

Recreational Saltwater Fishing Regulations

Regulations listed below are subject to change during the 2016 season.

Species	Note	Min. Size	Open Periods	Possession Limits
American Eel	(1)	9"	All Year	25 fish
American Shad	(2)	None	All Year	Closed with exceptions
Black Sea Bass	(3,7)	15"	May 21 – August 31	5 fish
Blue Marlin		Federal rules apply. Consult NOAA Fisheries.		
Bluefish		None	All Year	10 fish
Cod (North of Cape Cod)	(4,5)	Private 19"	January 1 – December 31	1 fish
		For Hire 24"	August 1 – September 30	1 fish
Cod (South & East of Cape Cod)	(4,5)	22"	All Year	10 fish
Dab (Plaice)	(4,5)	14"	All Year	None
Fluke		16"	May 22 – September 23	5 fish
Gray Sole (Witch)	(4,5)	14"	All Year	None
Haddock (North of Cape Cod)	(4,5)	17"	January 1 – April 30	3 fish
		17"	May 1 – December 31	15 fish
Halibut	(4,5)	41"	All Year	1 fish
Monkfish	(4,5)	None	All Year	None
Pollock	(4,5)	None	All Year	None
Redfish	(4,5)	None	All Year	None
River Herring		Harvest, possession, sale and use are prohibited.		
Sailfish		Federal rules apply. Consult NOAA Fisheries.		
Scup	(7)	Private 10"	May 1 – December 31	30 fish or 150 fish/vessel if 5 or more anglers are aboard
		For-Hire Bonus 10"	May 1 – June 30	45 fish
		For-Hire Regular 10"	July 1 – December 31	30 fish
Sharks (excludes spiny dogfish)		See www.mass.gov/marinefisheries for current regulations.		
Smelt		None	June 16 – March 14	50 fish
Spiny Dogfish		None	All year	None
Striped Bass	(6)	28"	All year	1 fish
Tautog		16"	All year	3 fish



White Perch	8"	All year	25 fish
Windowpane Flounder	(4,5) Prohibited		
Winter Flounder (North of Cape Cod)	(4,5) 12"	All year	8 fish
Winter Flounder (South & East of Cape Cod)	(4,5) 12"	March 1 – December 31	2 fish
Wolffish	(4,5) Prohibited		
Yellowtail Flounder	(4,5) 13"	All year	None

Prohibitions

Snagging, snatching of anadromous fish: including shad, smelt, white perch, striped bass, trout, and salmon, but excluding alewives or blueback herring.

The taking of striped bass by any means other than hook and line.

To “high-grade” striped bass, i.e. the discard of dead, legal size striped bass.

To retain live striped bass in the water by attaching to a stringer or placing in a live well or holding car.

The taking of billfish using gear other than a rod and reel.

The taking of Atlantic salmon, sturgeon, all marine mammals, all sea turtles, and the diamond back terrapin from Massachusetts waters.

For anyone, except the owner, to handle, destroy, or molest any lobster or crab pot or other fishing gear, including any gear swept up on the shore, beaches or flats whether public or private, or to take fish there from.

To sell, barter, or exchange fish or shellfish without a commercial permit.

Notes:

- 1) Subject to regulation by the Division and the municipality. Please consult municipal regulations.
- 2) American Shad is a catch and release fishery, except for on the Merrimack and Connecticut Rivers where anglers may retain up to 3 fish per day.
- 3) Black sea bass are measured from the tip of the snout or jaw (mouth closed) to the farthest extremity of the tail, not including the tail filament.
- 4) Federal rules apply beyond state waters. Consult NOAA Fisheries for permitting requirements and regulations.
- 5) It is unlawful to fish with hook and line gear in the Winter Cod Conservation Closure from November 15 through January 31. It is unlawful to take cod from the Spring Cod Conservation Closure from April 16 through July 21.
- 6) Striped bass must be kept whole, meaning the head, tail, and body remain intact. Only evisceration is allowed. Permitted for-hire vessels may fillet striped bass for their customers.
- 7) Black sea bass and scup may be filleted but not skinned while at-sea. No more than two fillets per allowed fish may be possessed.



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