response to federal liberalizations in recreational catch limits. The revisions for both GOM cod and haddock will be implemented via emergency rule-making in order for them to take effect by the onset of federal fishing year, which begins on May 1, 2016 and concludes on April 30, 2017.

**Table 1.** State rules for recreational take of GOM cod and haddock effective May 1, 2016.

|                    | <b>Mode</b> | <b>Season</b>                      | <b>Possession Limit</b> | <b>Size Limit</b> |
|--------------------|-------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>GOM Cod</b>     | Private     | Year-round                         | 1-fish                  | 19"               |
|                    | For-Hire    | August 1 – September 30            | 1-fish                  | 24"               |
| <b>GOM Haddock</b> | Private     | Year-round                         | 15-fish                 | 17"               |
|                    | For-Hire    | May 1- Feb 28<br>April 15-April 30 | 15-fish                 | 17"               |

On March 3, 2016, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) released a draft proposal to adjust the recreational fishing limits for Gulf of Maine (GOM) cod and haddock for federal fishing year 2016 (FY16). This action is consistent with an anticipated increase to the recreational catch limits for these stocks, as proposed in Framework 55 to the Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan. Framework 55 increases the FY16 recreational catch limits for GOM cod by 30% and GOM haddock by 149% compared to the FY15 limits.

State and federal for-hire regulations are identical, given the majority of for-hire vessels operating in Massachusetts are federally permitted. Massachusetts will maintain the status quo for private anglers except that the bag limit for GOM haddock will increase from 3-fish to 15-fish. DMF asserts that limited year-round access to GOM cod and haddock for private anglers, while different than federal rules, ensures (1) equitable access to a public resource by both private citizens and commercial enterprises, as well as (2) sufficient disincentive to recreational effort being executed under authority of an open-access commercial fishing permit.

For more information regarding the management of groundfish in Massachusetts, please visit our website:

[www.mass.gov/marinefisheries](http://www.mass.gov/marinefisheries)