



New England Fishery Management Council

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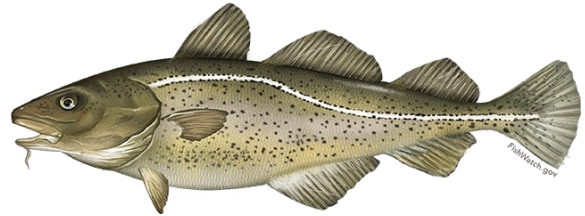
Council Recommends 2025 Rec Measures for Cod and Haddock; Participates in MRIP Listening Session; Receives Survey Update

The New England Fishery Management Council voted on Western Gulf of Maine cod and Gulf of Maine haddock recreational fishing measures when it met [January 28-30, 2025](#) in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. The measures are recommendations to NOAA Fisheries for the 2025 groundfish fishing year, which begins on May 1.

The Council also: (1) received an [update](#) on the [Fishing Effort Survey](#) conducted by NOAA Fisheries under the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP); and (2) participated in a public listening session about NOAA’s collaborative initiative to re-envision recreational fishing data collection [partnership approaches](#).

~ Recreational Measures ~

The Council’s fishing year 2025 recommendations for Atlantic cod are based on the [new understanding](#) of cod stock structure. Cod is now being assessed as four stock units, which are color-coded in the map below.



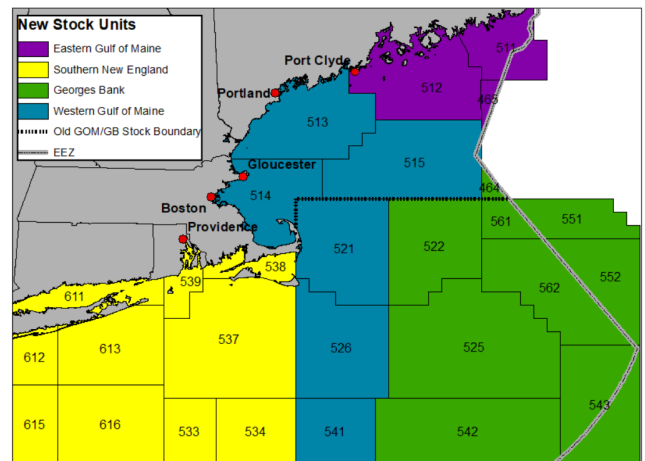
Recreational fishing measures for cod and haddock take the form of bag limits, minimum sizes, and seasons. The measures are determined annually by the NOAA Fisheries Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office (GARFO) regional administrator in consultation with the New England Council.

The Council addressed Southern New England cod in [December 2024](#) under [Framework Adjustment 69](#). The framework also establishes a regulatory process for the GARFO regional administrator to set Eastern Gulf of Maine cod and Georges Bank cod measures. The Council’s intent is for the measures to be equivalent to Western Gulf of Maine cod. This authority is a temporary regulatory provision for 2025 only.

The Council took up Western Gulf of Maine cod and Gulf of Maine haddock [in January](#). Here is the full package of recreational recommendations resulting from both the December and January Council meetings.

• Western Gulf of Maine Cod:

- Open Season: May 1-31* and September 1-October 31, 2025
- Bag Limit: one fish per day
- Minimum Size: 23 inches

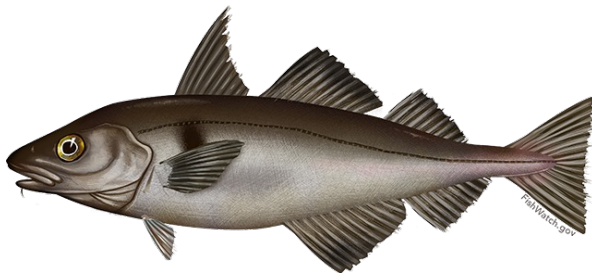




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- **Eastern Gulf of Maine Cod and Georges Bank Cod:**
 - Same as Western Gulf of Maine cod*
- **Southern New England Cod:**
 - Season: Closed Year-Round
 - Bag Limit: zero possession, which will remain in place until changed by future action

