

#5b

New England Fishery Management Council

Recreational Advisory Panel Meeting

By Webinar

January 20, 2026

Meeting Motions

Attendance

Recreational Advisory Panel

Present: Frank Blount (Chair), Jonathon Sterritt (Vice Chair), Rick Bellavance, Leo Chomen, Rip Cunningham, Tom DePersia, Andy Fishbein, Willy Hatch, William Vanderhoop, Mike Waine

Absent: Tony DiLernia, Tim Tower

The meeting started at approximately 9:00 am.

Recreational Measures for Fishing Year 2026

Motion 1 (DePersia/Hatch):

The RAP recommends to the Groundfish Committee recreational measures for fishing year 2026 for WGOM cod that includes opening May for at least 1 fish possession limit (status quo from what was proposed for FY2025).

Western Gulf of Maine Cod:

- Open season: May 1-31; September 1 - October 31
- Minimum size: 23 inches
- Possession limit: 1 fish per day

Rationale:

- Model runs, including the added cod mortality estimated by a sensitivity run, demonstrated cod mortality for this option (for 1 cod) to be below the recreational sub-ACL
- Main demand for cod is May and June from charter customers (in southern Gulf of Maine). Fall has business competition for other recreational species.

- Anglers won't target cod, but will catch them while fishing for haddock (converts dead discards to harvest)
- Balances access to cod in GOM for fisheries in north and south
- Based on risk tolerance – there are spawning closures in place and haddock targeting maps (for reducing cod bycatch) that have been well-received by anglers. Additionally, there are accountability measures (AMs) to address a potential overage.

Roll Call:

	Yes	No	Abstain
Jonathon Sterritt		X	
Rick Bellavance	X		
Leo Chomen	X		
Rip Cunningham		X	
Tom DePersia	X		
Andy Fishbein		X	
Willy Hatch	X		
William Vanderhoop			
Mike Waine	X		

Motion *carried* (5/3/0) (1 advisor out of the room).

Consensus Statement:

The Recreational Advisory Panel recommends to the Groundfish Committee recreational measures for fishing year 2026 for GOM haddock that maintain status quo from what was proposed for FY2025:

Gulf of Maine Haddock:

- Open season: May 1 – February 28/29; April 1–30
- Minimum size: 17 inches
- Possession limit: 15 fish per day

The meeting ended at approximately 12:15 pm.