



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Division of Marine Fisheries

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Marine Fisheries Advisory

NOAA Fisheries Enacts Final Interim Rule Extending Recreational Gulf of Maine Cod and Haddock Seasons

On August 13, 2020 NOAA Fisheries enacted a [final interim rule](#) to extend the recreational Gulf of Maine (GOM) cod and haddock seasons for the federal 2020 fishing year (May 1, 2020 – April 30, 2021). While specific details are provided below, in summary this action: 1) extends the fall for-hire recreational fishing season for GOM cod; 2) adds a springtime GOM cod recreational fishing season for all recreational anglers; and 3) extends the springtime GOM haddock recreational fishing season for all recreational anglers.

In response to this action, the Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) is proceeding to implement complementary measures for state-waters. Given the late timing, the extended fall for-hire recreational fishing season for GOM cod will be implemented by conditioning all 2020 For-Hire Permits (see [Statement of Permit Conditions](#)). DMF then expects to implement the springtime adjustments to the recreational GOM cod and haddock seasons by regulation over this coming winter.

Gulf of Maine Cod

Prior to this federal rule change, the recreational GOM cod season was scheduled to occur from September 15 – September 30 with a one-fish per angler bag limit and 21” minimum size for all recreational anglers. With this rule change, the [for-hire fishery](#) has been extended an additional 14 days to September 8 – October 7; private recreational anglers will still be subject to a September 15 – September 30 season. Additionally, an April 1 – April 14 season has been added for both [for-hire and private recreational anglers](#). During these open seasons, the one-fish per angler bag limit and 21” minimum size shall remain in effect.

The extended fall for-hire season is intended to allow the for-hire fleet to use the fall season to make up for the loss of access to the fishery in the spring. Travel and other COVID-related restrictions imposed by states in March and April effectively closed the for-hire fishery. While state restrictions of for-hire fishing have been lifted or modified, limits on the number of people who may gather remain in place and constrain the number of passengers for-hire vessels may accommodate.

FY2020 GOM Cod Recreational Fishing Limits			
Angler Mode	Open Season	Bag Limit	Minimum Size
Private Angler	September 15 – September 30	1 fish	21”
	April 1 – April 14	1 fish	21”
For-Hire Angler	September 8 – October 7	1 fish	21”
	April 1 – April 14	1 fish	21”

Gulf of Maine Haddock

Prior to this federal rule change, the recreational GOM haddock season was scheduled to occur from April 15 – February 28 with a 15-fish per angler bag limit and 17” minimum size for all recreational anglers. With this rule change, the fishery will be extended to include the entirety of April with the closed season only occurring from March 1 – March 31. No changes to the bag limit or size limit were made.

FY2020 GOM Haddock Recreational Fishing Limits			
Angler Mode	Open Season	Bag Limit	Minimum Size
Private Angler	April 1 – February 28	15-fish	17”
For-Hire Angler	April 1 – February 28	15-fish	17”

For more information regarding the management of recreational fisheries in the Commonwealth, please visit our website:
www.mass.gov/marinefisheries.