



Northeast Region Bulletin

National Marine Fisheries Service, Northeast Regional Office, 55 Great Republic Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930

For Information Contact:
Sustainable Fisheries Division
(978) 281-9315

<http://www.nero.noaa.gov/>
Date Issued: 4/19/2012

GULF OF MAINE RECREATIONAL HADDOCK FISHERMEN AND PARTY OR CHARTER VESSEL OPERATORS

Change to Haddock Regulations
Effective April 20, 2012 at 8:45 AM

The following haddock rules apply to recreational anglers on private, party, or charter vessels when fishing in the Federal waters of the Gulf of Maine. These rules are effective at 8:45 AM on April 20, 2012 and will continue until further notice.

- A minimum haddock size of **18 inches**, total length.
- An **unlimited** per-angler possession limit.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why are these changes being implemented?	We increased the minimum fish size to 19 inches and implemented a bag limit of 9 fish on January 6, 2012. We implemented these accountability measures to address an overage of the 2010 fishing year Gulf of Maine haddock annual catch limit allocated to the recreational fishery. However, new data indicate that an overage did not occur, and therefore, this rule removes the accountability measures.
What are the two different sources of data?	The Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey (MRFSS) has traditionally been used to estimate recreational effort and catch. However, on January 23, 2012, the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) data became available. MRIP data are considered less biased and more accurate than MRFSS, and are considered to be the best scientific information available for evaluating recreational catch and effort in the groundfish fishery.
Will the rules change again?	We will be reviewing the 2011 fishing year catch information using MRIP data to determine whether or not an overage occurred in the fishery. If an overage occurred, we must implement accountability measures to prevent future overages. If measures are necessary, they would be implemented in the latter half of the 2012 fishing year and we will inform you at that time.
Does this affect the changes to cod regulations?	This does not affect the changes that will occur on May 1, 2012 for cod. As previously announced, Gulf of Maine cod will be decreased to a minimum size of 19 inches and a bag limit of 9 cod on May 1, 2012.
What if the Federal cod regulations are different than my state's cod regulations?	Federal Charter/Party Vessels: The most restrictive always applies. If your state has a minimum size of 24 inches for cod but we have a minimum size of 19 inches, you must abide by the more restrictive regulation (i.e., minimum size of 24 inches). If we allow a bag limit of 9 cod, but your state allows a bag limit of 10 cod, you could only retain 9 cod. Private Recreational Vessels: If your state has a minimum size of 24 inches for cod but we have a minimum size of 19 inches, you must abide by the more restrictive regulation (i.e., minimum size of 24 inches). However, if we allow a bag limit of 9 cod, but your state allows a bag limit of 10 cod, you can retain 9 cod in Federal waters and may retain a 10 th cod in your state's waters before returning to port.

For more information on these or other recreational fishing measures, please use the contact information above. We also encourage private anglers fishing in state and Federal waters to contact their state marine fishing agency.

For small entity compliance guides, this bulletin complies with section 212 of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement and Fairness Act of 1996. This notice is authorized by the Regional Administrator of the National Marine Fisheries Service, Northeast Region.