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# Commonwealth of Massachusetts

## Division of Marine Fisheries

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July 10, 2019

### Marine Fisheries Advisory

### **Regulation Changes Affecting Recreational Groundfish: Gulf of Maine Cod and Haddock and Georges Bank Cod**

The Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) has filed emergency regulations to implement recreational Gulf of Maine (GOM) cod and haddock and Georges Bank cod fishing limits for fishing year 2019 (May 1, 2019 – April 30, 2020). These new recreational fishing limits described in the table below complement [recently enacted federal regulations](#) and are **effective immediately**.

Species	Open Fishing Season(s)	Bag Limit	Size Limit
GOM Haddock	May 1 – February 29 April 15 – April 30	15-fish	17"
GOM Cod	September 15 – September 30	1-fish	21"
Georges Bank Cod	January 1 – December 31	10-fish	21"

#### Changes from FY2018

In comparison to last year, there are several rule changes. For GOM haddock, the fall closure (September 17 – October 30) has been eliminated and the bag limit has been increased from 12-fish to 15-fish. The minimum size remains status quo at 17-inches. For GOM cod, the moratorium has been lifted for two weeks in the fall (September 15 – September 30), during which time anglers may retain 1-cod measuring at least 21". The retention of GOM cod during any other time of year remains prohibited. For Georges Bank cod, the minimum size has been reduced from 23-inches to 21-inches; the 10-fish bag limit and year round open season remain status quo.

The GOM cod and haddock rules apply within all state-waters north of 42° 00', as well as all state-waters of Cape Cod Bay and the Cape Cod Canal. The Georges Bank cod rules apply to all state-waters east of Cape Cod south of 42° 00' and waters south and west of Cape Cod and the islands. You may review NOAA Fisheries [recreational fishing information](#) sheet to see where these management area boundaries exist in federal waters.

On June 13, 2019, DMF held a public hearing to take comment on the [proposed federal measures](#) for these species. The proposed measures also included allowing the retention of one GOM cod per angler during two-weeks in April. The recently finalized federal rule ultimately did not authorize this. Due to this last minute change, DMF is not pursuing this open fishing season for state-waters as part of this emergency regulation. The Massachusetts Marine Fisheries Advisory

Commission will further discuss this at their August 15, 2019 business meeting. If the eventual final state rule differs from this emergency rule, such changes will be announced at least two weeks before they become effective.

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.