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Director

# Commonwealth of Massachusetts

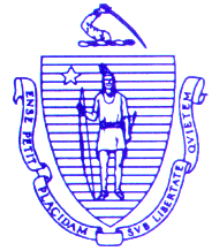
## Division of Marine Fisheries

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### **Marine Fisheries Advisory**

#### **Regulation Changes Affecting Groundfish: Commercial Minimum Sizes, Commercial Monkfish Possession Limits, Recreational Haddock Minimum Size, and Recreational Ocean Pout and Windowpane Flounder Prohibition**

The Division of Marine Fisheries (*Marine Fisheries*) is amending the state's groundfish regulations to compliment federal groundfish regulations. The changes to the commercial minimum sizes and the recreational minimum size for Gulf of Maine haddock are being enacted by an emergency regulation and are effective on July 1, 2013 for a period of 90-days. A public hearing to implement these emergency regulations beyond the 90-day period will likely be held in late July. The changes to the commercial monkfish possession limits and recreational prohibitions on the possession and landing of ocean pout and windowpane flounder are effective on July 5, 2013. More details regarding these regulatory changes are provided below.

#### **Commercial Minimum Sizes**

As part of Framework 48 to the Federal Multi-Species Groundfish Management Plan, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) promulgated regulations to reduce the minimum size for certain groundfish species. The minimum size adjustments are designed to reduce regulatory discards. These regulations are effective in federal waters on July 1, 2013.

To ensure that federally permitted groundfish vessels are authorized to land legally caught fish in Massachusetts ports, *Marine Fisheries* is complimenting the federal minimum size changes. The new minimum size limits are described in the table below. These changes apply in both state and federal waters and to state and federal commercial groundfish permit holders.

<b>Commercial Fishery Minimum Size Changes for Groundfish</b>		
<b>Species</b>	<b>Minimum Size Through June 30, 2013</b>	<b>Minimum Size Effective July 1, 2013</b>
Cod	22 inches	19 inches
Haddock	18 inches	16 inches
Witch flounder	14 inches	13 inches
Yellowtail flounder	13 inches	12 inches
American plaice	14 inches	12 inches
Redfish	9 inches	7 inches

#### **Commercial Monkfish Possession Limits**

*Marine Fisheries* has also promulgated regulations to liberalize the state's monkfish possession limits so that they conform to recent changes to federal monkfish regulations. Accordingly, the monkfish whole weight to tail weight equivalency has been reduced from 3.32 to 2.91 thereby allowing commercial fishermen to possess and land 536 pounds of monkfish tails, rather than 470 pounds. Additionally, the state now has possession equivalencies for monkfish livers. This allows commercial fishermen to eviscerate monkfish at sea and land livers, provided the livers do not exceed 25% the total weight of tails or 10% the total weight of whole monkfish. These new possession limits will be effective on July 5, 2013.

**Recreational Haddock Minimum Size**

Recreational groundfish fishing regulations have been amended to ensure state regulations compliment federal regulations. For 2013, NMFS required, as an accountability measure, the recreational minimum size for Gulf of Maine haddock be increased to 21 inches. Accordingly, the state's minimum size for haddock caught by recreational anglers in the state's Gulf of Maine Management Area is now 21 inches.

**Recreational Ocean Pout and Windowpane Flounder Prohibition**

The retention and possession of ocean pout and windowpane flounder caught in state waters is prohibited beginning on July 5, 2013.

For more information regarding the management of groundfish, please visit our website at [www.mass.gov/marinefisheries](http://www.mass.gov/marinefisheries) or call us at 617-626-1620. If you wish to obtain a copy of these regulations, please contact Jared Silva directly ([jared.silva@state.ma.us](mailto:jared.silva@state.ma.us) or 617-626-1534).