



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Division of Marine Fisheries

(617) 626-1520 | www.mass.gov/marinefisheries



MAURA T. HEALEY
Governor

KIMBERLEY DRISCOLL
Lt. Governor

REBECCA L. TEPPER
Secretary

THOMAS K. O'SHEA
Commissioner

DANIEL J. MCKIERNAN
Director

April 29, 2025

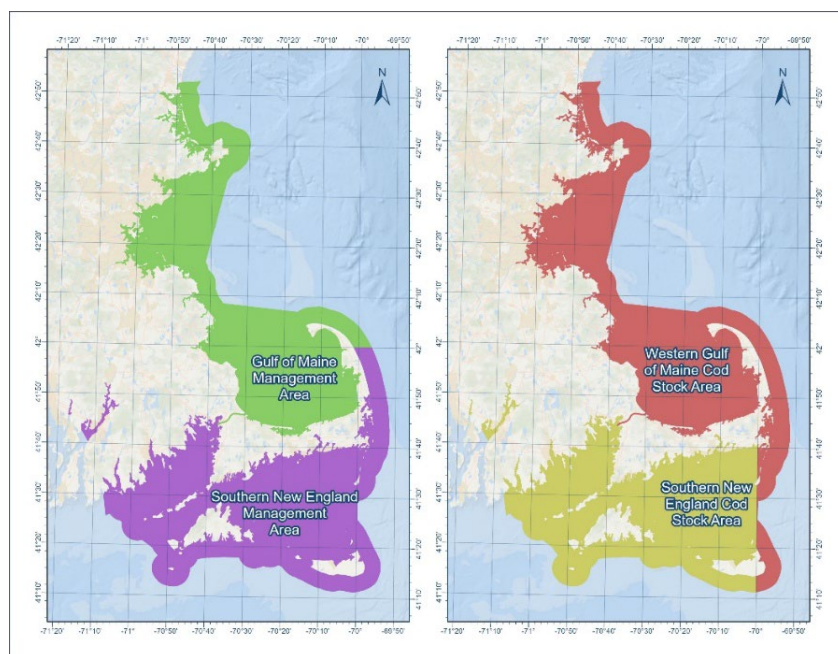
Marine Fisheries Advisory

UPDATE ON 2025 STATE WATERS GROUNDFISH MANAGEMENT

The purpose of this advisory is to update stakeholders on the management of the state waters groundfish fishery in 2025. DMF has filed final regulations affecting state waters groundfish management, which will go into effect on May 9, 2025. The information in this advisory applies only to fishing activity in state waters and the possession of groundfish when fishing in state waters. Federal rules apply to all fishing activity in federal waters and Massachusetts accommodates the possession and landing of groundfish lawfully taken in federal waters that do not conform to state rules. See this most recent [NOAA Bulletin](#) for information about the interim federal emergency rules to start the upcoming federal fishing season.

Cod Management Areas

Massachusetts has implemented its management areas for codfish consistent with pending changes to the federal stock boundary delineations. All state waters north of Cape Cod and those waters down the backside of Cape Cod and east of Nantucket west of the 70th meridian are now considered Western Gulf of Maine; all other state waters are now Southern New England. Effectively, designates that band of waters east of Cape Cod and Nantucket south of 42° 00' north latitude from Southern New England into the Western Gulf of Maine.



Moratorium on Southern New England Codfish

DMF has also adopted a moratorium on the harvest and possession of cod by commercial and recreational fishers within the Southern New England cod management areas. While there is

little cod catch occurring in these state waters, this action is designed to backstop anticipated federal rules.

Commercial Yellowtail Flounder and Monkfish Limits

Effective May 9, 2025, the commercial trip limit for yellowtail flounder is increasing from 350 pounds to 500 pounds and the commercial trip limit for monkfish is increasing from 1,560 pounds (536-pound tail weight) to 2,910 pounds (1,000-pound tail weight). The purpose of these actions is to provide commercial fishers with additional access to certain species for which there is sufficient allocation to offset the reduced availability of codfish. Note that while DMF proposed adjusting the commercial trip limit for Western Gulf of Maine cod, no changes were made, and this trip limit remains at 400 pounds year-round. These trip limits apply to Groundfish Endorsement permit holders; the open access groundfish fishery allows fishers to land up to 25 pounds of mixed groundfish per day.

Multi-Day Program

For the upcoming season, DMF has re-authorized the pilot program that allows trawlers and gillnetters to land two daily limits of Gulf of Maine winter flounder and yellowtail flounder that were lawfully caught and retained over consecutive calendar days. This is being done to enhance flexibility for these small-scale vessels so that they may operate more safely, efficiently, and cost effectively. Please note that participants are no longer required to seal containers of the first day's catch from the second day's catch with a single use tag. Instead, catch of each species from the first day must be segregated from catch on the second day and clearly labeled as such.

To be eligible to participate in this program the commercial fisher must hold a Coastal Access Permit or a Gillnet Endorsement along with a Groundfish Endorsement. To apply, please provide: (1) permit holder name; (2) vessel name; and (3) DMF permit number in an email to Bradlie Morgan (bradlie.morgan@mass.gov). DMF will review and process applications upon receipt. Permit holders should expect an authorization to be issued within a week of submitting their application, however, if you have an enforcement record within the past calendar year, you may be denied.

Recreational Limits for Gulf of Maine Haddock and Western Gulf of Maine Cod

At this time, the recreational fishing limits for haddock and Western Gulf of Maine cod remain status quo, consistent with federal regulations. For Gulf of Maine haddock the open fishing season is April 1 – February 28 with a 18" minimum size and 15-fish bag limit and for Western Gulf of Maine cod, the open season is September 1 – October 31 with a 1-fish bag limit and 23" minimum size.

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