



Greater Atlantic Region Bulletin

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NORTHEAST MULTISPECES (GROUND FISH) RECREATIONAL FISHING TRANSITING REGULATIONS *Reminder*

This bulletin clarifies that a recreational fishing vessel may possess cod that was caught outside the Gulf of Maine while transiting the Gulf of Maine during the season cod possession is prohibited in the Gulf of Maine. The groundfish regulations allow a vessel to transit the Gulf of Maine Regulated Mesh Area (see map on next page) with cod and haddock caught outside the area, up to the possession limits outside the area, provided all bait and hooks are removed from fishing rods and any cod and haddock on board has been gutted and stored.

A recreational fishing vessel that fishes inside and outside the Gulf of Maine on the same trip, or fishes outside the Gulf of Maine and transits the Gulf of Maine on the same trip, must comply with the most restrictive (larger) minimum fish size for all cod and haddock on board.

Minimum Fish Sizes (total length in inches)			
Species	Inside Gulf of Maine	Outside Gulf of Maine	Most Restrictive
Cod	24	22	24
Haddock	17	18	18

Example

On June 1 a recreational fishing vessel docked in Scituate, Massachusetts, wants to travel to Stellwagen Bank in the Gulf of Maine Regulated Mesh Area to catch haddock and then travel around Provincetown and south of 42 degrees N. Latitude (i.e., outside of the Gulf of Maine) to fish for cod, before returning to port in Scituate. In order to do this, the vessel must abide by the following requirements:

1. The vessel must discard any cod caught while fishing in the Gulf of Maine;
2. Any haddock retained by the vessel must have a total length of at least 18 inches;
3. The vessel may retain cod caught outside the Gulf of Maine with a total length of at least 24 inches;
4. The vessel may possess fillets less than the minimum size specified, if the fillets are taken from legal-sized fish;
5. All bait and hooks must be removed from fishing rods while transiting the Gulf of Maine. **The vessel may not fish in the Gulf of Maine while in possession of cod;** and
6. All cod must be gutted and stored while transiting the Gulf of Maine.

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, Greater Atlantic Region.

<i>Frequently Asked Questions</i>	
Can I fish inside and outside the Gulf of Maine on the same trip?	Yes. All cod and haddock on board must meet the larger of the two minimum sizes set for fish inside and outside the Gulf of Maine. For cod, the larger minimum size is 24 inches, and for haddock, the larger minimum size is 18 inches.
When the Gulf of Maine is closed to cod fishing can I fish for cod elsewhere?	Yes. A recreational fishing vessel may fish for cod outside the Gulf of Maine when the Gulf of Maine is closed to cod fishing. A recreational fishing vessel may possess cod caught outside the Gulf of Maine while transiting the Gulf of Maine when cod possession is prohibited in the Gulf of Maine.
What are the rules for transiting?	During transit all bait and hooks must be removed from rods, and all cod must be gutted and stowed. Any haddock above the Gulf of Maine possession limit must also be gutted and stowed when transiting.
Can I fish in the Gulf of Maine with cod on board the vessel?	No. When the Gulf of Maine Regulated Mesh Area is closed for cod you may not fish in the Gulf of Maine while in possession of cod. A vessel with cod caught outside the Gulf of Maine may only transit the Gulf of Maine.
Can I possess fillets less than the minimum fish size?	Yes. Fillets do not need to meet the minimum fish size, provided the fillets are from legal-sized fish. Fish fillets must have at least 2 square inches of contiguous skin to allow ready identification of the species while possessed on board the vessel and at the time of landing.
Do state regulations apply to trips that fish in Federal waters?	Yes. Vessels that fish in Federal waters are still subject to state regulations when in state waters and when landing. In state waters, when Federal and state regulations differ, Federally permitted vessel operators are subject to the more restrictive measures. Please confirm state regulations before you fish.

