



Northeast Multispecies Information Sheet

Charter/Party and Recreational Fishing



This summary provides a broad overview of restrictions and requirements; it is not a substitute for the regulations. You are strongly encouraged to read the regulations in conjunction with this information sheet to fully understand how this fishery is managed. This information sheet will be updated as regulations are revised. Most measures described here may be found at 50 CFR 648.88 and § 648.89. Others are set annually.

Introduction:

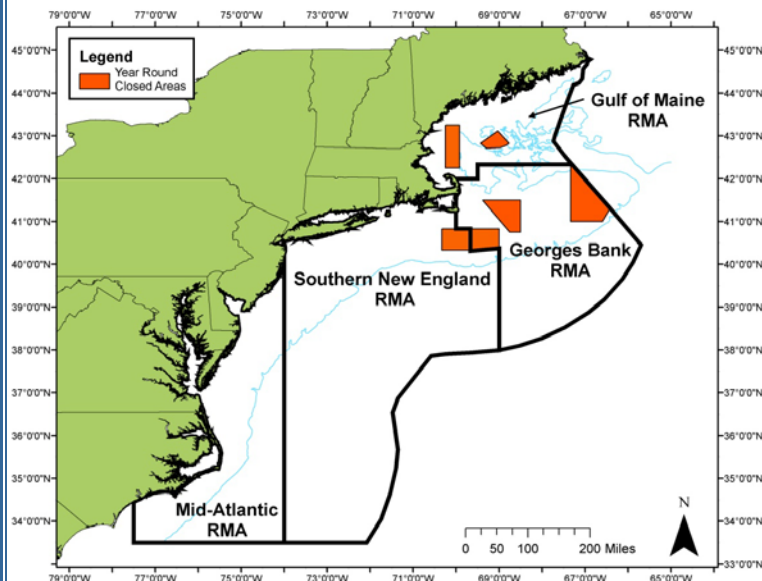
The following measures apply to private recreational fishing vessels in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ, typically 3-200 miles from shore), Federal charter/party permitted vessels, and Federal Northeast (NE) multispecies permitted vessels fishing under the charter/party or recreational regulations (not fishing under a NE multispecies day-at-sea).

Federal Minimum Fish Sizes and Possession Limits for Recreational and Charter/Party Vessels:

| Species | | Possession Limit | Minimum Size ² (inches) | Open Season |
|--|------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|---|
| Atlantic cod | Inside GOM RMA ¹ | NO RETENTION | N/A | CLOSED |
| | Outside GOM RMA ¹ | Private Boat: 10 fish per person per day Charter or Party Boat: Unlimited | 22 | All Year |
| Haddock | Inside GOM RMA ¹ | Private Boat: 12 fish per person per day Charter or Party Boat: 12 fish per person per day | 17 | May 1 – September 16 November 1 – February 28 and April 15 – April 30 |
| | Outside GOM RMA ¹ | Private Boat: Unlimited Charter or Party Boat: Unlimited | 18 | All Year |
| Atlantic halibut | | 1 fish per vessel per trip | 41 | All Year |
| Pollock | | Unlimited | 19 | All Year |
| Witch flounder (gray sole) | | Unlimited | 14 | All Year |
| Yellowtail flounder | | Unlimited | 13 | All Year |
| American plaice (dab) | | Unlimited | 14 | All Year |
| Winter flounder (blackback) | | Unlimited | 12 | All Year |
| Redfish (ocean perch) | | Unlimited | 9 | All Year |
| Offshore hake, red hake, white hake, and silver hake (whiting) | | Unlimited | None | All Year |
| Atlantic wolffish, windowpane flounder, ocean pout | | NO RETENTION | N/A | CLOSED |

¹Gulf of Maine Regulated Mesh Area (RMA): See figure below. ²Minimum size is measured as total length

Regulated Mesh Areas



The GOM RMA is bounded on the east and south by a line connecting the following points:

| Point | N. Latitude | W. Longitude |
|-------|-------------|--------------|
| G1 | (1) | (1) |
| G2 | 43° 58' | 67° 22' |
| G3 | 42° 53.1' | 67° 44.4' |
| G4 | 42° 31' | 67° 28.1' |
| CI13 | 42° 22' | 67° 20' |
| G6 | 42° 20' | 67° 20' |
| G7 | 42° 20' | 69° 30' |
| G8 | 42° 00' | 69° 30' |
| G9 | 42° 00' | (2) |

¹The intersection of the shoreline and the U.S.-Canada Maritime Boundary.