** If implementation of these measures is delayed, the one-fish bag limit during the May open season may not be available for 2025.*



- **Gulf of Maine Haddock:**
 - Open Season: May 1, 2025 through February 28, 2026 and April 1-30, 2026, leaving only March 2026 closed to recreational fishing
 - Bag Limit: 15 fish per day
 - Minimum Size: 17 inches, which is an inch lower than 2024 to help reduce discards

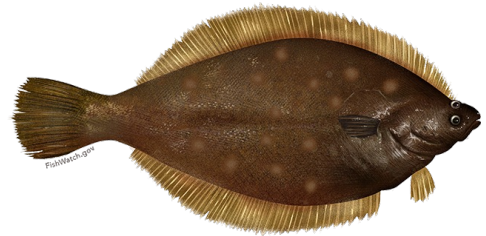
The Council considered input from its Groundfish Committee and Recreational Advisory Panel (RAP), which used a new cloud-based Decision Support Tool (DST) to develop Western Gulf of Maine cod and Gulf of Maine haddock recommendations. The tool automates the bioeconomic model process and allows users to directly run the model to explore a variety of alternatives under different season lengths, bag limits, and minimum fish sizes. The RAP explored runs that would optimize haddock catch and include an additional season for cod, which was May.

The Council expressed concerns about potential impacts to spawning cod in May but concluded that the one-fish limit would convert some dead discards into landings while recreational fishermen were targeting haddock in the spring. The measure also had economic benefits by potentially helping for-hire vessels increase trip sales. The presentation and other materials related to this discussion are posted [here](#).

➤ **Questions?** Contact Robin Frede, the Council's groundfish plan coordinator, at rfrede@nefmc.org.

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Yellowtail Flounder Research Track Assessment



The Council received a [presentation](#) on the [peer-reviewed results](#) of the 2024 Yellowtail Flounder Research Track Assessment. The goal was to develop assessment and projection methodologies to “support continued, incremental improvement” in future Yellowtail Flounder Management Track Stock Assessments.

- The Yellowtail Flounder Research Track Working Group Report is [posted here](#).
- The next management track assessments for yellowtail stocks are scheduled for [September 2025](#).



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Survey Update: The Council received an update from the Northeast Fisheries Science Center regarding fishery-related surveys. The [presentation](#) covered: (1) 2024 survey updates; (2) 2025 survey plans; (3) contingency plans for the *NOAA Ship Henry B. Bigelow*; (4) the recent shakedown cruise for the *NOAA Ship Pisces*; (5) a progress report on the development of industry-based surveys intended to complement the *Bigelow's* bottom trawl survey; and (6) other survey-related updates.

Community Engagement Meeting for June 2026 Management Track Assessments

On [Wednesday, February 26, 2025](#), the Northeast Fisheries Science Center will hold a community engagement meeting to gather input from the fishing community and other interested parties to help inform the [June 2026 Management Track Stock Assessments](#) for:

- Georges Bank cod
- Atlantic herring
- Georges Bank haddock
- Longfin inshore squid (*Illex*)
- Ocean quahog

This webinar meeting is an opportunity for the public to provide information and share insights with stock assessment scientists well before the June 2026 assessments get underway. The public also will be able to provide input via an online form. This year-in-advance opportunity was created to help improve the assessments. A list of potential questions and webinar information will be [posted here soon](#).

Assessment Oversight Panel Meeting for June 2025 Management Track Assessments

The assessment oversight panel (AOP) meeting for the [June 2025 Management Track Stock Assessments](#) is scheduled for [Thursday, February 27, 2025](#). The stocks covered are:

- Atlantic mackerel
- Scup, black sea bass, and summer flounder
- Bluefish
- Northern shortfin squid (*Illex*)

Webinar information and additional details are [posted here](#).



Cod, haddock, and pollock caught on a research trip. - SMAST photo

Provide input now! Atlantic herring, Georges Bank cod and haddock, and other stocks will be assessed in June 2026.



Atlantic herring