

### 5.7.10.2 Recreational Harvesting Component

The recreational fishery includes private anglers, party boat operators, and charter vessel operators. Several groundfish stocks are targeted by the recreational fishery, including GOM cod, GOM haddock, pollock, GOM winter flounder, and GB cod. GB haddock is targeted as well, but to a lesser extent. SNE/MA winter flounder and redfish are also target species. Wolffish was occasionally caught in the past. A16 (Section 6.2.5, NEFMC 2009) included a detailed overview of recreational fishing activity.

This section provides data on trends in landings, permits, and effort over the last five years. Table 40 provides a summary of groundfish and non-groundfish landings (fish kept, not pounds) by state and year. NH has been the top state for party and charter groundfish landings in each of the last five fishing years. Table 41 provides information on active party/charter permits by state and year. Table 42 provides information on the number of party/charter trips by state and year. The number of groundfish kept and groundfish trips from party and charter vessels reached a 5-year high in 2021.

**Table 40- Number of fish kept for groundfish and non-groundfish by state for groundfish party and charter permitted vessels, for fishing years (FY) 2017 to 2021. \*Other includes DE, MD, NC, PA, SC, and VA.**

Year	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
<b>Groundfish</b>	269,453	296,356	262,525	275,464	346,041
CT	759	700	489	630	192
MA	107,932	91,882	61,843	80,301	90,611
ME	26,546	27,306	29,142	30,444	28,275
NH	118,472	158,829	155,317	153,696	218,517
NJ	6,808	7,769	8,006	4,527	3,618
NY	6,714	8,413	5,550	2,980	3,006
OTHER*	109	95	25	6	8
RI	2,113	1,362	2,153	2,880	1,814
<b>Non-Groundfish</b>	2,027,110	2,013,385	2,256,899	1,879,520	1,945,118
CT	165,862	230,247	288,042	181,652	157,969
MA	119,477	118,901	112,583	72,554	118,584
ME	11,438	9,375	12,143	7,196	13,796
NH	128,786	74,035	98,349	78,164	133,980
NJ	534,682	545,819	655,060	542,474	474,376
NY	870,941	807,041	840,532	765,390	808,808
OTHER*	132,615	145,979	172,818	160,866	164,444
RI	63,309	81,988	77,372	71,224	73,161

Year	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
<b>Grand Total</b>	2,296,563	2,309,741	2,519,424	2,154,984	2,291,159

Source: Vessel Trip Reports (VTRs), FY2017 through FY2021. For VTRs that did not include state of landing, homeport state from permit data was utilized.

**Table 41- Count of the number of active party and charter groundfish permits by homeport state, FY 2017 to 2021. Other includes DE, FL, MD, NC, PA, VA, and WV. “Active” is defined as taking any party or charter trip among those groundfish party or charter permit holders, independent of what was caught.**

Year	CT	MA	ME	NH	NJ	NY	OTHER*	RI	Grand Total
2017	13	53	17	13	74	83	49	29	331
2018	13	57	20	16	91	82	46	31	356
2019	16	64	20	13	84	81	48	35	361
2020	10	63	13	16	78	72	46	40	338
2021	12	65	12	16	91	78	53	39	366

Source: VTRs and permit database. A vessel is included if they: 1) have a groundfish party or charter permit (Category I) and 2) took at least one party or charter trip, as indicated on the VTR.

**Table 42- Number of trips that kept groundfish by state for groundfish party and charter permitted vessels, for FY 2017 to 2021. \*Other includes DE, FL, MD, NC, PA, and VA.**

State	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
CT	34	34	37	62	40
MA	1,101	934	804	852	848
ME	439	467	500	396	392
NH	870	1,026	1,008	1,022	1,316
NJ	419	462	505	550	585
NY	344	386	392	385	434
OTHER*	25	36	14	5	5
RI	186	96	214	294	239
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>3,418</b>	<b>3,441</b>	<b>3,474</b>	<b>3,566</b>	<b>3,859</b>

Source: VTRs, FY 2017 to FY 2021. For VTRs that did not include state of landing, homeport state from permit data was utilized.

#### 5.7.10.2.1 Gulf of Maine Cod and Gulf of Maine Haddock Recreational Effort and Catch

Table 43 provides a breakdown of the number of vessels active in the for-hire component of the recreational fishery for FY 2017 to FY 2021. An overview of the management history and recreational fishery performance is provided for GOM cod and GOM haddock (see Table 44 and Table 45).

**Table 43- For-hire recreational vessels catching cod or haddock from the Gulf of Maine**

Fishing Year	Party	Charter	Total*
2017	52	59	91
2018	43	90	96
2019	20	81	87
2020	18	73	81
2021	17	67	76

Notes: \*Total may not sum due to vessels taking both categories of trips during the fishing year.

