

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration****50 CFR Part 648****[Docket No. 260625–0153]****RIN 0648–BO26****Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act Provisions; Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Northeast Multispecies Fishery; Amendment 25 (Revised)**

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: NMFS implements regulations to incorporate revised Atlantic cod stock units into the Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan (FMP), and set status determination criteria (SDC), specifications, and commercial and recreational management measures, for the four new cod stocks, as proposed. This action also sets other recreational cod measures necessary for the fishery. The purpose of this action is to prevent overfishing, ensure rebuilding, and help achieve optimum yield in the Northeast multispecies (groundfish) fisheries consistent with the status of the stocks and requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act).

DATES: This rule is effective June 30, 2026.

ADDRESSES: Copies of Amendment 25 (Revised), including the draft Environmental Assessment (EA), the Regulatory Impact Review, and the Regulatory Flexibility Act Analysis prepared by the Council in support of this action, are available from Dr. Cate O’Keefe, Executive Director, New England Fishery Management Council, 50 Water Street, Mill 2, Newburyport, MA 01950. The supporting documents are also accessible via the internet at: <https://www.nefmc.org/management-plans/northeast-multispecies> or <https://www.regulations.gov>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Liz Sullivan, Fishery Policy Analyst, phone: 978–282–8493; email: Liz.Sullivan@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Northeast Multispecies FMP specifies the management measures for 13 groundfish species, both target and non-

target. The Northeast Multispecies FMP was prepared by the Council and is implemented by NMFS through regulations at 50 CFR part 648, consistent with the requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Act. The groundfish fishery includes recreational and commercial components. Members of the commercial fishery choose whether to fish as part of the sector program or the common pool. Annually, the commercial groundfish fishery has a value of approximately \$40 million (ex-vessel revenue from the most recent complete fishing year). Recreational fisheries, including the recreational groundfish fishery, contribute substantial value to the regional and national economies.

Background

The New England Fishery Management Council (Council) adopted Amendment 25 (Revised) to the Northeast Multispecies FMP on September 24, 2025. The Council submitted Amendment 25 (Revised), including a draft EA, for NMFS approval on December 15, 2025. NMFS published a notice of availability for Amendment 25 (Revised) on January 13, 2026 (91 FR 1257), with a 60-day comment period that closed on March 16, 2026. NMFS published a proposed rule for Amendment 25 (Revised) on March 18, 2026 (91 FR 12993), with a 30-day public comment period that ended on April 17, 2026. On April 6, 2026, the Greater Atlantic Office’s Regional Administrator, Michael Pentony, approved Amendment 25 (Revised) on behalf of the Secretary of Commerce. This final rule implements the Amendment 25 (Revised) management measures, as proposed.

Under the provisions of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, on behalf of the Secretary of Commerce, NMFS approves, disapproves, or partially approves measures that the Council proposes, after reviewing for consistency with the Act and other applicable law. Relying on the research and management track assessments; other scientific, commercial, and fishery data; economic, social, and ecological information and expertise; and public comments from numerous public meetings, the Council developed Amendment 25 (Revised) to specify SDC, overfishing limits (OFL), acceptable biological catches (ABC), and annual catch limits (ACL), and set other management measures for all four cod stocks that are necessary to achieve optimum yield, prevent overfishing, and ensure accountability. NMFS reviews recommended regulations for consistency with the fishery

management plan, plan amendments, the Magnuson-Stevens Act, and other applicable law.

Based on information provided in the EA and considered during the preparation of this action, and after consideration of public comments, NMFS has approved all of the measures in the Amendment 25 proposed rule, as recommended by the Council, and as described below. The Amendment 25 (Revised) measures implemented in this final rule:

- Incorporate the revised Atlantic cod stock unit definitions for Georges Bank (GB) cod, Eastern Gulf of Maine (EGOM) cod, Western GOM (WGOM) cod, and Southern New England (SNE) Atlantic cod into the Northeast Multispecies FMP;
- Set SDCs for the Atlantic cod stocks;
- Set specifications including catch limits for four cod stocks: GB cod for fishing year 2026; and EGOM cod, WGOM cod, SNE cod for fishing years 2026–2027;
- Define the apportionment method for setting the WGOM cod commercial sub-ACL;
- Establish the management uncertainty buffers for the Atlantic cod stocks;
- Set recreational sub-ACLs for WGOM cod and SNE cod;
- Establish common pool trimester total allowable catch (TAC) distributions, TAC closure areas, and baseline common pool trip limits for the Atlantic cod stocks;
- Set recreational measures for SNE cod; and
- Establish a regulatory process for the Regional Administrator to set recreational measures for GB and EGOM cod for fishing year 2026.

In addition to the measures recommended by the Council in Amendment 25 (Revised), this action also implements measures that are not part of Amendment 25 (Revised) but are implemented under section 305(d) authority in the Magnuson-Stevens Act to make changes necessary to carry out the FMP. Through this rulemaking, NMFS is implementing recreational management measures for WGOM, EGOM, and GB cod pursuant to this authority. These measures are dependent on the incorporation of the new stocks of cod into the FMP.

Atlantic Cod Stock Unit Definitions

Since the initial development of the FMP in 1985, the fishery has been managed based on two Atlantic cod biological stock units: Gulf of Maine (GOM) cod and GB cod. Amendment 25 (Revised) revises the FMP to reflect four

cod biological stock units as defined in the 2023 Research Track Assessment of Atlantic Cod: EGOM cod; WGOM cod; GB cod; and SNE cod. A peer review of the 2023 research track assessment accepted the outcomes of that assessment and its determination on the four-stock unit structure for cod, and this represents the best scientific

information available. A copy of the Summary Report of the Atlantic Cod Research Track Stock Assessment Peer Review is available at: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/s3/2023-08/PanelSummaryReportoftheAtlantiCodRTPeerReviewAugust172023-mlt-508-8-23-23ajd-508gw.pdf>. In order to implement the management areas for the four new cod

stocks, which are used for possession limits, minimum sizes, sector quotas, and other programs that are part of the Northeast Multispecies FMP, this action defines the geographical areas for the four cod stocks and management units in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) (see figure 1 and the regulatory text below).

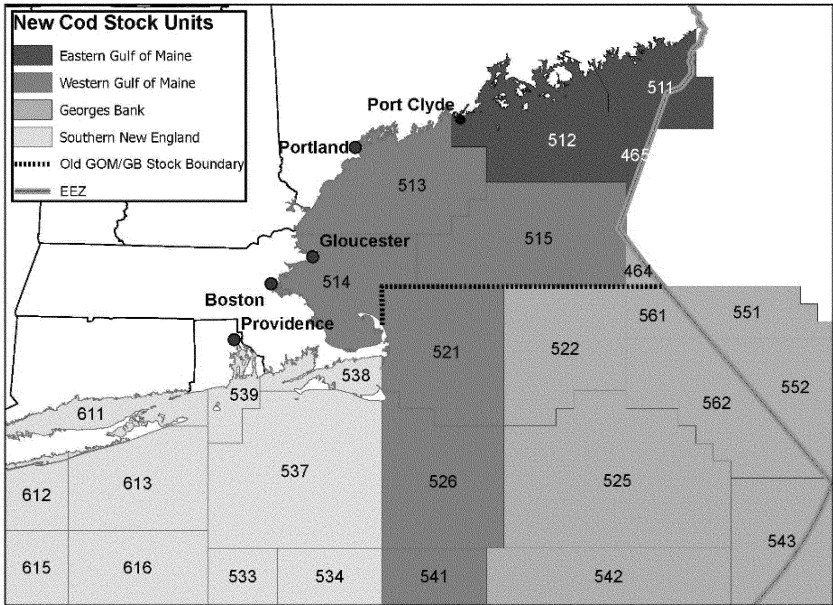


Figure 1—Map of New Atlantic Cod Stock Units

Status Determination Criteria

Section 303(a)(10) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act requires FMPs to specify objective and measurable criteria, *i.e.*, SDCs, for identifying when a stock is

overfished or is experiencing overfishing. This action establishes SDCs for EGOM, WGOM, GB, and SNE cod, and provides numerical estimates of these criteria, in order to incorporate the results of the 2024 stock assessments and based on the peer reviewed recommendations from the 2024 stock

assessments. Table 1 provides the SDCs for EGOM, WGOM, GB and SNE cod, and table 2 provides the resulting numerical estimates of the SDCs. These numerical estimates would be updated in subsequent stock assessments, as needed.

TABLE 1—STATUS DETERMINATION CRITERIA

Stock	Biomass target (SSB _{MSY} or Proxy)	Minimum biomass threshold	Maximum fishing mortality threshold (F _{MSY} or proxy)
EGOM cod	SSB _{MSY} proxy	1/2 B _{MSY}	F=40 percent of proxy
WGOM cod	SSB _{MSY} proxy	1/2 B _{MSY}	F=40 percent of proxy
GB cod	SSB _{MSY} proxy	1/2 B _{MSY}	F=40 percent of proxy
SNE cod	SSB _{MSY} proxy	1/2 B _{MSY}	F=40 percent of proxy

SSB = spawning stock biomass; MSY = maximum sustainable yield; B = biomass; F = fishing mortality.

TABLE 2—NUMERICAL ESTIMATES OF STATUS DETERMINATION CRITERIA

Stock	Model/ approach	B _{MSY} or proxy (mt)	F _{MSY} or proxy	MSY (mt)
EGOM cod	WHAM ...	2,184	0.27	476
WGOM cod	WHAM ...	62,677	0.19	11,271
GB cod	WHAM ...	8,290	0.23	1,930
SNE cod	WHAM ...	11,258	0.12	1,317

WHAM = Woods Hole Assessment Model; mt = metric tons.

Specifications for Fishing Years 2026–2027*Overfishing Limits and Acceptable Biological Catches*

This action implements catch limits for GB cod for the 2026 fishing year and EGOM cod, WGOM cod, SNE cod for

the 2026–2027 fishing years, based on stock assessments completed in 2024 (see table 3), replacing the fishing year 2026 default specifications for GOM cod and GB cod (91 FR 22467, April 27, 2026). Specifications for fishing year 2027 are projections that would be considered and reaffirmed or adjusted

in the annual framework adjustment for 2027. The GB cod ABC may be revised through Framework 72 to the FMP, which the Council voted to submit to NMFS for review on December 3, 2025. If approved, the Framework 72 GB cod ABC would replace and increase the GB cod ABC implemented here.

