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Marine Fisheries Advisory

Gulf of Maine Haddock Recreational Rule Clarification

On Friday, May 1, new federal recreational rules for Gulf of Maine (GOM) haddock will take effect which differ from Massachusetts recreational rules for GOM haddock. The Division of Marine Fisheries is undertaking rule-making to mirror the federal possession and size limits, but in the meantime there will be a discrepancy. This notice serves to clarify how the combination of state and federal recreational rules will be enforced in Massachusetts.

Gulf of Maine Haddock Recreational Rules

Federal Rules <i>Effective May 1, 2015</i>	Massachusetts Rules <i>Until Further Notice</i>
3 fish (per person per day)	Unlimited possession
17" minimum size	21" minimum size
Open May 1 – Aug. 31, Nov. 1 – Feb. 28/29	Open year-round

(Outside the GOM, state and haddock rules are the same: 18", unlimited possession, open year-round.)

How these rules apply depends on both the type of permit held and area of fishing:

- A private recreational angler fishing in state waters only and landing in Massachusetts is bound by the state rules.
- A private recreational angler fishing entirely or in part in federal waters and landing in Massachusetts is bound by a combination of the most restrictive rules: 3 fish and 21" minimum size. The angler cannot catch or possess GOM haddock from federal waters during March, April, September, and October.
- A state-permitted for-hire vessel fishing only in state waters and landing in Massachusetts is bound by the state rules.
- A dual-permitted (state and federal) for-hire vessel fishing in state or federal waters and landing in Massachusetts is bound by a combination of the most restrictive rules: 3 fish and 21" minimum size. The vessel cannot catch or possess GOM haddock from state or federal waters during March, April, September, and October.

The Division is currently accepting public comment and will be holding a public hearing on Thursday, May 28 on changing the state GOM haddock recreational rules. For more information on how to submit comment or the timing of the public hearing, refer to our previous [Advisory](#).

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