This summary provides a broad overview for the recreational fishery in Federal waters, 3-200 miles offshore; the regulations summarized here may be found at 50 CFR part 648.

The following measures apply to private recreational fishing vessels, Federal charter/party permitted vessels, and Federal Northeast multispecies permitted vessels fishing under the charter/party or recreational regulations (not fishing under a Northeast multispecies day-at-sea).

Updated July 2019

Atlantic Cod
- Gulf of Maine: 21 inches, 1 fish/person/day, Open Season: Sept 15 - Sept 30
- Georges Bank: 21 inches, 10 fish/person/day

Haddock
- Gulf of Maine: 17 inches, 15 fish/person/day, Open Season: May 1 - Feb 28/29, Apr 15 - Apr 30

Pollock
- Georges Bank: 18 inches, Unlimited

Witch Flounder (Gray Sole)
- 14 inches, Unlimited

Yellowtail Flounder
- Gulf of Maine: 13 inches, Unlimited

American Plaice (Dab)
- 14 inches, Unlimited

Winter Flounder (Blackback)
- 12 inches, Unlimited

Redfish (Ocean Perch)
- 9 inches, Unlimited

Hake:
- Offshore, Red, White, and Silver (Whiting): No Size Limit, Unlimited

Atlantic Halibut
- 41 inches, 1 fish per vessel per trip

NO RETENTION SPECIES:
- Atlantic Wolffish
- Windowpane Flounder
- Ocean Pout
Gear Restrictions

“Whaleback” Gulf of Maine Cod Spawning Protection Area:
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 Gulf of Maine Cod Spawning Protection Area.

Winter Massachusetts Bay Spawning Protection Area:
From November 1 through January 31 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 Winter Massachusetts Bay 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.

Possession Restrictions: Any vessel fishing in the Gulf of Maine Cod Spawning Protection Area or the Winter Massachusetts Bay Spawning Protection Area, 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 are allowed to transit the Gulf of Maine Cod Spawning Protection Area and Winter Massachusetts Bay Spawning Protection Area provided all gear is stowed in accordance with the regulations.

For more information, call the Greater Atlantic Regional Office Sustainable Fisheries Division at 978-281-9315.