Based on vessel reporting via vessel log book.

Vessels landing or discarding cod or haddock from Gulf of Maine (464 - 519) statistical areas based on vessel log book.

Source: NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office, December 2022.

**Table 44- Summary of Gulf of Maine cod recreational catch performance and federal management (fishing years 2010–2022).**

<b>Fishing Year</b>	<b>Sub-Annual Catch Limit (mt)</b>	<b>Catch (mt)</b>	<b>Percent of catch limit taken (%)</b>	<b>Minimum Size (inches)</b>	<b>Bag Limit Fish per angler - daily</b>	<b>Season Open</b>	<b>Season Closed</b>	<b>Additional Measures/Notes</b>
2010	2,673	1506.9	56.4	24	10	5/1/10 to 10/31/10 and 4/16/11 to 4/30/11	11/1/10 to 4/15/11	<p>First year of sub-ACL 33.7% of ABC with 7% management uncertainty buffer applied</p> <p>Groundfish Regulations:</p> <p>Only one line per angler, and</p> <p>Fillets landed by private recreational and charter/party vessels must have at least 2 sq. inches (5.08 sq. cm) of contiguous skin that allows for the ready identification of the fish species. Such fillets are required to be from legal-sized fish, but the fillets themselves would not need to meet the minimum size requirements in the regulations.</p>
2011	2,824	1640.3	58.1	24	10	5/1/11 to 10/31/11 and 4/16/12 to 4/30/12	11/1/11 to 4/15/12	<p>First Year: Gulf of Maine (Whaleback) Cod Spawning Protection Area:</p> <p>From April 1 through June 30 of each year, all recreational vessels, including private recreational and charter/party vessels, may only use pelagic hook-and-line gear, as defined below, when</p>

Fishing Year	Sub-Annual Catch Limit (mt)	Catch (mt)	Percent of catch limit taken (%)	Minimum Size (inches)	Bag Limit Fish per angler - daily	Season Open	Season Closed	Additional Measures/Notes
								fishing in the Whaleback Cod Spawning Protection Area. <sup>29</sup>
2012	2,215	937.4	42.3	19	9	5/1/12 to 10/31/12 and 4/16/13 to 4/30/13	11/1/12 to 4/15/13	
2013	486	639.3	131.5	19	9	5/1/13 to 10/31/13 and 4/16/14 to 4/30/14	11/1/13 to 4/15/14	
2014	486			21	9	5/1/14 to 8/31/14 and 4/15/14 to 4/30/14	9/1/14 to 4/14/15	Replaced by interim action on 11/15/14
		623.3	128.3	n/a	0	closed	11/15/14 to 4/30/15	2014 interim action: Seasonal 30-minute block closures, no recreational gear capable of catching groundfish in closures

<sup>29</sup> **Pelagic hook-and-line gear** is defined as handline or rod and reel gear that is designed to fish for, or that is being used to fish for, pelagic species. No portion of this gear may be operated in contact with the bottom at any time.

**Possession Restrictions:** Any vessel fishing in the Gulf of Maine Whaleback Cod Spawning Protection Area, or the Winter Massachusetts Bay Spawning Protection Area, including pelagic hook-and-line gear by recreational vessels, is prohibited from possessing or retaining regulated species or ocean pout from April 1 through June 30 of each year.

**Transiting:** Recreational vessels are allowed to transit the Gulf of Maine Cod Spawning Protection Area, and Winter Massachusetts Bay Spawning Protection Area provided all gear is stowed in accordance with the regulations.

Fishing Year	Sub-Annual Catch Limit (mt)	Catch (mt)	Percent of catch limit taken (%)	Minimum Size (inches)	Bag Limit Fish per angler - daily	Season Open	Season Closed	Additional Measures/Notes
2015	121	84.5	69.8	n/a	0	Closed year-round		Interim action Seasonal closures removed on 5/1/16
2016	157	280.9	178.9	24	1	8/1/16 to 9/30/16	5/1/16 to 7/31/16 and 10/1/16 to 4/30/17	
2017	157			24	1	8/1/17 to 9/30/17	5/1/17 to 7/31/17 and 10/1/18 to 4/30/18	Replaced by final rule effective on 7/27/17
		245.4	156.3	n/a	0	Closed year-round		
2018	220	146.9	66.8	n/a	0	Closed year-round		First Year: Winter Massachusetts Bay Spawning Protection Area:  From November 1 through January 31 of each year, all recreational vessels, including private recreational and charter/party vessels, may only use pelagic hook-and-line gear, as defined below, when fishing in the Winter Massachusetts Bay Spawning Protection Area. <sup>1</sup>
2019	220	79.8	36.3	21	1	9/15/19 to 9/30/19	5/1/19 to 9/14/19 and	Previous year's regulations were in effect until July 5, 2019, when these measures were implemented. Based

