



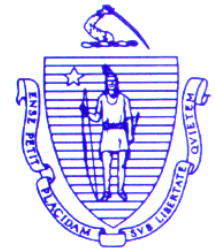
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May 3, 2017

### Marine Fisheries Advisory

### Update on Recreational Gulf of Maine Cod and Haddock Limits for 2017

The recreational fishing limits for GOM cod and haddock published in our Sportfish Guide reflect 2017 rule changes that have not yet been implemented. This advisory serves to notify you of this discrepancy and inform you of the current limits.

Earlier this spring, DMF published the expected 2017 recreational fishing limits for recreational Gulf of Maine (GOM) cod and haddock in various formats (including in the Sportfish Guide). We anticipated that these limits would be in place for May 1, 2017. However, as a result of unforeseen federal delays these rule changes have not yet taken effect. For the time being, the state's recreational fishing limits for GOM cod and haddock will remain unchanged from 2016 (Table 1). When the 2017 limits are enacted, there will be a follow up announcement from DMF.

**Table 1. Current MA recreational regulations for cod and haddock within GOM Management Area.**

Stock	Mode	Open Season	Closed Season	Bag Limit	Size Limit
Cod	Private Angler	Jan 1 – Dec 31	N/A	1-fish	19"
	For-Hire	Aug 1 – Sept 30	Jan 1 – July 31 Oct 1 – Dec 31	1-fish	24"
Haddock	Private Angler	Jan 1 – Dec 31	N/A	15-fish	17"
	For-Hire	Jan 1 – Feb 28 Apr 15 – Dec 31	Mar 1 – Apr 14	15-fish	17"

The principal impact of retaining the 2016 rules is that all anglers will remain at a 15-haddock and private anglers may continue to retain 1-cod if fishing exclusively in state waters. We still anticipate (1) the haddock limit for private anglers and for-hire vessels being reduced to 12-haddock; (2) an amended haddock closed season of 9/16-10/31 and 3/1-4/15 applicable to all for-hire vessels and private anglers fishing in federal waters; and (3) a year-round closure to GOM cod except for private anglers fishing exclusively in state waters. However, these anticipated changes will not be implemented until federal rules are finalized.

The National Marine Fisheries Service has [announced](#) that they are preparing a proposed rule to solicit comments on the New England Fishery Management Council's recommended 2017 recreational management measures. A final rule should be implemented by early summer 2017. Once the federal rules are adjusted, DMF will make amendments to the state rule. This approach ensures that disparate state and federal rules do not restrict Massachusetts' anglers from landing the federal limit.

The above described recreational fishing limits for cod and haddock only apply within the GOM Management Area. This area includes all waters north of 42°00' and those waters south of 42°00' within Cape Cod Bay including the Cape Cod Canal. Waters south and east of these parameters fall outside of the GOM Management Area and are subject to different recreational fishing limits for these species. These

limits will remain unchanged for 2017. Additionally, for-hire vessels fishing in federal waters under the authority of a for-hire permit may possess cod and haddock are exempt from state limits if fishing in compliance with federal rules.

For more information regarding cod and haddock management please view our [website](#). The full text of these regulations may be found at [322 CMR 6.03](#). Official copies of the CMR are maintained by the [Secretary of State](#).