TABLE 3—FISHING YEARS 2026–2027 OVERFISHING LIMITS AND ACCEPTABLE BIOLOGICAL CATCHES FOR ATLANTIC COD STOCKS
[Mt, live weight]

Stock	2026		2027	
	OFL	U.S. ABC	OFL	U.S. ABC
EGOM Cod	50	39	39	30
WGOM Cod	603	460	769	586
GB Cod *	433	106	.....	.....
SNE Cod	47	36	65	36

Note: An empty cell indicates no OFL/ABC is adopted for that year. These catch limits would be set in a future action.

* If approved, Framework 72 would replace the 2026 specifications with an OFL of 473 mt and a U.S. ABC of 151 mt.

*Annual Catch Limits***Development of Annual Catch Limits**

Implementing the transition from two to four stocks of Atlantic cod requires updates to the current system of setting catch limits for the cod stocks, including setting recreational sub-ACLs as needed, developing a method for applying potential sector contributions (PSC) to the new cod stocks, and establishing management uncertainty buffers for the new cod stocks. Tables 4 and 5 provide the catch limits for the 2026 and 2027 fishing years.

This action creates a recreational sub-ACL for WGOM cod and allocates 27.5 percent of the WGOM cod ABC to the recreational fishery. The remaining 72.5 percent of the ABC is distributed between commercial fisheries, including commercial groundfish, State, and other Federal fisheries. This action also creates a recreational sub-ACL for SNE cod and allocates 73.5 percent of the SNE cod ABC to the recreational fishery, after first reducing the ABC to account for catch from State and other Federal fisheries. The remaining 26.5 percent would be allocated to the commercial groundfish fishery. A recreational allocation of SNE cod is necessary to provide accountability to every segment of the fishery that catches this stock, and to develop more segment-specific management measures that more effectively reduce fishing mortality for such segments.

This action does not change an individual's qualifying fishing history or the way an individual vessel's PSC contributes to a sector's cumulative PSC. To allocate to sectors and common pool vessels, NMFS will continue to

apply the existing sector PSCs for the previous GOM and GB cod stocks to the commercial groundfish sub-ACL to calculate the sector and common pool sub-ACLs as follows: For EGOM cod, the GOM cod PSCs will be used; and for the revised GB cod and SNE cod, the GB cod PSCs will be used. This is because, for each of these stocks, the new stock area falls completely within the old stock area on which the PSC is based.

The WGOM cod stock area is made up of three statistical areas (513, 514, 515) that were previously in the GOM cod stock area and three statistical areas (521, 526, 541) that were previously in the old GB cod stock area (see figure 1). This action implements an apportionment method that applies existing sector PSCs to the new stock area to approximate sector vessels' catch performances in the old stock areas as closely as practicable, while facilitating effective conservation and management of the new stocks. The commercial groundfish sub-ACL for WGOM cod is divided into a northern and southern portion, which correspond to the areas previously within the GOM cod and old GB cod stock areas, respectively. The apportionment, described more fully in the proposed rule, results in 68 percent of the commercial groundfish sub-ACL from the northern portion and 32 percent from the southern portion. More information regarding the analyses conducted to support this decision is included in appendix III (Development of Phase I Cod Transition—Sector Allocation Bridge Approach) of the Amendment 25 (Revised) EA.

The WGOM cod commercial groundfish sub-ACL will be divided by these percentages, and the GOM cod

and GB cod PSCs will be applied to the northern and southern portions, respectively, before being recombined to calculate total WGOM cod sector and common pool sub-ACLs. Therefore, a sector will be allocated WGOM cod based on its GOM cod and GB cod PSC, and could fish that quota throughout the WGOM cod stock area. These measures are expected to facilitate catch accounting and accountability that would help achieve biological conservation, manage stocks at sustainable levels, and achieve optimum yield while maintaining historic fishing opportunities.

Management Uncertainty Buffers

For the new cod stocks, Amendment 25 (Revised) uses the same management uncertainty approach established by Amendment 16. Recreational sub-ACLs have a 7-percent buffer applied; commercial sub-ACLs generally have a 5-percent buffer. Although Amendment 16 set a lower buffer for certain stocks that do not have a state waters component, Amendment 25 (Revised) sets the fishing year 2026 GB cod management uncertainty buffer at 5 percent. The sector management uncertainty buffer can be removed under a 100-percent at-sea monitoring (ASM) coverage target, except for SNE cod. The annual framework (Framework 72) will provide more information regarding the ASM target coverage level and explain how sector allocations could change based on that target and any associated buffer changes.

Sector and Common Pool Allocations

NMFS calculates a sector's allocation for each stock by summing its members'

PSCs for a stock and then multiplying that total percentage by the available commercial sub-ACL for that stock. Table 6 shows the total GOM cod and GB cod PSCs for each sector, by stock, for fishing year 2026 based on 2026 preliminary sector rosters. It also provides the allocations of EGOM, WGOM, GB, and SNE cod that each sector is allocated, in metric tons (mt) and thousands of pounds (lb), for fishing year 2026, under the specifications in this action. The common pool sub-ACLs are also included in table 6 for comparison.

According to the regulations at § 648.87(b)(1)(i)(C), a sector may carry

over up to 10 percent of its initial quota for each stock that is unused at the end of the previous fishing year provided that the total unused sector ACE plus the overall ACL for the following fishing year does not exceed the ABC for the fishing year in which the carryover may be harvested. Given the transition from two to four stocks of Atlantic cod, there is no means of ensuring that unused sector ACE for cod of the old stocks plus the overall ACL for the new stocks would not exceed the ABCs of the new stocks. It would also not be possible to fairly assign unused GOM or GB cod ACE to one of the new stock areas. Consequently, sectors are not allowed to

carry over unused quota of fishing year 2025 GOM and GB cod into fishing year 2026.

This action also implements the trimester TAC distributions for the EGOM cod, WGOM cod, SNE cod, and GB cod common pool sub-ACLs (see table 7) and sets the trimester TACs for each cod stock for fishing years 2026 and 2027 (see table 8), based on 2026 preliminary rosters. Incidental catch TACs are also specified for the four new cod stocks for common pool vessels fishing in the special management programs (*i.e.*, special access programs (SAP) and the Regular B Days-at-Sea (DAS) Program) (tables 9–11).

TABLE 4—CATCH LIMITS FOR THE 2026 FISHING YEAR
[Mt, live weight]

Stock	Total ACL	Groundfish sub-ACL	Sector sub-ACL	Common pool sub-ACL	Recreational sub-ACL	Midwater trawl fishery	Scallop fishery	Small-mesh fisheries	State waters sub-component	Other sub-component
	A to H	A + B + C	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
EGOM Cod	37	37	35	1.4	.....	.....	.....	.....	0	0.4
WGOM Cod	436	408	279	10.6	118	.....	.....	.....	23	5.0
GB Cod	101	93	89	3.2	.....	.....	.....	.....	0	8.5
SNE Cod	34	25	6.5	0.2	18	.....	.....	.....	6.1	3.2

TABLE 5—CATCH LIMITS FOR THE 2027 FISHING YEAR *
[Mt, live weight]

Stock	Total ACL	Groundfish sub-ACL	Sector sub-ACL	Common pool sub-ACL	Recreational sub-ACL	Midwater trawl fishery	Scallop fishery	Small-mesh fisheries	State waters sub-component	Other sub-component
EGOM Cod	29	28	27	1.0	.....	.....	.....	.....	0.2	0.3
WGOM Cod	555	519	356	14	150	.....	.....	.....	30	6.4
SNE Cod	34	25	6.5	0.2	18	.....	.....	.....	6.1	3.2

* GB cod does not have catch limits set for fishing year 2027, and is therefore not included in table 5.

TABLE 6—CUMULATIVE PSC (PERCENTAGE), ESTIMATED ACE (IN MT) AND ESTIMATED ACE (IN 1,000 LB) FOR EACH SECTOR BY COD STOCK FOR FISHING YEAR 2026 * #

Sector name	MRI count	PSC		ACE in mt					ACE in 1,000 lb				
		GOM cod	GB cod	EGOM cod	WGOM cod	GB cod east	GB cod west	SNE cod	EGOM cod	WGOM cod	GB cod east	GB cod west	SNE cod
Fixed Gear Sector	57	0.620007170	10.25792369	0	11	9	0	1	0	24	21	0	2
Maine Coast Community Sector ...	106	15.94885074	2.01397400	6	33	2	0	0	13	73	4	0	0
Maine Permit Bank	11	1.16763878	0.13459891	0	2	0	0	0	1	5	0	0	0
Mooncusser Sector	50	7.47192323	11.96726174	3	26	11	0	1	6	57	24	0	2
NEFS 2	133	26.02830199	11.00087974	9	62	10	0	1	21	136	22	0	2
NEFS 4	58	11.22369265	8.64395731	4	30	8	0	1	9	66	18	0	1
NEFS 5	14	0.33003363	0.35527445	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0
NEFS 6	3	0.16963046	0.53360157	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0
NEFS 8	116	6.65297914	34.30912194	2	45	32	0	2	5	99	70	0	5
NEFS 10	20	1.68404030	0.17156341	1	3	0	0	0	1	8	0	0	0
NEFS 11	37	10.57507102	0.39824603	4	21	0	0	0	9	47	1	0	0
NEFS 12	24	3.70670785	0.66798830	1	8	1	0	0	3	17	1	0	0
NEFS 13	49	0.35715437	7.58727804	0	8	7	0	1	0	17	15	0	1
New Hampshire Permit Bank	4	1.15613548	0.00082824	0	2	0	0	0	1	5	0	0	0
Sustainable Harvest Sector 1	46	5.93238203	5.43174188	2	17	5	0	0	5	37	11	0	1
Sustainable Harvest Sector 2	24	2.04310071	1.98369974	1	6	2	0	0	2	13	4	0	0
Sustainable Harvest Sector 3	10	1.20890197	1.05247319	0	3	1	0	0	1	7	2	0	0
Common Pool	489	3.72344849	3.48958783	1	11	3	0	0	3	23	7	0	1
All Sectors	762	96.28	96.51	35	279	89	0	7	77	616	197	0	14

* The data in this table are based on final sector rosters for fishing year 2026.

Numbers are rounded to the nearest thousand pounds and nearest metric ton. In some cases, this table shows an allocation of 0, but that sector may be allocated a small amount of that stock in pounds.