Fishing Year	Sub-Annual Catch Limit (mt)	Catch (mt)	Percent of catch limit taken (%)	Minimum Size (inches)	Bag Limit Fish per angler - daily	Season Open	Season Closed	Additional Measures/Notes
							10/1/19 to 4/30/20	on comments received on the proposed rule there will not be an open season in April 2020.
2020	193	184	95.3	21	1	9/15/20-9/30/20 and 4/1/21-4/14/21 (Private) 9/8/20-10/7/20 and 4/1/21-4/14/21 (Charter/Party)	5/1/20-9/14/20 and 10/1/20-3/31/21 (Private) 5/1/20-9/7/20 and 10/8/20-3/31/21 (Charter/Party)	Revised sub-ACL to 37.5% of ABC with 7% management uncertainty buffer applied
2021	193	146.2	75.8	21	1	9/15/21-9/30/21 and 4/1/22-4/14/22 (Private) 9/8/21-10/7/21 and 4/1/22-4/14/22 (Charter/Party)	5/1/21-9/14/21 and 10/1/21-3/31/22 (Private) 5/1/21-9/7/21 and 10/8/21-3/31/22 (Charter/Party)	
2022	192			22	1	9/1/22-10/7/22 and 4/1/23-4/14/23	5/1/22-8/31/22, 10/8/22-3/31/23 and 4/15/23-4/30/23	Final rule effective 8/30/22

**Table 45- Summary of Gulf of Maine haddock recreational catch performance and federal management (fishing years 2010–2022).**

<b>Fishing Year</b>	<b>Sub-Annual Catch Limit (mt)</b>	<b>Catch (mt)</b>	<b>Percent of catch limit taken (%)</b>	<b>Minimum Size (inches)</b>	<b>Bag Limit Fish per angler - daily</b>	<b>Season Open</b>	<b>Season Closed</b>	<b>Additional Measures/Notes</b>
2010	324	297.4	91.8	18	no limit		n/a	<p>First year of sub-ACL 27.5% of ABC with 7% management uncertainty buffer applied</p> <p>Groundfish Regulations:</p> <p>Only one line per angler, and</p> <p>Fillets landed by private recreational and charter/party vessels must have at least 2 sq. inches (5.08 sq. cm) of contiguous skin that allows for the ready identification of the fish species. Such fillets are required to be from legal-sized fish, but the fillets themselves would not need to meet the minimum size requirements in the regulations.</p>
2011	308			18	no limit	5/1/11 to 1/5/12	n/a	<p>First Year: Gulf of Maine (Whaleback) Cod Spawning Protection Area:</p> <p>From April 1 through June 30 of each year, all recreational vessels, including private recreational and charter/party vessels, may only use pelagic hook-and-line gear, as defined below, when fishing in the Whaleback Cod Spawning Protection Area.<sup>1</sup></p>



Fishing Year	Sub-Annual Catch Limit (mt)	Catch (mt)	Percent of catch limit taken (%)	Minimum Size (inches)	Bag Limit Fish per angler - daily	Season Open	Season Closed	Additional Measures/Notes
		238.5	77.4	19	9	1/6/12 to 4/19/12	n/a	Accountability Measure (AM) for 2010 overage
				18	no limit	4/20/12 to 4/30/12	n/a	AM lifted after re-evaluation of data showing no 2010 overage
2012	259	280.7	108.4	18	no limit		n/a	
2013	74	231.5	312.2	21	no limit		n/a	
2014	173	658.6	380.7	21	3	5/1/14 to 8/31/14 and 11/1/14 to 2/28/15	9/1/14 to 10/31/14 and 3/1/15 to 4/30/15	<i>See Cod interim action</i>
2015	372	381.9	102.7	17	3	5/1/15 to 8/31/15 and 11/1/15 to 2/29/16	9/1/15 to 10/31/15 and 3/1/16 to 4/30/16	
2016	928	887.0	95.6	17	15	5/1/16 to 2/28/17 and	3/1/17 to 4/14/17	

