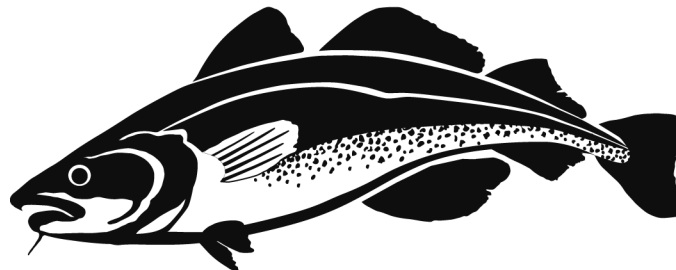


# **Public Hearing: Recreational Fishing Limits for Cod and Haddock**

October 10, 2023

**Marine Fisheries**  
Commonwealth of Massachusetts



# Public Hearing

Under the provisions of M.G.L. c. 30A, and pursuant to the authorities found at M.G.L. c. 130 §§ 17A, and 104, the Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) is taking public comment and holding virtual public hearings on recently enacted emergency regulations affecting recreational fishing limits for Gulf of Maine cod and haddock and Georges Bank cod.



October 10, 2023

Division of Marine Fisheries

Slide 2



# Virtual Rules of Engagement

- Purpose of the hearing is to afford interested parties an opportunity to submit data, opinions, comments, or arguments on the specific amendments being proposed, or to offer how the proposed amendment can be changed to minimize the impact on those affected while still achieving goals.
- Comments on matters outside of the scope of the specific amendments being proposed will be accommodated upon the conclusion of the hearing and if time permits.
- All members of the public will be muted throughout the presentation. At the conclusion of the presentation, DMF will first accept clarifying questions regarding the proposals, and then once all the questions are addressed, DMF will invite public comment on the various proposals.
- The written “chat” and “question and answer” functions have been disabled. DMF will respond to verbal questions at the end of the hearing. Additionally, you can follow up with DMF staff after the hearing by e-mail ([marine.fish@mass.gov](mailto:marine.fish@mass.gov)).
- When participating in the question and comment forums, the public is required to use the raise hand function. This creates a queue and DMF will recognize and unmute individuals when it is their turn to speak. Individuals will be provided three (3) minutes for questions and comments per hearing item. Follow-up comments may be allowed after all other persons have had an opportunity to speak.
- This public hearing will be recorded, and questions and comments are part of the public record. The recording of the public hearing will also be posted to [DMF's YouTube Channel](#).



# Recreational Georges Bank Cod

Fishing Year (FY)	Mode	Open Season	Bag Limit	Size Limit
FY22	All	August 1 – April 30	5-fish per angler	≥22" and ≤28"
FY23	All	<b>September 1 – May 31</b> <del>August 1 – April 30</del>	5-fish per angler	<b>≥23"</b> <del>≥22" and ≤28"</del>

- Action moves fishing season back one month to close June – August rather than May – July.
- Eliminates slot limit in favor of a minimum size.
- FY23 recreational target catch GB cod set at 113mt (249,112 lbs) versus 218mt (480,608 pounds) in FY22.
- As FY22 measures were not implemented for entirety of FY22, NOAA projected status quo measures would achieve 28% of the necessary 48% reduction in harvest if implemented for the full fishing year in FY23.
- Shift in the closed season coupled with change in size limit expected to achieve necessary harvest reduction.



# Recreational Gulf of Maine Cod

Fishing Year (FY)	Mode	Open Season	Bag Limit	Minimum Size
FY22	All	September 1 – October 7 April 1 – April 14	1-fish per angler	22"
FY23	All	<b>September 1 – October 31</b> <del>September 1 – October 7</del> <del>April 1 – April 14</del>	1-fish per angler	22"

- FY23 GOM cod recreational sub-ACL is 192 mt (423,288 pounds), same as FY22.
- This extends fall fishing season by three weeks (through October 31) at expense of two-week early April fishing season. No changes to bag limit or size limit.
- NOAA's bio-economic model suggests this adequately constrains catch of GOM cod.
- This change was recommended to NOAA by NEFMC's Recreational Advisory Panel.
- Will conform state regulations to existing federal regulations for consistent rules across jurisdictions.



# Recreational Gulf of Maine Haddock

Fishing Year (FY)	Mode	Open Season	Bag Limit	Minimum Size
FY22	All	April 1 – February 28	20-fish	17"
FY23	Private	April 1 – February 28	10-fish <del>20-fish</del>	17"
	For-Hire	April 1 – February 28	15-fish <del>20-fish</del>	18" <del>17"</del>

- For FY23, NEFMC recommended status quo season with a 15-fish bag limit and 18" minimum size.
- NOAA was concerned limits this would unnecessarily constrain retention of haddock and result in regulatory discarding due to minimum size increase.
- NOAA instead adopted a split mode approach, which DMF did not support.
  - For-hire mode gets higher bag limit at expense of a minimum size. Higher bag limit is desired for advertisement/bookings and expectation is this sector can better target larger fish.
  - Private mode maintains existing minimum size with a lower bag limit. With fishery dominated by younger year classes, this is expected to maximize catch and minimize discarding.



# Overview of Proposed FY23 Limits

Species/Stock	Open Season	Bag Limit	Size Limit
Georges Bank Cod All Modes	September 1 – May 31	5 fish per angler	Min: 23"
Gulf of Maine Cod All Modes	September 1 – October 31	1 fish per angler	Min: 22"
Gulf of Maine Haddock Private Angler Mode	April 1 – February 28	10 fish per angler	Min: 17"
Gulf of Maine Haddock For-Hire Mode	April 1 – February 28	15 fish per angler	Min: 18"



October 10, 2023

Division of Marine Fisheries

Slide 7



# Questions and Comments

## **Instructions for Public Hearing Questions and Comments**

1. Meeting moderator will now recognize members of the public.
2. DMF will first recognize individuals with questions regarding the presentation and proposals.
3. Upon conclusion of the question period, DMF will accept verbal public comment.
4. To ask a question or submit a verbal comment, please use the “raise hand” function. This will create a queue of participants.

## **Instructions for Written Public Comment**

DMF will accept written public comment through 5PM on Friday, October 13, 2023. Please submit all written comments to Director McKiernan by e-mail to [marine.fish@mass.gov](mailto:marine.fish@mass.gov).