TABLE 7—TRIMESTER TAC DISTRIBUTIONS (PERCENT) FOR ATLANTIC COD STOCKS

Stock	Trimester 1	Trimester 2	Trimester 3
EGOM Cod	80	10	10
WGOM Cod	55	22	23
GB Cod	33	33	34
SNE Cod	36	31	33

TABLE 8—FISHING YEARS 2026–2027 COMMON POOL TRIMESTER TACS
[Mt, live weight] *

Stock	2026			2027		
	Trimester 1	Trimester 2	Trimester 3	Trimester 1	Trimester 2	Trimester 3
EGOM Cod	1.1	0.1	0.1	0.8	0.1	0.1
WGOM Cod	5.8	2.3	2.4	7.4	3.0	3.1
GB Cod	1.1	1.1	1.1	.....	.....	.....
SNE Cod	0.083	0.071	0.076	0.072	0.062	0.066

* The data in this table are based on final sector rosters for fishing year 2026.

TABLE 9—COMMON POOL INCIDENTAL CATCH TACS FOR THE 2026–2027 FISHING YEARS
[Mt, live weight]

Stock	Percentage of common pool sub-ACL	2026	2027
EGOM Cod	1	0.01	0.01
WGOM Cod	1	0.11	0.14
GB Cod	1.68	0.05	.....
SNE Cod	1	0.00	0.00

TABLE 10—PERCENTAGE OF INCIDENTAL CATCH TACS DISTRIBUTED TO EACH SPECIAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Stock	Regular B DAS program (percent)	Eastern U.S./Canada haddock SAP (percent)
EGOM Cod	100	n/a
WGOM Cod	100	n/a
GB Cod	60	40
SNE Cod	100	n/a

TABLE 11—FISHING YEARS 2026–2027 INCIDENTAL CATCH TACS FOR EACH SPECIAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAM
[Mt, live weight]

Stock	Regular B DAS program		Eastern U.S./Canada haddock SAP	
	2026	2027	2026	2027
EGOM Cod	0.01	0.01	n/a	n/a
WGOM Cod	0.11	0.14	n/a	n/a
GB Cod	0.03	0.00	0.02	.....
SNE Cod	0.00	0.00	n/a	n/a

Common Pool Accountability Measures and Other Management Measures

Common Pool Trimester Total Allowable Catch Areas for Cod Stocks

The Trimester TAC accountability measure (AM) requires closure of a stock's Trimester TAC Area for common pool vessels fishing when common pool catch is projected to reach 90 percent of the Trimester TAC for that stock. For the

cod stocks, these closures would apply to common pool vessels fishing with trawl, gillnet, or longline/hook gear. Amendment 25 (Revised) establishes Trimester TAC Areas for each of the four cod stocks (table 12). These areas were developed based on the statistical areas that made up 90 percent of the total commercial catches using the most recent 5-year period (fishing years 2019 through 2023) of data.

TABLE 12—TRIMESTER TAC AREAS FOR ATLANTIC COD STOCKS, BY STATISTICAL AREA

Stock	Trimester TAC area, by statistical area
EGOM Cod	512
WGOM Cod	513, 514, 521
GB Cod	522, 561
SNE Cod	537, 539, 613

Common Pool Baseline Trip Limits for Cod Stocks

Amendment 25 (Revised) sets common pool trip limits for each of the revised cod stocks for DAS Northeast multispecies permits and non-DAS

Northeast multispecies permits (Handgear A, Handgear B, and the Small Vessel Category permit) (table 13). The common pool trip limits set by this action are intended to provide for a limited amount of bycatch of cod that may result from fishing for other stocks

in the common pool. For SNE cod, the common pool sub-ACL is insufficient to support any amount of landings, even as incidental catch, and so Amendment 25 (Revised) prohibits common pool vessels' possession of this stock.

TABLE 13—2026 COMMON POOL DAILY AND TRIP POSSESSION LIMITS

Stock	2026 Common pool daily and trip possession limits			
	DAS permits	Handgear A	Handgear B	Small vessel category
EGOM Cod	25 lb (11 kg) per DAS, up to 50 lb (23 kg) per trip.	25 lb (11 kg) per trip.		
WGOM Cod	50 lb (23 kg) per DAS, up to 100 lb (45 kg) per trip.	50 lb (23 kg) per trip ..	25 lb (11 kg) per trip ..	50 lb (23 kg) per trip.
GB Cod	25 lb (11 kg) per DAS, up to 50 lb (23 kg) per trip.	25 lb (11 kg) per trip.		
SNE Cod	0 lb (0 kg) per trip; possession prohibited.			

Recreational Management Measures

WGOM Cod

This action sets the WGOM cod recreational minimum size of 23 inches (58.4 cm), a recreational possession limit of one fish, and a recreational open season of September 1–October 31 (see table 14).

Although the proposed rule included a May open season for WGOM cod, this opening was developed as a measure for fishing year 2025. In a February 2, 2026 letter to the Regional Administrator, the Council recommended that WGOM cod not have a May open season in fishing year 2026 and shortening the fall season to include only October.

At the time of the January Council meeting, preliminary fishing year 2025 Wave 5 Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) data had been made available only recently, which did not provide sufficient time to incorporate the data into the Recreational Demand Model (RDM) that underpins the Decision Support Tool (DST) prior to the Council making its recommendation for recreational measures for WGOM cod and GOM haddock. To account for this updated information for Council consideration, Northeast Fisheries Science Center (Center) staff applied a scaling adjustment of 3.65 times to prior model predicted outcomes for mortality of cod for each set of measures considered by the DST. As such, the

Council was able to consider only a limited suite of potential measures that prevented cod mortality from exceeding both cod and haddock sub-ACLs in at least 50 percent of the model runs.

After the January 2026 Council meeting, Center staff fully incorporated Wave 5 MRIP data into the RDM to re-estimate the potential cod and haddock mortality under the Council-recommended measures and the other sets of measures that were considered. Based on the new RDM results, the impact of the Wave 5 data was less than initially expected under the estimates produced via scaling of previous RDM results. A 2-month fall season (September and October) constrains catch below the WGOM cod recreational sub-ACL in 77 percent of simulations. Center staff also evaluated management options with a May open season for WGOM cod, but none of those resulted in projected cod mortality under the recreational sub-ACL in greater than 50 percent of the simulations run. This information was communicated directly to the Council in an April 1, 2026, letter from the Regional Administrator, including a report of the new RDM results.

GB and EGOM Cod

Amendment 25 (Revised) establishes a temporary regulatory process for the Regional Administrator to set EGOM cod and GB cod recreational measures for fishing year 2026, following

consultation with the Council. Any measures set by the Regional Administrator would remain in place unless changed in a future framework action. As previously recommended by the Council, this action sets EGOM cod and GB cod recreational measures consistent with WGOM cod measures, specifically a minimum size of 23 inches (58.4 cm), with a possession limit of one fish and an open season of September 1–October 31 (see table 14).

SNE Cod

As discussed in Specifications for Fishing Years 2026–2027, Amendment 25 (Revised) includes a very small recreational sub-ACL for SNE cod. While the regulations provide procedures for the Regional Administrator to set the recreational measures for a stock with a sub-ACL, in this case the Council included the recreational measures for SNE cod as part of Amendment 25 (Revised) for fishing year 2026. Amendment 25 (Revised) establishes a zero fish possession limit for SNE cod for all recreational fishermen (charter/party and private anglers) (see table 14). Given the very low ABC and recreational sub-ACL for fishing year 2026, these are the only measures that would be expected to reduce mortality sufficiently. The Regional Administrator will evaluate the SNE cod recreational management measures annually.

TABLE 14—RECREATIONAL COD MANAGEMENT MEASURES

Stock	Possession limit (For hire and private)	Minimum size in inches (cm)	Open season
WGOM Cod	1	23 (58.4)	September 1–October 31.
GB Cod	1	23 (58.4)	September 1–October 31.
EGOM Cod	1	23 (58.4)	September 1–October 31.
SNE Cod	No retention	n/a	CLOSED.

n/a: No minimum size set for SNE cod, because it is zero retention.

Comments on Amendment 25 (Revised) Notice of Availability

NMFS received 261 comments during the comment period for the Amendment 25 (Revised) notice of availability. Comments broadly supported the approval and quick implementation of Amendment 25 (Revised). We did not receive any comments urging the disapproval of the Amendment or opposing Amendment 25 (Revised) overall. NMFS took all comments received on the notice of availability into consideration as part of its approval of the Amendment.

Comments and Responses on Measures in Amendment 25 Proposed Rule

NMFS received 14 comments in response to the Amendment 25 proposed rule. Comments were submitted by Conservation Law Foundation (CLF), Maine Coast Fisherman's Association (MCFA), V Northeast Fishery Sector, Inc. (NEFS 5), NEFS 11, Oceana, U.S. Seafood Policy Council (USSPC), and seven members of the public. A collective comment from 15 fishermen was also submitted. One comment of the 14 was irrelevant to the groundfish fishery and this action and is not addressed further. Amendment 25 (Revised) was approved on April 6, 2026. Statements in these comments that are specific to the agency's approval of Amendment 25 (Revised) rather than the measures proposed for this rulemaking, including questioning the basis of the four cod stocks, are not addressed further in this action. Similarly, comments regarding habitat protections for cod, including protection of cod's food source, are outside the scope of Amendment 25 (Revised) and not addressed further.

Support for Proposed Measures

Comment 1: CLF, MCFA, NEFS 5, NEFS 11, Oceana, and a collective comment from 15 fishermen expressed support for Amendment 25 and the proposed regulations. USSPC supports the science-based efforts under Amendment 25. A member of the public commented that using these updated stocks can allow for more precise

regulation, which could help prevent overfishing and better support long-term population recovery.

Response 1: NMFS agrees and is publishing this final rule to implement these measures to carry out the goals and objectives of Amendment 25.

Timing

Comment 2: NEFS 5 and NEFS 11 emphasized the need for NMFS to implement Amendment 25 (Revised) as soon as possible in the 2026 fishing year. They highlighted the complications sectors will experience tracking and managing quota and catch for both two and four stocks, until Amendment 25 is implemented. CLF and Oceana also stressed the need for timely implementation of the measures in this final rule. Comments from MCFA and a collective comment signed by 15 fishermen both asked that Amendment 25 not be implemented mid-season; however, both comments went on to say that if approved for 2026, Amendment 25 should be implemented as close to May 1 as possible.

Response 2: NMFS is publishing this final rule so that Amendment 25 (Revised) will be in place as soon after May 1, 2026, as possible. To further facilitate the transition to four stocks for Northeast multispecies sectors and their member vessels, NMFS has provided information from the approved Amendment 25 (Revised) to groundfish sector managers to ensure they are aware of and can track quota and catch of the cod stocks.

Comment 3: One commenter stated that a mid-cycle shift would undermine the rule's scientific basis and enforceability of ACLs due to the difficulty a delay presents for catch accounting, and that the change needs to be phased in so that the industry, Council, and NMFS can incorporate updated stock boundaries and age data into the next full specifications cycle.