Fishing Year	Sub-Annual Catch Limit (mt)	Catch (mt)	Percent of catch limit taken (%)	Minimum Size (inches)	Bag Limit Fish per angler - daily	Season Open	Season Closed	Additional Measures/Notes
						4/15/17 to 4/30/17		
2017	1,160	795.0	68.5	17	15	5/1/17 to 2/28/18 and 4/15/18 to 4/30/18	3/1/18 to 4/14/18	Replaced by final rule effective 7/27/17
				17	12	5/1/17 to 9/16/17 and 11/1/17 to 2/28/18 and 4/15/18 to 4/30/18	9/17/17 to 10/31/17 and 3/1/18 to 4/14/18	
2018	3,358	595.0	17.7	17	12	5/1/18 to 9/16/18 and 11/1/18 to 2/28/19 and 4/15/19 to	9/17/18 to 10/31/18 and 3/1/19 to 4/14/19	First Year: Winter Massachusetts Bay Spawning Protection Area: From November 1 through January 31 of each year, all recreational vessels, including private recreational and charter/party vessels, may only use pelagic hook-and-line gear, as defined below, when fishing in the Winter Massachusetts Bay Spawning Protection Area. <sup>1</sup>

<b>Fishing Year</b>	<b>Sub-Annual Catch Limit (mt)</b>	<b>Catch (mt)</b>	<b>Percent of catch limit taken (%)</b>	<b>Minimum Size (inches)</b>	<b>Bag Limit Fish per angler - daily</b>	<b>Season Open</b>	<b>Season Closed</b>	<b>Additional Measures/Notes</b>
						4/30/19		
2019	3,194	423.2	13.3	17	15	5/1/19 to 2/29/20 and 4/15/20 to 4/30/20	3/1/20 to 4/14/20	Previous year's regulations were in effect until July 5, 2019, when these measures were implemented. The possession limit increased from 12-15 fish, and the fall closure has been removed to increase access to this healthy stock.
2020	6,210	1202.3	19.4	17	15	5/1/20-2/28/21 and 4/1/21-4/30/21	3/1/21-3/31/21	Revised sub-ACL to 33.9% of ABC with 7% management uncertainty buffer applied
2021	5,295	901.5	17.0	17	15	5/1/21-2/28/22 and 4/1/22-4/30/22	3/1/22-3/31/22	
2022	3,634			17	20	5/1/22-2/28/23 and	3/1/23-3/31/23	Final rule effective 8/30/22

<b>Fishing Year</b>	<b>Sub- Annual Catch Limit (mt)</b>	<b>Catch (mt)</b>	<b>Percent of catch limit taken (%)</b>	<b>Minimum Size (inches)</b>	<b>Bag Limit Fish per angler - daily</b>	<b>Season Open</b>	<b>Season Closed</b>	<b>Additional Measures/Notes</b>
						4/1/23- 4/30/23		

#### 5.7.10.2.2 Georges Bank Cod Recreational Effort

Table 46 provides a breakdown of the number of vessels active in the for-hire component of the recreational fishery for FY 2017 to FY 2021.

**Table 46- For-hire recreational vessels catching cod or haddock from Georges Bank**

Fishing Year	Party	Charter	Total*
2017	47	49	91
2018	44	72	94
2019	36	68	97
2020	43	77	114
2021	46	74	111

Notes: \*Total may not sum due to vessels taking both categories of trips during the fishing year.  
Based on vessel reporting via vessel log book.

Vessels landing or discarding cod or haddock from Georges Bank statistical areas (520 - 699)  
based on vessel log book.

Source: NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office, December 2022.

#### 5.7.10.2.3 Georges Bank Cod Recreational Catch Target

An overview of the management history is provided for GB cod below.

##### **Summary of changes in federal recreational management measures for GB cod:**

- Prior to Framework Adjustment 57,
  - 10 fish bag limit for private anglers
  - No bag limit for-hire (party/charter)
  - 22” minimum fish size
- May 1, 2018 - Framework 57
  - Set 138 mt GB cod recreational fishery catch target for FY2018-FY2020, and
  - Granted the Regional Administrator the authority to adjust measures following consultation with the Council for FY2018 and FY2019
- May 1, 2018 - FY2018 Recreational Groundfish Rule
  - 10 fish limit for private angler and for-hire (party/charter), and
  - 23” minimum fish size
- July 9, 2019 - FY2019 Recreational Groundfish Rule
  - 10 fish limit for private angler and for-hire (party/charter),
  - 21" minimum size
- July 30, 2020 - Framework Adjustment 59
  - Extended the 138 mt GB cod recreational fishery catch target for FY2020-FY2022 and made no changes to the management measures from FY2019
- July 15, 2022 - Framework Adjustment 63
  - Revised the GB cod recreational catch target for FY2022 to 75 mt, and
  - 5 fish limit for private angler and for-hire (party/charter), and
  - Slot limit – 22” minimum size and 28” maximum size, and

- Closed season May 1 – July 31

Table 47 summarizes recent catches of GB cod by the US commercial groundfish fishery and in-season FY2022 catches. Table 48 summarizes recent catches of GB cod by recreational fishery and in-season FY2022 catches.

