



# Northeast (NE) Multispecies Charter/Party and Recreational Fishing Regulations

*The following measures apply to private recreational fishing vessels in the EEZ, charter/party vessels fishing in the EEZ, and to charter/party vessels that possess a NE multispecies permit and that are **not** fishing under the NE multispecies Day-at-Sea (DAS) program. (See 50 CFR § 648.4 for Federal fishing permit requirements.) This information sheet is only a summary of applicable fishing regulations and is not a substitute for the actual regulations which can be found at 50 CFR Part 648.*

## **Minimum Recreational Fish Sizes:**

Individuals are subject to the following minimum fish sizes:

<u>Species</u>	<u>Inches (Total Length)</u>
Cod	22
Haddock	19
Pollock	19
Witch flounder (gray sole)	14
Yellowtail flounder	13
Atlantic halibut	36
American plaice (dab)	14
Winter flounder (blackback)	12
Redfish	9

***Exception:** Vessels may possess fillets less than the minimum size specified if the fillets are taken from legal-sized fish and are not offered or intended for sale, trade or barter.*

## **Possession Restrictions For Charter/Party vessels fishing in the Gulf of Maine (GOM) Regulated Mesh Area (RMA):**

Each person on a Charter/Party vessel fishing in the GOM RMA may not possess more than 10 cod, in or harvested from the EEZ and 1 Atlantic halibut, per day. (Charter/Party vessels are not subject to a possession limit if fishing outside of the GOM RMA.)

1. For purposes of counting fish, fillets will be converted to whole fish at the place of landing by dividing the fillet number by two. If fish are filleted into a single (butterfly) fillet, such fillet shall be deemed to be from one whole fish.
2. Cod harvested by Charter/Party vessels with more than one person aboard may be pooled in one or more containers. Compliance with the possession limit will be determined by dividing the number of fish on board by the number of persons aboard. If there is a violation of the possession limit on board a vessel carrying more than one person, the violation shall be deemed to have been committed by the owner and operator.

3. Cod must be stored, so as to be readily available for inspection.
4. Any trip over 15 hours and covering 2 calendar days will be considered a 2 day trip for purposes of calculating bag limits. Similarly any trip in excess of 39 hours and covering 3 consecutive calendar days and, so on, in a similar fashion.

**Possession Restrictions for Private Recreational Fishing Vessel:**

Each person on a private recreational fishing vessel may not possess more than 10 cod, and 1 Atlantic halibut, in or harvested from the EEZ, per day year-round.

1. For purposes of counting fish, fillets will be converted to whole fish at the place of landing by dividing fillet number by two. If fish are filleted into a single (butterfly) fillet, such fillet shall be deemed to be from one whole fish.
2. Cod harvested by private recreational fishing vessels with more than one person aboard may be pooled in one or more containers. Compliance with the possession limit will be determined by dividing the number of fish on board by the number of persons aboard. If there is a violation of the possession limit on board a vessel carrying more than one person, the violation shall be deemed to have been committed by the owner and operator.
3. Cod must be stored, so as to be readily available for inspection.
4. Any trip over 15 hours and covering 2 calendar days will be considered a 2 day trip for purposes of calculating bag limits. Similarly any trip in excess of 39 hours and covering 3 consecutive calendar days and, so on, in a similar fashion.

**Charter/Party Permit Requirements:**

Charter/Party Vessels without a limited access NE multispecies permit that fish 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 not allowed and must abide by the restrictions on sale described below.

**Prohibition on Fishing Under a NE Multispecies DAS While Taking Passengers for Hire:**

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

**Gear Restrictions:**

Individuals are prohibited from fishing with more than two hooks per line and one line per angler. All other fishing gear must be properly stowed.

**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 finfish caught or landed by Charter or Party vessels permitted under this part not fishing under a DAS, or recreational fishing vessels fishing in the EEZ.

**Charter/Party Vessel Certificate to Fish in the Closure Areas:**

Vessels fishing under Charter/Party regulations may not fish in the GOM Rolling Closure Areas, Cashes Ledge Closure Area, Western GOM Closure Area or the Nantucket Lightship Closed Area unless the

vessel has on board a letter of authorization (LOA) issued by the Northeast Regional Office of NOAA Fisheries. The letter of authorization is valid for a minimum of 7 days for the Nantucket Lightship Closed Area, three months for the GOM Rolling Areas Closure, and for the remainder of the fishing year for Cashes Ledge Closure Area, and Western GOM Area Closures. The LOA is available upon request by calling the Northeast Regional Office at (978) 281-9370. As a condition of this letter, the vessel owner must agree to the following:

- Fish harvested or possessed by the vessel may not be traded, bartered, sold, or intended for trade, barter, or sale, regardless of where the regulated species are caught with the exception of tuna;
- The vessel has no gear other than rod and reel or handline gear on board;
- The vessel does not fish outside the Nantucket Lightship Closed Area during the period specified by the LOA;
- The vessel may not use any NE multispecies DAS during the period of participation; and
- The letter of authorization must be carried on board the vessel.

This is a simplified summary of the measures in effect under the NE Multispecies Fishery Management Plan. You should also get a copy of the official rules as published in the [Federal Register](#).