Response 3: Implementing this Amendment will facilitate accurate catch accounting and data for effective management in the current fishing year and consideration in future assessments and management. Currently, the fishery

is operating under default quotas for cod that are 75 percent of the 2025 quotas for two stocks, and those default quotas expire on October 31, 2026. Once implemented, the fishery will be managed as four stocks using catch advice specifically designed for those stocks. Further delays in implementing these four stock measures could affect the transition and potentially adversely affect catch accounting or information that would be included in future management considerations. NMFS is addressing these concerns by implementing this final rule as soon as possible. Also, consistent with the commenter's suggestion to engage fishing stakeholders and use transitional accounting protocols to ensure better catch accountability, NMFS has provided information to the groundfish sector managers to ensure they are aware of and can track quota and catch of the cod stocks under the old and new management schemes, to avoid the undermining of the goals and objectives of Amendment 25 (Revised). Implementation of this action is based on and consistent with the best scientific information available. The 2024 management track assessments used to develop the specifications for fishing years 2026 and 2027 for the four cod stocks were peer-reviewed, based on the peer-reviewed research track assessment, which all necessarily included new stock boundaries and age data. Attempting to manage the fishery on a two-stock basis for an additional entire fishing year would not fully incorporate this available science.

Comment 4: As part of its comment urging immediate implementation of Amendment 25, CLF referenced its February 17, 2026, petition for rulemaking related to Atlantic cod. Specifically, CLF petitioned the Department of Commerce and NOAA to approve Amendment 25 (Revised), and to immediately notify the Council that it must take action to end overfishing on WGOM and SNE cod stocks and prepare rebuilding plans within 2 years for all four cod stocks or prepare a Secretarial Amendment to take those actions without the Council.

Response 4: Amendment 25 (Revised) was approved on April 6, 2026, incorporating the four cod stocks into the FMP. This final rule implements the measures necessary to carry out the goals and objectives of the Amendment and addresses the issues raised by CLF. The specifications approved in this action have been determined to prevent overfishing. Additionally, with the incorporation of SDCs for the four cod stocks into the FMP through this action, NMFS can now proceed with the next steps in making status determinations and providing guidance to the Council regarding the development of rebuilding plans, as required under the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

Commercial and Recreational Allocations

Comment 5: NEFS 5 and NEFS 11 expressed concern for the methodology used to allocate Atlantic cod to sectors. While the two sectors support using the approach developed for Amendment 25 (Revised) as a temporary measure, NEFS 5 and NEFS 11 strongly urged NMFS and the Council to continue their work on the cod transition plan to develop new allocations that are more in-line with vessel landing history under the four-cod stock structure. MCFA and the collective comment from a group of fishermen also commented on the need to make longer-term allocation decisions through a transparent and deliberate process. One commenter stated that NMFS should provide a sensitivity analysis of the alternative qualifying years for the WGOM cod stock PSCs and apportionment and explain how the 2001–2006 recreational baseline and the separate 2010–2012, 2017, and 2022–2023 commercial baseline satisfy National Standard 2. The commenter asked why the PSC baseline remains appropriate despite changes in effort and gear and stated that NMFS should use a new approach that reflects a different choice of fishing patterns than that chosen by the Council.

Response 5: The bridge approach used in Amendment 25 (Revised) to allocate the four stocks of cod to sectors using the PSCs from two cod stocks was developed as part of Phase 1 of the cod transition plan. The Council is planning Phase 2 of the cod transition plan, recognizing the need for an extended period of time in the next phase. The Council may consider updated information and analyses to potentially establish new PSCs or new allocative measures for each of the four cod stocks to promote conservation, as well as developing other management measures, consistent with the comments submitted for this action and during the

development of Amendment 25 (Revised). NMFS is committed to working with the Council on the continuation of the cod transition plan following the implementation of Amendment 25 (Revised). Input from stakeholders will be critical as part of this process.

The data used for the apportionment decision complies with the requirement to consider the best scientific information available during the development of this action. National Standard 2 requires conservation and management measures to be based on the best scientific information available, not the best data possible. It requires a thorough review of all the relevant information available at the time the decision was made to ensure superior information is not disregarded. There is no indication that better or contrary information was available and not considered. As explained in the EA (Section 7.1.1), Amendment 25 (Revised) is based on the most recent information from the 2024 management track assessments and prior Atlantic cod research track assessment. The mortality limits were based on the scientific advice of the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee, which recommends ABCs to the Council. Bycatch information was based on the most recent assessments, and economic impacts were analyzed using the Quota Change Model. Consistent with National Standard 2 guidance, the catch data used for the apportionment was chosen and evaluated for its relevance to the goals and objectives of Amendment 25 (Revised) of effectively managing the four cod stocks within the FMPs system of ACLs and AMs to ensure catch remains below desired targets. The Council considered which catch data best reflected fishing under the sector system for the purpose of preserving the status quo to the best extent practicable during the interim period of Phase 1. There were extensive discussions and consideration of the basis of these decisions and the years that would best reflect fishing operations. Numerous apportionment options were considered. The fishing years used were refined from entire series of years of available data since the sector system's implementation for the purpose of best reflecting stock abundance, catch information, and the conservation and management measures that governed the fishery during that period. Those decisions, along with the Council's decisions to allocate between the recreational and commercial fisheries, sought to maintain the fair and equitable balance established in Amendment 16

while promoting conservation of the new cod stocks by preventing overfishing and establishing a basis on which the NMFS may notify the Council of the necessity of new rebuilding plans as appropriate. The fishing years chosen incorporate many factors that reasonably reflect sector operations since sectors were established. The decisions also were well-informed by economic analyses that the Council considered to provide for the sustained participation of fishing communities and minimize adverse economic impacts on such communities to the extent practicable, consistent with National Standard 8.

Comment 6: One commenter requested additional information regarding the selection of the management uncertainty buffers, asking how the buffers would be adjusted if recreational estimates are revised mid-season. The commenter questioned why a 100-percent at-sea monitoring coverage target is not sufficient for the elimination of the management uncertainty buffer for SNE cod. CLF noted that a prolonged delay of implementation might warrant more precautionary buffers to ensure conservation objectives are met, but points to no information supporting this concern.

Response 6: Management uncertainty buffers for cod are set consistent with the majority of other stocks managed under the FMP, as previously established in Amendment 16, to account for the uncertainties associated with discard estimation and quota monitoring, with the exception of GB cod. Stocks in the FMP with no inshore component receive a 3-percent buffer, but in the case of GB cod, the Council chose a higher buffer of 5 percent to reflect additional uncertainties of managing the U.S./Canada shared resource. The Council may revisit these buffers in future management actions. For SNE cod, the Council recommended not removing the buffer for sectors, even under a 100-percent ASM coverage target, because of the overlap of the stock area with the area west of 71°30' W longitude that is excluded from sector ASM coverage. There is no information showing that implementation of this action as soon as practicable during this season will undermine the effectiveness of these buffers.

Recreational estimation methods are not changed mid-season. Previously, when there have been changes to the recreational estimation process, they have been incorporated into catch accounting only after being incorporated into the specification setting process.

Economic Impacts

Comment 7: USSPC commented that the transition from two to four stocks of cod should be implemented in a way that safeguards the strength, stability, and competitiveness of the American seafood industry. It expressed concern that the proposed measures would have economic risks to seafood industries. It commented that NOAA should implement a phased transition to the four-stock framework, provide economic mitigation or support for impacted businesses, regularly reassess commercial and recreational allocation splits, simplify compliance, and incorporate U.S. seafood supply chain resilience into regulatory impact analyses.

Response 7: Amendment 25 (Revised) represents the transition from two to four stocks of cod under Phase 1 of the Cod Stock Transition Plan. Appendix III of the Amendment 25 (Revised) EA provides additional details on the quota setting method that would allow for quotas to be set, monitored, and managed for four areas that match the four new stock units that were used in assessments, while not revising the existing PSCs for the previous two units of cod. As part of Phase 2, the Council may develop potential new reallocations between the commercial and recreational sectors, and within the commercial sector, but that is not part of the measures implemented in this rule.

This action includes an evaluation of alternative management approaches relative to economic and social impacts, which includes the impacts to affected communities. Specifically, Section 6.5 of the Amendment 25 (Revised) EA and the Regulatory Impact Review in Section 7.11.1 of the Amendment 25 (Revised) EA describe the economic impacts of the action and its alternatives, and Section 6.6 of the EA describes the social impacts of the action. NMFS evaluated the conservation and management measures considered, selected, and implemented in this action to ensure they meet all of the requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, including minimizing costs to the extent practicable while seeking the greatest overall benefit to the Nation, particularly with respect to food production and recreational opportunities and taking into account the protection of marine ecosystems.

Comment 8: One commenter expressed concern that the analysis accompanying this action does not adequately account for distributional shifts in fishing effort. The commenter states that without analyzing where

fishing effort will shift, NMFS cannot determine if fishing mortality on Atlantic cod stocks will decrease. The commenter additionally states that the analysis should include scenario results showing likely effort redistribution under alternative allocation formulas and the expected biological consequences of those shifts, stating that this analysis is a legal requirement to ensure no coastal community is unfairly burdened. Another commenter expressed concern regarding the economic impact for fishermen who may face stricter catch limits or reduced access to certain fishing areas.

Response 8: Amendment 25 (Revised) establishes four stocks of Atlantic cod and establishes specifications for these stocks consistent with the 2023 Research Track Assessment for Atlantic cod and subsequent management track assessments completed in 2024. Based on the assessments, the specifications limit fishing mortality within each stock area sufficiently to facilitate achievement of optimum yield and prevent overfishing of the newly established stocks of Atlantic cod, as required by National Standard 1. Consistent with National Standard 3, the selected management areas balance known and reasonably foreseeable biological, geographic, economic, technical, social, and ecological concerns to best achieve the FMP's goals and objectives. The FMP and its conservation and management measures are subject to continual Council and NMFS oversight and evaluation with the goal of achieving optimum yield on a continuing basis, including evaluating fishing activity that occurs after implementation of this action.

The stock area and apportionment measures approved in this action reasonably promote conservation, do not discriminate between residents of different states, and are fair and equitable, consistent with National Standard 4. The measures have different impacts on different participants because of the differences in the distribution of fish and varying stock levels in the complex. As explained in Section 7.1.1 of the Amendment 25 (Revised) EA, some of these impacts may be localized, but these distributive impacts are difficult to avoid given the requirement to rebuild overfished stocks.