²The intersection of the Cape Cod, MA, coastline and 42°00' N. lat.

ALL VESSELS:

Federal and State Regulations:

State recreational fishing regulations may differ from the Federal regulations. Please consult with your state to determine its regulations. When Federal and state regulations both apply, vessels are bound by the most restrictive requirements.

Restrictions on Sale:

It is unlawful to sell, barter, trade, or otherwise transfer for a commercial purpose, or to attempt to sell, barter, trade, or otherwise transfer for a commercial purpose, NE multispecies caught or landed by recreational fishing vessels fishing in the EEZ, or charter/party vessels not fishing under a day-at-sea.

Annual Catch Limits

For two groundfish stocks (GOM cod and GOM haddock), a portion of the Annual Catch Limit (ACL) is allocated to the recreational fishery. If this portion of the ACL for either of these two stocks is exceeded, NMFS, in consultation with the New England Fishery Management Council, will develop management measures during the following fishing year to compensate for the overage.

Gear Restrictions:

Each angler is limited to one line. There is no limit to the number of hooks per line per person. All other fishing gear must be properly stowed as described in the regulations.

Possession Restrictions:

- Fillets, or parts of fish, must have at least 2 square inches of contiguous skin that allows for identification of fish species, while possessed on board and at the time of landing.

- Vessels may possess fillets less than the minimum size specified if the fillets are taken from legal-sized fish.
- For purposes of counting fish, fillets will be converted to whole fish at the place of landing by dividing the number of fillets by two. If fish are filleted into a single (butterfly) fillet, such fillet shall be deemed to be from one whole fish.
- Haddock and cod harvested by recreational and charter/party vessels with more than one person aboard may be pooled in multiple containers. Compliance with possession limits will be determined by dividing the number of fish on board by the number of persons aboard. If there is a violation of a possession limit on board a vessel carrying more than one person, the violation shall be deemed to have been committed by the owner or operator.
- Recreational and charter/party vessels may not fish for, possess, or land any cod from the GOM. Recreational and charter/party vessels may not fish for, possess, or land any haddock from the GOM from March 1 – April 14, and September 17 – October 31. (Cod or haddock caught outside of the GOM RMA during these periods may be on board a vessel transiting the area, but only if all bait and hooks are removed from fishing rods and all cod on board have been gutted and stored, in accordance with the regulations).
- Cod and haddock must be stored so as to be readily available for inspection.
- Any trip covering 2 calendar days, and over 15 hours in duration, may possess 2 daily possession limits worth of cod or haddock. Likewise, any trip covering 3 calendar days, and over 39 hours in duration, may possess 3 times the daily limit of cod or haddock, and so on.

CHARTER/PARTY VESSELS:

Permit Requirements:

Charter/party vessels without a limited access NE multispecies permit that fish for or possess NE multispecies in the EEZ must obtain an open access NE multispecies charter/party permit. Vessels with a limited access NE multispecies permit do not need to obtain a charter/party permit. Such vessels, when fishing under the charter/party rules, must stow all fishing gear except rod & reel or handline gear unless further restricted by a closed area letter of authorization (LOA) described below, and must abide by the restrictions on sale described above. Additionally, all vessels fishing as a charter/party vessel must submit vessel trip reports.

Reporting Requirements

All NE multispecies charter/party vessels are required to submit a vessel trip report (VTR) to the Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office for each trip that is taken. As of August 26, 2015, you are **not** required to submit a "Did Not Fish" VTR for weeks that you do not fish.

Charter/Party Vessel LOA to Fish in Closed Areas:

Vessels fishing under charter/party regulations may not fish in the GOM Cod Protection Closures, Cashes Ledge Closed Area, Western GOM Closed Area, or the Nantucket Lightship Closed Area, unless the vessel has on board the appropriate LOA issued by the Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office. Restrictions apply, as stated in the LOA. LOAs are available upon request by calling the Regional Office at (978) 281-9370. Additional details on closed areas are available in a separate information sheet.

As a condition of these letters, the vessel owner must agree to restrictions, including the following:

- Fish managed by either the New England Fishery Management Council or the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council that are harvested or possessed by the vessel may not be sold, bartered or traded or intended for sale, barter or trade, regardless of where caught. Species such as tuna and striped bass may be landed for sale provided the vessel has the proper permits;
- The vessel has no gear other than rod and reel or handline gear on board;
- The LOA must be carried on board the vessel during the participation period;
- Other restrictions, specific to the LOA, are explained in the LOA.