**Table 47- Summary of recent catches (mt) of Georges Bank cod by the US commercial groundfish fishery, FY2017- FY2021, and in-season FY2022.**

Fishing Year	<i><b>Commercial Groundfish Fishery- Georges Bank Cod</b></i>				
	Sub-ACL	Landings	Discards	Catch	Percentage of sub-ACL
2015	1,787	1,608.5	28.3	1,636.8	91.6%
2016	608	571.9	24.6	596.6	98.1%
2017	531	432.8	13.1	446.0	84.0%
2018	1,360	833.2	4.7	837.9	61.6%
2019	1,568	524.5	7.9	532.4	34.0%
2020	1,073	417.4	7.8	425.3	39.6%
2021	1,093	463.6	7.2	470.8	43.1%
*2022	243.9	*38.8	*3.3	*42.1	*17.3%

Sources: FY2015 – FY2021 final year-end multispecies catch reports, GARFO, FY2022 in-season catch report, GARFO, November 8, 2021.

**Table 48- Summary of recent Georges Bank cod recreational catch (mt), FY2015-FY2021, and in-season FY2022.**

Fishing Year	<i><b>Recreational Fishery – Georges Bank Cod</b></i>					
	Federal Waters Recreational Catch	State Waters Recreational Catch	All Recreational Catch	Recreational Catch Target	Total US Catch	Recreational Portion of Total US Catch (Percent)
2015	132.1	33.0	165.1	n/a	1,835.4	9.0%
2016	419.7	57.8	477.5	n/a	1,125.5	42.4%
2017	50.1	2.8	52.9	n/a	522.5	10.1%
2018	31.6	5.5	37.1	138	887.3	4.2%
2019	88.9	11.0	99.9	138	641.7	15.6%
2020	152.6	141.8	294.4	138	731.2	40.3%
2021	191.8	44.2	236.0	138	718.6	32.8%
*2022			*83	75		

Sources: FY2015 – FY2021 final year-end multispecies catch reports, GARFO. Preliminary FY2022, available MRIP data through Nov. 8, 2022, NEFSC personal communication.

#### Analysis to Develop a Recreational Fishery Catch Target for GB Cod:

Presently, the Georges Bank cod recreational catch target is apportioned into the state waters and other fishery sub-components for GB cod during specifications setting. The catch target is not an allocation to the recreational fishery. The Council has to-date chosen not to allocate to the recreational fishery.

The data to evaluate a possible revised catch target comes from the most recent 2021 stock assessment for GB cod as well as an updated CY2021 estimate of catches and does not rely on information in year-end fishery catch reports. This is in part because the stock assessment includes the new Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) data for the entire time series. The PDT examined data from calendar years 2019 to 2021 to develop approaches for the catch target. Recreational catch for calendar year 2019 came directly from the MRIP data used in the 2021 stock assessment for GB cod. Recreational catch for calendar year 2020 was calculated by the PDT and used in the assessment as a catch estimate. Recreational catch for calendar year 2021 was provided by Population Dynamics assessment scientists. The data the PDT evaluated included recent 3-year (2019-2021) averages of recreational catches and the percentage relative to all US fisheries catches. The calculations are summarized below.

Year	Comm landings	Comm discards	Rec Landings	Rec Discards	Total Catch	Total Comm	Total Rec	Rec State	Rec State land	Rec State Disc	Rec Fed	Rec Fed Land	Rec Fed Disc	Rec as proportion of total catch	3-Year Recent Average (2019- 2021)	3-Year Recent Average (2019- 2021) * percent decline FY2022 to FY2023	3-Year Recent Average (2019- 2021) * percent decline FY2021 to FY2023	3-Year Recent Average Percentage (2019- 2021)
2016	1109	33	1075	10	2227	1142	1085	339	336	3	746	739	7	48.7%				
2017	464	20	785	8	1277	484	793	248	245	3	545	540	5	62.1%				
2018	574	13	66	2	655	587	68	21	21	1	47	45	1	10.4%				
2019	682	8	251	6	947	690	257	80	78	2	177	173	4	27.1%				
2020	497.6	14.2	148.7	15.67	676.17	511.8	164.37	51	46	5	113	102	11	24.3%				
2021	-	-	255.3	21.2	679.6	403.1	276.5	86	80	7	190	176	15	40.7%	233	352	92	30.7%