National Standard 8 requires that measures take into account the importance of fishing resources to communities by considering economic and social data. Section 6.5 of the Amendment 25 (Revised) EA and the Regulatory Impact Review in Section 7.11.1 of the Amendment 25 (Revised)

EA describe the economic impacts of the action and its alternatives, and Section 6.6 of the EA describes the social impacts of the action. As noted in the EA, there could be behavioral fishing changes due to the transition from two to four cod stocks. For example, few trips occurred in the EGOM cod stock area in fishing year 2023, but the EA noted that this could change given the expectation that the WGOM cod quota will be constraining. However, the quota change model is largely unable to predict large shifts in effort, because it is based on a data period when there were only two stocks of cod and the model implicitly assumes that fishing practices during the data period are representative of future effort.

Commercial and Recreational Measures

Comment 9: One recreational fisherman provided input on possible recreational measures such as maximum size limits, and suggested setting "seasonal catch totals" as an alternative to "minimalized numerical or weight possession limits," which they stated will economically affect offshore charters. One member of the public expressed concern that recreational fishing restrictions like limited seasons and possession limits have the possibility to reduce community engagement and economic stimulation in that sector.

Response 9: The recreational measures implemented in this final rule were developed in consultation with the Council and its recreational advisory panel and are intended to allow the recreational fishery to achieve but not exceed the recreational sub-ACLs for the year. Maximum size limits or slot limits have been previously implemented but were not recommended for any of the cod stocks for fishing year 2026. The commenter referenced setting seasonal catch totals but did not provide more context. Larger scale changes (*i.e.*, beyond adjustments to season, minimum size, and bag limit) to recreational management of stocks in the FMP could be considered through the Council process but are out of scope for Amendment 25 (Revised).

Comment 10: One fisherman recommended small possession limits for both recreational and commercial sectors for cod off Montauk NY.

Response 10: The zero-fish possession limit for recreational fishermen and common pool vessels is based on the very low ABC, recreational sub-ACL, and common pool sub-ACL. Because of the other effort controls on sector vessels, zero possession was not determined to be necessary at this time, although it is an option that the Council

has considered and could pursue in the future. Recreational and common pool possession limits are considered annually (and common pool possession limits can be changed in-season) by the Regional Administrator, and the limits for SNE cod could be increased if it is determined to be possible.

NEPA Analysis

Comment 11: One commenter stated that the EA should include more ecosystem factors to ensure the rebuilding targets for cod remain realistic in a changing climate and should also include cumulative effects of other rulemakings.

Response 11: As described in the Amendment 25 (Revised) EA, the status determination criteria, including the biomass target, were developed as part of the Atlantic Cod Research Track Assessment completed in 2023, and the management track assessments completed in 2024. “Ecosystem and climate influences” was the first Term of Reference for the research track assessment, and the 2023 peer review found that this had been met for all four stocks of cod. Future management track assessments will continue to recalculate the numeric estimates for each of the four cod stocks’ SDCs to reflect any changes in the understanding of the stocks’ statuses. Cumulative effects of other actions are considered as part of the Amendment 25 (Revised) EA, Section 6.7.

Changes From the Proposed Rule

As described more fully in Recreational Management Measures, this final rule approves a recreational open season for WGOM cod for September and October only and does not include the May season that was originally proposed.

Sector and common pool allocations have been updated to reflect final sector rosters for fishing year 2026, rather than the 2025 rosters used in the proposed rule.

Classification

NMFS is issuing this rule pursuant to sections 304(b)(3) and 305(d) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, which provide specific authority for implementing this action. Pursuant to section 305(d), this action implements recreational measures for the EGOM, WGOM, and GB cod stocks, in accordance with § 648.89(f)(3), and is necessary to carry out the Northeast Multispecies FMP. The NMFS Assistant Administrator has determined that this final rule is consistent with Amendment 25 (Revised), the Northeast Multispecies

FMP, other provisions of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, and other applicable law.

This final rule has been determined to be not significant for purposes of Executive Order (E.O.) 12866. This final rule is not an E.O. 14192 regulatory action because this rule is not significant under E.O. 12866.

The Assistant Administrator for Fisheries finds that this action is excepted from the 30-day delayed effectiveness of this action pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553(d)(1) because it relieves restrictions and is otherwise justified by good cause under 5 U.S.C. 553(d)(3).

These measures should be implemented upon publication because they relieve the restrictions of the lower default catch limits that are in place until superseded by this action. Further delay in implementation of these measures would limit economic opportunities for the fishery to fully access groundfish quota within the 2026 fishing year. Until the rule is in effect, fishermen are restricted in their opportunity to fish, because they are operating under default quotas that are based on 75 percent of the 2025 specifications set for the two cod stocks. The default allocations are overall lower than the specifications for cod implemented through this final rule. Waiving the 30-day delay for this rule would immediately relieve the 75-percent catch limit restriction. Fishermen are currently fishing under more-restrictive default catch limits and do not need time to prepare for the effective date of this action. In fact, fishermen who are subject to this action expect and need timely implementation to avoid adverse economic impacts. While NMFS has worked closely with sector managers to use the online quota tracking systems available to allow managers to track quota under both the 2-stock and 4-stock regimes, immediate implementation will reduce confusion and the burden for sector managers. Numerous comments received on the proposed rule, from both industry groups and non-governmental organizations, stressed the need for speedy implementation. In sum, a delay in implementation of this action would greatly diminish the benefits of these specifications and other approved management measures.

Further, there is good cause to waive the 30-day delay from publication before the rule comes into effect. Multiple commenters on the proposed rule noted the need to implement this action as soon as possible to capture fully the conservation and economic benefits of Amendment 25 (Revised) and avoid adverse economic impacts. This action relies on the best available

science to define four Atlantic cod stocks under the FMP and set fishing year 2026 catch limits for those stocks. Implementing this action as soon as possible will facilitate effective management of these stocks because it puts into place catch limits specifically tailored to the four stocks that are designed to prevent overfishing. Further, immediate implementation will relieve a recordkeeping burden on sectors and facilitate clear and more efficient catch accountability because it will shorten the need to convert catch and leasing activity from two stocks into four stocks. For these reasons there is good cause to implement these measures immediately upon publication.

NMFS has determined that this action would not have a substantial direct effect on one or more Indian Tribes, on the relationship between the Federal Government and Indian Tribes, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities between the Federal Government and Indian Tribes; therefore, consultation with Tribal officials under E.O. 13175 is not required, and the requirements of section (5)(b) and (c) of E.O. 13175 also do not apply. A Tribal summary impact statement under section (5)(b)(2)(B) and (c)(2) of E.O. 13175 is not required and has not been prepared.

Final Regulatory Flexibility Analysis

Section 604 of the Regulatory Flexibility Act (RFA) requires Federal agencies to prepare a Final Regulatory Flexibility Analysis (FRFA) for each final rule that describes the economic impact of this action on small entities (5 U.S.C. 604). The FRFA includes a summary of significant issues raised by public comments, the analyses contained in Amendment 25 (Revised) and its accompanying Environmental Assessment, Regulatory Impact Review, an Initial Regulatory Flexibility Analysis (IRFA), the IRFA summary in the proposed rule, as well as the summary provided below. A statement of the necessity for and the objectives of this action are contained in Amendment 25 (Revised) and in the preamble to this final rule and are not repeated here.

Section 212 of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996 states that, for each rule or group of related rules for which an agency is required to prepare a FRFA, the agency shall publish one or more guides to assist small entities in complying with the rule and shall designate such publications as “small entity compliance guides.” The agency shall explain the actions a small entity is required to take to comply with a rule

or group of rules. As part of this rulemaking process, a letter to permit holders that also serves as small entity compliance guide (the guide) was prepared. Copies of this final rule are available from the Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office, and the guide (i.e., permit holder letter) will be sent to all holders of permits for the fishery. The guide and this final rule will be available upon request.

A Summary of the Significant Issues Raised by the Public in Response to the IRFA, a Summary of the Agency's Assessment of Such Issues, and a Statement of Any Changes Made in the Final Rule as a Result of Such Comments

NMFS received one comment regarding the economic analysis and specifically referenced the regulatory impact review. NMFS's assessment of the comment and the economic analysis is provided in the Comments and Responses section of this final rule. NMFS is not making any changes to the final rule based on the comment. The comment provided no specifics for alternative approaches or analyses, it only requested additional analysis.

Description and Estimate of the Number of Small Entities to Which This Final Rule Would Apply

This final rule applies to the commercial and recreational fisheries for groundfish, as well as the Atlantic sea scallop, small-mesh multispecies, Atlantic herring, and large-mesh non-groundfish fisheries that overlap with the groundfish fishery. Individually permitted vessels may hold permits for several fisheries, harvesting species of fish that are regulated by several different FMPs, beyond those directly affected by this action. Furthermore, multiple-permitted vessels and/or permits may be owned by entities affiliated by stock ownership, common management, identity of interest, contractual relationships, or economic dependency. For the purposes of the RFA analysis, the ownership entities, not the individual vessels, are considered to be the regulated entities.

As of June 1, 2024, NMFS issued 669 commercial limited-access groundfish permits associated with vessels (including those in confirmation of permit history), 719 party/charter groundfish permits, 696 limited access and general category Atlantic sea scallop permits, 761 small-mesh multispecies permits, 71 Atlantic herring permits, and 743 large-mesh non-groundfish permits (i.e., limited access summer flounder and scup permits). Therefore, this action

potentially regulates to 3,659 permits. When accounting for overlaps between fisheries, this number reduces to 2,144 permitted vessels. Each vessel may be individually owned or part of a larger corporate ownership structure and, for RFA purposes, it is the ownership entity that is ultimately regulated by this action. Ownership entities are identified on June 1st of each year based on the list of all permit numbers, for the most recent complete calendar year, that have applied for any type of Greater Atlantic Region Federal fishing permit. The current ownership data set is based on calendar year 2023 permits and contains gross sales associated with those permits for calendar years 2019 through 2023.

For RFA purposes only, NMFS has established a small business size standard for businesses, including their affiliates, whose primary industry is commercial fishing (see 50 CFR 200.2). A business primarily engaged in commercial fishing (NAICS code 11411) is classified as a small business if it is independently owned and operated, is not dominant in its field of operation (including its affiliates), and has combined annual receipts not in excess of \$11 million for all its affiliated operations worldwide. The determination as to whether the entity is large or small is based on the average annual revenue for the 5 years from 2019 through 2023. The Small Business Administration has established size standards for all other major industry sectors in the U.S., including for-hire fishing (NAICS code 487210). These entities are classified as small businesses if combined annual receipts are not more than \$8.0 million for all of an entity's affiliated operations. As with commercial fishing businesses, the annual average of the 3 most recent years (2019–2023) is utilized in determining annual receipts for businesses primarily engaged in for-hire fishing.

