



Paul J. Diodati
Director

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Division of Marine Fisheries
251 Causeway Street, Suite 400
Boston, MA 02114
(617) 626.1520
Fax (617) 626.1509



Deval Patrick
Governor
Ian Bowles
Secretary
Mary B.
Griffin
Commissioner

March 30, 2010
Marine Fisheries Advisory

Clarification of April cod closure rules in Massachusetts portion of the Gulf of Maine

This advisory explains the current state rules governing cod harvest by recreational fishermen in the waters north of Cape Cod.

Background: In April of 2009, NMFS enacted restrictions as part of the so-called Interim Groundfish Rule affecting the recreational cod fishery in the Gulf of Maine by extending the existing 5-month (November – March) closed season an additional 15 days through April 15th. For the past two years, Massachusetts has had similar closures governing the for-hire sector, however private anglers in state waters were allowed to retain 2 cod per person not to exceed 75 lbs. per vessel.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts did not take complementary actions to match the Interim Rules concerning the first 15 days of April. Consequently, during April 1-15, recreational fishermen fishing in the Commonwealth's waters north of Cape Cod may take up to 10 cod per person, but may not possess cod taken from federal waters or while in federal waters. For-hire vessel operators with federal permits are bound by the more restrictive federal measures (i.e., no possession of cod) regardless of where they fish. Please note that commercial fishing for cod and other multispecies groundfish is closed during all of April and May in all waters under the jurisdiction of the Commonwealth from Cape Cod to the NH border.

DMF urges all anglers to abide by the federal closure when in federal waters. Those with federal for-hire permits seeking to participate in the recreational fishery in state waters during April 1-15 can contact NMFS at 978-281-9200 to determine what options may be available.

