



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Division of Marine Fisheries

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March 24, 2021

Marine Fisheries Advisory

Recreational Gulf of Maine Cod and Haddock Limits

The recreational Gulf of Maine cod and haddock seasons open on April 1st under the following rules established by the Division of Marine Fisheries (322 CMR 6.03) consistent with federal regulations.

Stock	Open Season	Bag Limit	Size Limit
Gulf of Maine Cod	April 1 – April 14 & September 15 – September 30	1 fish	21”
Gulf of Maine Haddock	April 1 – February 29	15 fish	17”

DMF may adjust rules for the fall GOM cod for-hire season pending a federal decision on the [New England Fishery Management Council’s recommendation](#) to continue a for-hire bonus season. In 2020, NOAA Fisheries enacted an interim rule that authorized a September 8 – October 7 for-hire GOM cod season (1 fish at 21”) to account for loss of access to the springtime fishery due to COVID related restrictions. DMF intends to remain consistent with federal rules.

Recreational anglers are reminded that groundfish fishing within the [Spring Cod Conservation Zone](#) (SCCZ) is prohibited from April 16 – July 21. The SCCZ protects a discrete inshore springtime cod spawning aggregation in Massachusetts Bay. The closed area is bound by 42°30’ N latitude to the south, 42°33’ N latitude to the north and 70°44.5W longitude to the west 70°38.5W to the east.

Anglers must release all cod and haddock that do not meet the minimum size requirements, or were caught during seasons or in areas where their harvest is prohibited. Recreational fishermen are encouraged to use circle hooks to minimize discard mortality of released fish and are also encouraged to target haddock or other abundant stocks to minimize unintended cod mortality. Anglers are also encouraged to consult [DMF’s Haddock Fishing Guide](#) to find areas where they may seasonally target haddock with a reduced likelihood of incidentally catching cod.

For more information please visit our website: www.mass.gov/marinefisheries.