Based on the ownership data, 1,648 distinct business entities hold at least one permit that this action potentially regulates. All 1,648 business entities identified could be directly regulated by this action. Of these 1,648 entities, 891 are commercial fishing entities, 326 are for-hire entities, and 431 did not have revenues (i.e., were inactive in 2023). Of the 891 commercial fishing entities, 881 are categorized as small entities and 10 are categorized as large entities, per the NMFS guidelines. Furthermore, 412 of these commercial fishing entities held limited access groundfish permits, with 408 of these entities being classified as small businesses and 4 of these entities being classified as large businesses. All

326 for-hire entities are categorized as small businesses.

Description of the Projected Reporting, Record-Keeping, and Other Compliance Requirements of This Final Rule

The final action contains no information requirements under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA).

Description of the Steps the Agency Has Taken To Minimize the Significant Economic Impact on Small Entities Consistent With the Stated Objectives of the Applicable Statutes

The economic impacts of each measure are discussed in more detail in sections 6.5 and 7.11 of the draft Amendment 25 (Revised) EA (see **ADDRESSES**) and in the IRFA and are not repeated here. These considerations include the SDCs, the updated groundfish specifications, and other measures in this rule, and the No Action alternative. An alternative approach to dividing the northern and southern portions of the WGOM cod stock area for allocating to the commercial fishery was considered by the Council but was moved to “considered but rejected.” This action is predicted to generate \$34.7 million in gross revenues for the sector portion of the commercial groundfish trips. Under the No Action alternative, sector revenue could not be estimated due to the lack of specifications for the new Atlantic cod stocks for the upcoming fishing year. Small entities engaged in the commercial groundfish fishery, including both the sector component and the common pool component, will be positively impacted by this action relative to No Action. However, this action is predicted to result in \$7.0 million less than the amount of gross revenues generated in fishing year 2023. Small entities engaged in common pool groundfish fishing are expected to be positively impacted by the action, relative to the No Action alternative.

The recreational sub-ACLs for WGOM cod and SNE cod would be defined under this action, and because these sub-ACLs would not be defined under the No Action, this action is expected to positively impact the recreational fishery relative to the No Action. However, relative to fishing year 2023, the zero-possession recreational limit for SNE cod is expected to negatively impact the recreational fishery. The recreational measures for WGOM cod are expected to have a neutral effect on small entities, because they provide a similar opportunity to harvest WGOM cod as the previous recreational measures for GOM cod.

NMFS considered the Council's range of alternatives for each of the management measures included in this action that were included in the proposed rule, as well as the No Action alternatives for each measure. NMFS could have selected any combination of alternatives or the No Action alternative for the range of measures. In this final rule, NMFS is implementing all the alternatives to the No Action alternatives for each management measure. In the short term, the zero-retention recreational possession limit and low cod specifications overall (but higher relative to no action) are expected to have negative economic impacts relative to other alternatives not implemented (status quo and no action alternatives). However, maintaining status quo or no action specifications and allowing more recreational possession in southern New England would be inconsistent with the four-stock structure of the FMP and would undermine long term sustainability.

List of Subjects in 50 CFR Part 648

Fisheries, Fishing, Recordkeeping, and reporting requirements.

Dated: June 25, 2026.

Samuel D. Rauch III,

Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, National Marine Fisheries Service.

For the reasons stated in the preamble, NMFS amends 50 CFR part 648 as follows:

PART 648—FISHERIES OF THE NORTHEASTERN UNITED STATES

■ 1. The authority citation for part 648 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*

■ 2. In § 648.2, add the definitions for “WGOM cod northern portion” and “WGOM cod southern portion” in alphabetical order to read as follows:

§ 648.2 Definitions.

* * * * *

WGOM cod northern portion means the geographical area of the WGOM cod stock area, as defined in § 648.88(a)(2), that overlaps the GOM Stock Area 1, as described in § 648.10(k)(3)(i).

WGOM cod southern portion means the geographical area of the WGOM cod stock area, as defined in § 648.88(a)(2), that overlaps the Inshore GB Stock Area

2 and SNE/MA Stock Area 4, as described in § 648.10(k)(3)(ii) and (iv).

■ 3. Amend § 648.82 as follows:

■ a. Revise paragraphs (n)(2)(i)(A), (n)(2)(ii) introductory text, and (n)(2)(ii)(A) and (B);

■ b. Redesignate paragraphs (n)(2)(ii)(C) through (N) as paragraphs (n)(2)(ii)(E) through (P); and

■ c. Add new paragraphs (n)(2)(ii)(C) and (D).

The revisions and additions read as follows:

§ 648.82 Effort-control program for NE multispecies vessels.

* * * * *

(n) * * *

(2) * * *

(i) * * *

(A) *Trimester TAC distribution.* With the exception of SNE/MA winter flounder, any sub-ACLs specified for common pool vessels pursuant to § 648.90(a)(4) shall be apportioned into 4-month trimesters, beginning at the start of the fishing year (*i.e.*, Trimester 1: May 1–August 31; Trimester 2: September 1–December 31; Trimester 3: January 1–April 30), as follows:

TABLE 1 TO PARAGRAPH (n)(2)(i)(A)—PORTION OF COMMON POOL SUB-ACLs APPORTIONED TO EACH STOCK FOR EACH TRIMESTER

Stock	Trimester 1 (percent)	Trimester 2 (percent)	Trimester 3 (percent)
EGOM cod	80	10	10
WGOM cod	55	22	23
GB cod	33	33	34
SNE Cod	36	31	33
GB haddock	27	33	40
GOM haddock	27	26	47
GB yellowtail flounder	19	30	51
SNE/MA yellowtail flounder	21	28	51
CC/GOM yellowtail flounder	57	26	17
American plaice	74	8	18
Witch flounder	55	20	25
GB winter flounder	8	24	68
GOM winter flounder	37	38	25
Redfish	25	31	44
White hake	38	31	31
Pollock	28	35	37

* * * * *

(ii) *Stock area closures.* Unless otherwise specified in this paragraph (n)(2)(ii), if the Regional Administrator projects that 90 percent of the trimester TACs specified in paragraph (n)(2)(i) of this section will be caught based upon available information, the Regional Administrator shall close the area where 90 percent of the catch for each such stock occurred to all common pool vessels on a NE multispecies DAS using gear capable of catching such stocks for the remainder of that trimester, as

specified in paragraphs (n)(2)(ii)(A) through (P) of this section, in a manner consistent with the Administrative Procedure Act. For example, if the Regional Administrator projects that 90 percent of the CC/GOM yellowtail flounder Trimester 1 TAC will be caught, common pool vessels using trawl and gillnet gear shall be prohibited from fishing in the CC/GOM Yellowtail Flounder Closure Area specified in paragraph (n)(2)(ii)(I) of this section until the beginning of Trimester 2 on September 1 of that fishing year.

Based upon all available information, the Regional Administrator is authorized to expand or narrow the areas closed under this paragraph (n)(2)(ii) in a manner consistent with the Administrative Procedure Act. If it is not possible to identify an area where only 90 percent of the catch occurred, the Regional Administrator shall close the smallest area possible where greater than 90 percent of the catch occurred. Common pool vessels holding either a Handgear A or B permit and fishing with handgear or tub trawls are exempt

from stock area closures for white hake. The Regional Administrator may exempt Handgear A and B permitted vessels from stock area closures for other stocks pursuant to this paragraph (n)(2)(ii) if it is determined that catches of the respective species or stock by these vessels are less than 1 percent of the common pool catch of that species or stock. The Regional Administrator shall make such determination prior to the start of the fishing year through a notice published in the **Federal Register**, consistent with the Administrative Procedure Act, and any such determination shall remain in effect until modified.

(A) *EGOM Cod Trimester TAC Area.* For the purposes of the trimester TAC AM closure specified in paragraph (n)(2)(ii) of this section, the EGOM Cod Trimester TAC Area shall apply to common pool vessels using trawl gear, sink gillnet gear, and longline/hook gear within the area bounded by the coastline of the United States and by straight lines connecting the following points in the order stated:

TABLE 2 TO PARAGRAPH (n)(2)(ii)(A)—
EGOM COD TRIMESTER TAC AREA

Point	N latitude	W longitude
EGOM1	44°23'58"	67°57'35"
EGOM2	44°10'	67°50'
EGOM3	44°00'	67°50'
EGOM4	44°00'	67°40'
EGOM5	43°20'	67°40'
EGOM6	43°20'	69°00'
EGOM7	43°40'	69°00'
EGOM8	43°40'	69°20'

(B) *WGOM Cod Trimester TAC Area.* For the purposes of the trimester TAC AM closure specified in paragraph (n)(2)(ii) of this section, the WGOM Cod Trimester TAC Area shall apply to common pool vessels using trawl gear, sink gillnet gear, and longline/hook gear within the area bounded by the coastline of the United States and by the straight lines connecting the following points in the order stated:

TABLE 3 TO PARAGRAPH (n)(2)(ii)(B)—
WGOM COD TRIMESTER TAC AREA

Point	N latitude	W longitude
WGOM1	(1)	69°20'
WGOM2	43°40'	69°20'
WGOM3	43°40'	69°00'
WGOM4	43°10'	69°00'
WGOM5	43°10'	69°10'
WGOM6	43°00'	69°10'
WGOM7	43°00'	69°20'
WGOM8	42°50'	69°20'
WGOM9	42°50'	69°40'
WGOM10	42°20'	69°40'
WGOM11	42°20'	68°50'

TABLE 3 TO PARAGRAPH (n)(2)(ii)(B)—
WGOM COD TRIMESTER TAC
AREA—Continued

Point	N latitude	W longitude
WGOM12	41°00'	68°50'
WGOM13	41°00'	69°30'
WGOM14	41°10'	69°30'
WGOM15	41°10'	69°50'
WGOM16	41°20'	69°50'
WGOM17	(2)	70°00'
WGOM18	(3)	70°00'

¹ Intersection of south-facing ME coastline and 69°20' W Long.

² Northeast-facing coastline of Nantucket, MA.

³ South-facing coastline of Cape Cod, MA.