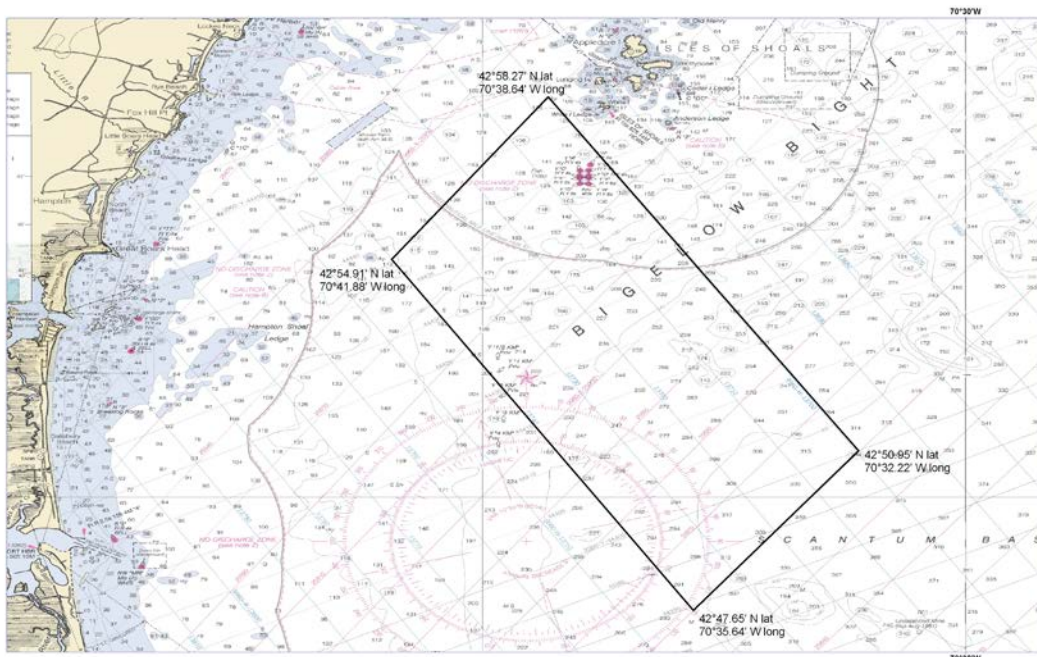
Prohibition on Fishing Under a Day-At-Sea While Taking Passengers for Hire:

Charter/party vessels with a limited access NE multispecies permit are prohibited from fishing commercially when carrying passengers for hire. This provision is intended to more clearly distinguish between vessels carrying passengers for hire and other commercial fishing vessels.

Control Date:

Charter/party vessel owners should be aware that a control date of March 30, 2006, has been published for the NE multispecies charter/party fishery. This date may be used for establishing eligibility criteria for determining future access to the charter/party fishery.

WHALEBACK COD SPAWNING PROTECTION AREA



Gear Restrictions: The following gear restrictions apply to either commercial or recreational fishing vessels fishing in the GOM Cod Spawning Protection Area.

- **Recreational vessels:** From April 1 through June 30 of each year, all recreational vessels, including private recreational and charter/party vessels, may only use pelagic hook-and-line gear, as defined below, when fishing in the GOM Cod Spawning Protection Area.
 - Pelagic hook-and-line gear is defined as handline or rod and reel gear that is designed to fish for, or that is being used to fish for, pelagic species. No portion of this gear may be operated in contact with the bottom at any time.

| Point | N. Latitude | W. Longitude |
|-------|-------------|--------------|
| CSPA1 | 42° 50.95' | 70° 32.22' |
| CSPA2 | 42° 47.65' | 70° 35.64' |
| CSPA3 | 42° 54.91' | 70° 41.88' |
| CSPA4 | 42° 58.27' | 70° 38.64' |

Possession Restrictions: Any vessel fishing in the GOM Cod Spawning Protection Area and using the exempted gear described above, including pelagic hook-and-line gear by recreational vessels, is prohibited from possessing or retaining regulated species or ocean pout from April 1 through June 30 of each year.

Transiting: Recreational vessels may transit the GOM Cod Spawning Protection Area provided all bait and hooks are removed from fishing rods, and any regulated species on board have been caught outside the GOM Cod Spawning Protection Area and have been gutted and stored.