



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
**Division of Marine Fisheries**  
(617) 626-1520 | [mass.gov/MarineFisheries](http://mass.gov/MarineFisheries)



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May 18, 2026  
*Marine Fisheries Advisory*

**Reminder: Virtual Public Hearing Scheduled for 6PM on May 19**

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The Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) will host a virtual public hearing on May 19 at 6PM to accept comment on recently adopted emergency regulations that established recreational black sea bass, recreational Gulf of Maine haddock, and recreational and commercial mackerel limits. [Register here](#) to attend the public hearing. Written public comment will be accepted through 5PM on Friday, May 22, 2026 and should be sent by e-mail ([marine.fish@mass.gov](mailto:marine.fish@mass.gov)) to Director McKiernan's attention.

The emergency regulations — summarized below — expire after 90-days. Accordingly, DMF intends to submit final regulatory recommendations to the Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission for a vote at their May 28, 2026 business meeting. If approved, these final regulations will replace the emergency regulations and remain in effect moving forward.

Recreational Black Sea Bass

For recreational black sea bass, the emergency rules established a May 16–October 14 open season with a 16" minimum size and season-specific bag limits—4 fish during May 16–August 31 and 2 fish during September 1–October 14. This replaced the May 17–September 1 open season with a 4-fish bag limit and 16.5" minimum size.

Recreational Gulf of Maine (GOM) Haddock

For recreational GOM haddock, the emergency regulations reduced the minimum size by 1-inch from 18 inches to 17 inches. The open fishing season and bag limit remain status quo. This results in an open season of April 1 through February 28 with a 15-fish bag limit and a 17" minimum size.

Recreational and Commercial Atlantic Mackerel

The emergency rules adjusted the recreational and commercial limits for Atlantic mackerel. The recreational limit increased from 20 fish for all anglers to 25 fish for the private angler mode and to 50 fish for anglers fishing from a for-hire vessel on a for-hire trip. On the commercial side, the state-waters trip limit was liberalized to continue to match the federal Open Access trip limit. This limit now starts at 20,000 pounds and is reduced to 5,000 pounds and then 2,500 pounds once certain landings thresholds have been met, replacing a 5,000-pound trip limit that was reduced to 2,500 pounds at 80% quota utilization.

Visit DMF's [proposed regulations website](#) for full details.