(C) *GB Cod Trimester TAC Area.* For the purposes of the trimester TAC AM closure specified in paragraph (n)(2)(ii) of this section, the GB Cod Trimester TAC Area shall apply to common pool vessels using trawl gear, sink gillnet gear, and longline/hook gear within the area bounded by straight lines connecting the following points in the order stated:

TABLE 4 TO PARAGRAPH (n)(2)(ii)(C)—
GB COD TRIMESTER TAC AREA

Point	N latitude	W longitude
GB1	42°20'	68°50'
GB2	42°20'	(1)
GB3	41°50'	(1)
GB4	41°50'	67°40'
GB5	41°20'	67°40'
GB6	41°20'	68°10'
GB7	41°10'	68°10'
GB8	41°10'	68°20'
GB9	41°00'	68°20'
GB10	41°00'	68°50'
GB1	42°20'	68°50'

¹ U.S./Canada maritime boundary.

(D) *SNE Cod Trimester TAC Area.* For the purposes of the trimester TAC AM closure specified in paragraph (n)(2)(ii) of this section, the SNE Cod Trimester TAC Area shall apply to common pool vessels using trawl gear, sink gillnet gear, and longline/hook gear within the area bounded by the coastline of the United States and by straight lines connecting the following points in the order stated and bounded by the coastline:

TABLE 5 TO PARAGRAPH (n)(2)(ii)(D)—
SNE COD TRIMESTER TAC AREA

Point	N latitude	W longitude
SNE1	(1)	71°10'
SNE2	41°20'	71°10'
SNE3	41°20'	(2)
SNE4	(3)	70°00'
SNE5	39°50'	70°00'
SNE6	39°50'	71°40'

TABLE 5 TO PARAGRAPH (n)(2)(ii)(D)—
SNE COD TRIMESTER TAC AREA—
Continued

Point	N latitude	W longitude
SNE7	40°00'	71°40'
SNE8	40°00'	73°00'
SNE9	(4)	73°00'
SNE10	41°00'	(5)
SNE11	41°00'	71°40'
SNE12	(1)	71°40'

¹ South-facing coastline of Rhode Island.

² West-facing coastline of Martha's Vineyard, MA.

³ South-facing coastline of Nantucket, MA.

⁴ South-facing coastline of Long Island, NY.

⁵ Southeast-facing coastline of Long Island, NY.

* * * * *

■ 4. Amend § 648.85 by revising paragraph (b)(5) introductory text and paragraph (b)(6)(iv)(D) to read as follows:

§ 648.85 Special management programs.

* * * * *

(b) * * *

(5) *Incidental Catch TACs.* Unless otherwise specified in this paragraph (b)(5), Incidental Catch TACs shall be based upon the portion of the ACL for a stock specified for common pool vessels pursuant to § 648.90(a)(4), and allocated as described in this paragraph (b)(5), for each of the following stocks: WGOM cod, EGOM cod, GB cod, SNE cod, GB yellowtail flounder, CC/GOM yellowtail flounder, American plaice, SNE/MA winter flounder, and witch flounder. Because GB yellowtail flounder and GB cod are transboundary stocks, the incidental catch TACs for these stocks shall be based upon the common pool portion of the ACL available to U.S. vessels. NMFS shall send letters to limited access NE multispecies permit holders notifying them of such TACs.

* * * * *

(6) * * *

(iv) * * *

(D) *Landing limits.* Unless otherwise specified in this paragraph (b)(6)(iv)(D), or restricted pursuant to § 648.86, a NE multispecies vessel fishing in the Regular B DAS Program described in this paragraph (b)(6), and fishing under a Regular B DAS, may not land more than 100 lb (45.5 kg) per DAS, or any part of a DAS, up to a maximum of 1,000 lb (454 kg) per trip, of any of the following species/stocks from the areas specified in § 648.88: Cod (EGOM, WGOM, GB, and SNE), American plaice, witch flounder, SNE/MA winter flounder, and GB yellowtail flounder; and may not land more than 25 lb (11.3 kg) per DAS, or any part of a DAS, up

to a maximum of 250 lb (113 kg) per trip of CC/GOM yellowtail flounder. In addition, trawl vessels, which are required to fish with a haddock separator trawl, as specified in paragraph (a)(3)(iii)(A) of this section, or a Ruhle trawl, as specified in paragraph (b)(6)(iv)(J) of this section, and other

gear that may be required in order to reduce catches of stocks of concern as described in paragraph (b)(6)(iv)(J) of this section, are restricted to the trip limits specified in paragraph (e) of this section.

* * * * *

■ 5. Amend § 648.86 by revising Table 1 to Paragraph (a)(1) to read as follows:

§ 648.86 NE Multispecies commercial possession restrictions.

* * * * *

(a) * * *

(1) * * *

TABLE 1 TO PARAGRAPH (a)(1)

Stock ¹	DAS limit ²	Trip limit ²
EGOM cod ³	25 lb per DAS	50 lb per trip.
WGOM cod ³	50 lb per DAS	100 lb per trip.
GB cod ³	25 lb per DAS	50 lb per trip.
SNE cod ³	0 lb per DAS	0 lb per trip.
GOM haddock	1,000 lb (453 kg) per DAS	2,000 lb (907 kg) per trip.
GB haddock	1,000 lb (453 kg) per DAS	2,000 lb (907 kg) per trip.
CC/GOM yellowtail flounder ⁴	1,500 lb (680 kg) per DAS	3,000 lb (1,360 kg) per trip.
GB yellowtail flounder ⁴	No daily limit	100 lb (45.4 kg) per trip.
SNE yellowtail flounder ⁴	200 lb (90.7 kg) per DAS	400 lb (181 kg) per trip.
American plaice	3,000 lb (1,360 kg) per DAS	6,000 lb (2,721 kg) per trip.
Witch flounder	No daily limit	1,500 lb (680 kg) per trip.
GB winter flounder	No daily limit	500 lb (227 kg) trip.
GOM winter flounder	No daily limit	2,000 lb (907 kg) per trip.
SNE/MA winter flounder	2,000 lb (907 kg) per DAS	4,000 lb (1,814 kg) per trip.
Redfish	Unlimited	Unlimited.
White hake	No daily limit	1,000 lb (453 kg) per trip.
Pollock	Unlimited	Unlimited.

¹ The stock areas that apply to these possession limits are specified in § 648.88.

² The possession limits in Table 1 to Paragraph (a)(1) may be adjusted in-season by the Regional Administrator, as specified under at § 648.86(a)(5). Current possession limits are available at: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/new-england-mid-atlantic/commercial-fishing/northeast-multispecies-common-pool-fishery>.

³ Additional restrictions for cod stocks are specified at § 648.86(a)(6)(iii).

⁴ Additional restrictions for yellowtail flounder stocks are specified at § 648.86(a)(6)(iv).

* * * * *

■ 6. Amend § 648.87 as follows:

- a. Revise paragraph (b)(1)(i)(C)(1) introductory text;
- b. Add paragraph (b)(1)(i)(C)(1)(iii);
- c. Revise paragraph (b)(1)(i)(E) introductory text and (b)(1)(i)(E)(2) paragraph heading.

The revisions and addition read as follows:

§ 648.87 Sector allocation.

* * * * *

(b) * * *

(1) * * *

(i) * * *

(C) * * *

(1) *Maximum carryover.* With the exception of GB yellowtail flounder, and unless otherwise specified in (b)(1)(i)(C)(1)(iii) of this section a sector may carryover an amount of ACE equal to 10 percent of its original ACE for each stock that is unused at the end of one fishing year into the following fishing year, provided that the total unused sector ACE plus the overall ACL for the following fishing year does not exceed the ABC for the fishing year in which the carryover may be harvested. If this total exceeds the ABC, NMFS shall adjust the maximum amount of unused ACE that a sector may carryover (down from 10 percent) to an amount equal to

the ABC of the following fishing year.

Any adjustments made would be applied to each sector based on its total unused ACE and proportional to the cumulative PSCs of vessels/permits participating in the sector for the particular fishing year, as described in paragraph (b)(1)(i)(E) of this section.

* * * * *

(iii) *Atlantic cod stocks carryover for fishing year 2026.* Unused fishing year 2025 ACE for the Atlantic cod stocks will not carryover to a sector's fishing year 2026 ACE for the Atlantic cod stocks. For the 2027 fishing year and onward, carryover for the Atlantic cod stocks will return to the processes described in paragraphs (b)(1)(i)(C)(1) and (2) of this section.

* * * * *

(E) *Potential sector contribution (PSC).* For the purposes of allocating a share of the available ACL for each NE multispecies stock to approved sectors pursuant to § 648.90(a)(4), the landings history of all limited access NE multispecies permits shall be evaluated to determine each permit's share of the overall landings for each NE multispecies stock as specified in paragraphs (b)(1)(i)(E)(1) and (2) of this section. For the purposes of allocating a share of the available ACL for the four

Atlantic cod stocks (*i.e.*, EGOM, WGOM, GB, and SNE cod) to approved sectors pursuant to § 648.90(a)(4), the PSCs will continue to be calculated for GOM cod and GB cod according to the method specified in Amendment 16, in accordance with paragraphs (b)(1)(i)(E)(1) and (2) of this section. When calculating an individual permit's share of the overall landings for a particular regulated species or ocean pout stock, landed weight shall be converted to live weight to maintain consistency with the way ACLs are calculated pursuant to § 648.90(a)(4) and the way ACEs are allocated to sectors pursuant to this paragraph (b)(1)(i). This calculation shall be performed on July 1 of each year, unless another date is specified by the Regional Administrator, to redistribute the landings history associated with permits that have been voluntarily relinquished or otherwise canceled among all remaining valid limited access NE multispecies permits as of that date during the following fishing year. The PSC calculated pursuant to this paragraph (b)(1)(i)(E) shall remain with the permit indefinitely, but may be permanently reduced or eliminated due

to a permit sanction or other enforcement action.

* * * * *

(2) *Calculation of PSC for GB cod.* * * *

* * * * *

■ 7. Amend § 648.88 by revising paragraphs (a)(1) and (2) and adding paragraphs (a)(3) and (4) to read as follows:

§ 648.88 Multispecies stock area definitions.

(a) * * *

(1) *EGOM cod stock area.* The EGOM cod stock is the area defined by straight lines connecting the following points in the order stated and bounded by the coastline of the United States:

TABLE 1 TO PARAGRAPH (a)(1)—EGOM COD STOCK AREA

Point	N latitude	W longitude
EGOM1	(1)	69°20'
EGOM2	(2)	67°00'
EGOM3	(2)	67°40'
EGOM4	43°20'	67°40'
EGOM5	43°20'	69°00'
EGOM6	43°40'	69°00'
EGOM7	43°40'	69°20'

¹ Intersection of south-facing ME coastline and 69°20' W long.

² U.S./Canada maritime boundary.

(2) *WGOM cod stock area.* The WGOM cod stock is the area defined by straight lines connecting the following points in the order stated and bounded by the coastline of the United States:

TABLE 2 TO PARAGRAPH (a)(2)—WGOM COD STOCK AREA

Point	N latitude	W longitude
WGOM1	(1)	69°20'
WGOM2	43°40'	69°20'
WGOM3	43°40'	69°00'
WGOM4	43°20'	69°00'
WGOM5	43°20'	67°40'
WGOM6	(2)	67°40'
WGOM7	(3)	67°40'
WGOM8	42°20'	67°40'
WGOM9	42°20'	68°50'
WGOM10	39°50'	68°50'
WGOM11	39°50'	69°00'
WGOM12	39°00'	69°00'
WGOM13	39°00'	70°00'
WGOM14	(4)	70°00'

¹ Intersection of south-facing ME coastline and 69°20' W long.

² U.S./Canada maritime boundary (northern intersection with 67°40' W long).

³ U.S./Canada maritime boundary (southern intersection with 67°40' W long).

⁴ Intersection of south-facing coastline of Cape Cod and 70°00' W long.

(3) *GB cod stock area.* The GB cod stock area is the area defined by straight lines connecting the following points in the order stated:

TABLE 3 TO PARAGRAPH (a)(3)—GB COD STOCK AREA

Point	N latitude	W longitude
GB1	42°20'	68°50'
GB2	42°20'	67°40'
GB3	(1)	67°40'
GB4	39°00'	(2)
GB5	39°00'	69°00'
GB6	39°50'	69°00'
GB7	39°50'	68°50'
GB1	42°20'	68°50'

¹ U.S./Canada maritime boundary (northern intersection with 67°40' W long).

TABLE 1 TO PARAGRAPH (b)(1)

Species	Charter/party minimum size		Private minimum size		Maximum size	
	inches	cm	inches	cm	inches	cm
Cod						
EGOM cod stock area ¹	23	58.4	23	58.4	N/A	N/A
WGOM cod stock area ¹	23	58.4	23	58.4	N/A	N/A
GB cod stock area ¹	23	58.4	23	58.4	N/A	N/A
SNE cod stock area ¹	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Haddock						
Inside GOM Regulated Mesh Area ²	17	43.2	17	43.2	N/A	N/A
Outside GOM Regulated Mesh Area ²	18	45.7	18	45.7	N/A	N/A
Pollock	19	48.3	19	48.3	N/A	N/A
Witch Flounder (gray sole)	14	35.6	14	35.6	N/A	N/A
Yellowtail Flounder	13	33.0	13	33.0	N/A	N/A
American Plaice (dab)	14	35.6	14	35.6	N/A	N/A
Atlantic Halibut	41	104.1	41	104.1	N/A	N/A
Winter Flounder (black back)	12	30.5	12	30.5	N/A	N/A
Redfish	9	22.9	9	22.9	N/A	N/A

¹ Cod stock areas specified in § 648.88

² GOM Regulated Mesh Area specified in § 648.80(a).

² U.S./Canada maritime boundary (intersection with 39°00' N latitude).

(4) *SNE cod stock area.* The SNE cod stock area is the area defined by straight lines connecting the following points in the order stated and bounded by the coastline of the United States:

TABLE 4 TO PARAGRAPH (a)(4)—SNE COD STOCK AREA

Point	N latitude	W longitude
SNE1	(1)	70°00'
SNE2	39°00'	69°00'
SNE3	39°00'	(2)
SNE4	35°00'	(2)
SNE5	35°00'	(3)

¹ Intersection of south-facing coastline of Cape Cod and 70°00' W long.

² U.S./Canada maritime boundary.

³ Intersection of east-facing coastline of Outer Banks, NC, and 35°00' N lat.

* * * * *

■ 8. Amend § 648.89 as follows:

■ a. Revise Table 1 to Paragraph (b)(1), Table 2 to Paragraph (c)(1), and Table 3 to Paragraph (c)(2); and

■ b. Add paragraph (g).

The revisions and addition read as follows:

§ 648.89 Recreational and charter/party vessel restrictions.

* * * * *

(b) * * *

(1) * * *

* * * * *

(c) * * *

(1) * * *

TABLE 2 TO PARAGRAPH (c)(1)

Stock	Open season	Possession limit	Closed season
EGOM Cod	September 1–October 31	1	May 1–August 31; November 1–April 30.
WGOM Cod	September 1–October 31	1	May 1–August 31; November 1–April 30.
GB Cod	September 1–October 31	1	May 1–August 31; November 1–April 30.
SNE Cod	CLOSED	No Retention ..	All Year.
GB Haddock	All Year	Unlimited	N/A.
GOM Haddock	May 1–February 28 (or 29); April 1–30	15	March 1–March 31.
GB Yellowtail Flounder	All Year	Unlimited	N/A.
SNE/MA Yellowtail Flounder	All Year	Unlimited	N/A.
CC/GOM Yellowtail Flounder ...	All Year	Unlimited	N/A.
American Plaice	All Year	Unlimited	N/A.
Witch Flounder	All Year	Unlimited	N/A.
GB Winter Flounder	All Year	Unlimited	N/A.
GOM Winter Flounder	All Year	Unlimited	N/A.
SNE/MA Winter Flounder	All Year	Unlimited	N/A.
Redfish	All Year	Unlimited	N/A.
White Hake	All Year	Unlimited	N/A.
Pollock	All Year	Unlimited	N/A.
Northern Windowpane Flounder.	CLOSED	No retention ...	All Year.
Southern Windowpane Flounder.	CLOSED	No retention ...	All Year.
Ocean Pout	CLOSED	No retention ...	All Year.
Atlantic Halibut	See paragraph (c)(3) of this section..	No retention ...	All Year.
Atlantic Wolffish	CLOSED	No retention ...	All Year.

(2) * * *

TABLE 3 TO PARAGRAPH (c)(2)

Stock	Open season	Possession limit	Closed season
EGOM Cod	May 1–May 31; September 1–October 31	1	June 1–August 31; November 1–April 30.
WGOM Cod	May 1–May 31; September 1–October 31	1	June 1–August 31; November 1–April 30.
GB Cod	May 1–May 31; September 1–October 31	1	June 1–August 31; November 1–April 30.
SNE Cod	CLOSED	No Retention ..	All Year.
GB Haddock	All Year	Unlimited	N/A.
GOM Haddock	May 1–February 28 (or 29) April 1–30	15	March 1–March 31.
GB Yellowtail Flounder	All Year	Unlimited	N/A.
SNE/MA Yellowtail Flounder	All Year	Unlimited	N/A.
CC/GOM Yellowtail Flounder ...	All Year	Unlimited	N/A.
American Plaice	All Year	Unlimited	N/A.
Witch Flounder	All Year	Unlimited	N/A.
GB Winter Flounder	All Year	Unlimited	N/A.
GOM Winter Flounder	All Year	Unlimited	N/A.
SNE/MA Winter Flounder	All Year	Unlimited	N/A.
Redfish	All Year	Unlimited	N/A.
White Hake	All Year	Unlimited	N/A.
Pollock	All Year	Unlimited	N/A.
N Windowpane Flounder	CLOSED	No retention ...	All Year.
S Windowpane Flounder	CLOSED	No retention ...	All Year.
Ocean Pout	CLOSED	No retention ...	All Year.
Atlantic Halibut	See paragraph (c)(3) of this section..	No retention ...	All Year.
Atlantic Wolffish	CLOSED	No retention ...	All Year.

* * * * *

(g) *Regional Administrator authority for GB cod and EGOM cod recreational measures.* For the 2026 fishing year, the Regional Administrator, after consultation with the NEFMC, may adjust recreational measures for GB cod and EGOM cod to set consistent

measures with other stock areas, as appropriate. Appropriate measures, including adjustments to fishing seasons, minimum fish sizes, or possession limits, may be implemented in a manner consistent with the Administrative Procedure Act, with the final measures published in the **Federal**

Register prior to the start of the fishing year when possible. Separate measures may be implemented for the private and charter/party components of the recreational fishery. Measures in place in fishing year 2026 will be in effect beginning in fishing year 2027, and will remain in effect until they are changed

by a Framework Adjustment or Amendment to the FMP, or through an emergency action.

* * * * *

■ 9. Amend § 648.90 by revising paragraph (a)(4)(iii)(A)(1) and adding paragraphs (a)(4)(iii)(I)(2) and (3) to read as follows:

§ 648.90 NE multispecies assessment, framework procedures and specifications, and flexible area action system.

* * * * *

(a) * * *

(4) * * *

(iii) * * *

(A) * * *

(1) *Stocks allocated.* Unless otherwise specified in this paragraph (a)(4)(iii)(A), the ABCs/ACLs for WGOM cod and GOM haddock set pursuant to paragraph (a)(4) of this section shall be divided between commercial and recreational components, based upon the average proportional catch of each component for each stock during fishing years 2001 through 2006. The ABCs/ACLs for SNE cod set pursuant to paragraph (a)(4) of

this section shall first have the state and other non-specified fisheries deducted as specified in paragraphs (a)(4)(iii)(B) and (C) of this section, and then divided between commercial and recreational components, as specified in a framework adjustment.

* * * * *

(I) * * *

(2) *WGOM cod.* For the purposes of allocating to the commercial NE multispecies fishery, the remaining ABC for WGOM cod shall first be apportioned between the WGOM cod northern and southern portions as follows: 68 percent of the remaining ABC to the northern portion and 32 percent of the remaining ABC to the southern portion. The share of the northern portion of WGOM cod allocated to a sector will be based on the cumulative GOM cod PSCs of vessels participating in sectors calculated pursuant to § 648.87(b)(1)(i)(E). The share of the southern portion of WGOM cod allocated to a sector will be based on the cumulative GB cod PSCs of vessels participating in sectors. The

northern and southern portions shall then be summed for a final allocation to each sector and to vessels operating under the provisions of the common pool. The WGOM cod allocation may be fished throughout the entire geographic area of the WGOM cod stock area, as defined at § 648.88(a)(2).

(3) *Atlantic cod stocks except WGOM cod.* For the purpose of allocating EGOM cod to the commercial NE multispecies fishery, the cumulative GOM cod PSCs of vessels participating in sectors calculated pursuant to § 648.87(b)(1)(i)(E) shall be applied to the remaining ABC for EGOM cod. For the purposes of allocating GB cod and SNE cod to the commercial NE multispecies fishery, the cumulative GB cod PSCs of vessels participating in sectors calculated pursuant to § 648.87(b)(1)(i)(E) shall be applied to the remaining ABC for GB cod and SNE cod.

* * * * *

[FR Doc. 2026–13153 Filed 6–29–26; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510–22–P