

§ 648.89 Recreational and charter/party restrictions.

(a) *Recreational gear restrictions.* Persons aboard charter or party vessels permitted under this part and not fishing under the DAS program, and recreational fishing vessels in the EEZ, are prohibited from fishing with more than two hooks per line and one line per angler and must stow all other fishing gear on board the vessel as specified under § 648.23(b).

(b) *Recreational minimum fish sizes--(1) Minimum fish sizes.* Persons aboard charter or party vessels permitted under this part and not fishing under the DAS program, and recreational fishing vessels in the EEZ, may not retain fish smaller

than the minimum fish sizes, measured in total length (T.L.) as follows:

MINIMUM FISH SIZES (TL)

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Species Size (Inches)

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Cod 21 (53.3 cm)

Haddock 21 (53.3 cm)

Pollock 19 (48.3 cm)

Witch flounder (gray sole) 14 (35.6 cm)

Yellowtail flounder 13 (33.0 cm)

Atlantic halibut 36 (91.4 cm)

American plaice (dab) 14 (35.6 cm)

Winter flounder (blackback) 12 (30.5 cm)

Redfish 9 (22.9 cm)

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(2) *Exception.* Vessels may possess fillets less than the minimum size specified, if the fillets are taken from legal-sized fish and are not offered or intended for sale, trade or barter.

(c) *Possession restrictions--(1) Cod and haddock.* Each person on a recreational vessel may possess no more than 10 cod and/or haddock, combined, in, or harvested from, the EEZ.

(i) For purposes of counting fish, fillets will be converted to whole fish at the place of landing by dividing fillet number by two. If fish are filleted into a single (butterfly) fillet, such fillet shall be deemed to be from one whole fish.

(ii) Cod and haddock harvested by recreational vessels with more than one person aboard may be pooled in one or more containers. Compliance with the possession limit will be determined by dividing the number of fish on board by the number of persons on board. If there is a violation of the possession limit on board a vessel carrying more than one person, the violation shall be deemed to have been committed by the owner and operator.

(iii) Cod and haddock must be stored so as to be readily available for inspection.

(2) *Atlantic halibut.* Charter and party vessels permitted under this part, and recreational fishing vessels fishing in the EEZ, may not possess, on board, more than one Atlantic halibut.

(d) *Restrictions on sale.* It is unlawful to sell, barter, trade, or otherwise transfer for a commercial purpose, or to attempt to sell, barter, trade, or otherwise transfer for a commercial purpose, NE multispecies caught or landed by charter or party vessels permitted under this part not fishing under a DAS or a recreational fishing vessels fishing in the EEZ.

(e) Charter/party vessel restrictions on fishing in Gulf of Maine closed areas and the Nantucket Lightship Closed Area.

(1) *Gulf of Maine Closed Areas.* A vessel fishing under charter/party regulations may not fish in the Gulf of Maine closed areas

specified in § 648.81(g)(1) through (i)(1), and (o)(1) if it becomes effective, during the time periods specified in those sections, unless the vessel has on board a letter of authorization issued by the Regional Administrator pursuant to §§ 648.81(g)(2)(iii) and 648.89(e)(3). The letter of authorization is valid for a period of 3 months.

(2) *Nantucket Lightship Closed Area.* A vessel fishing under charter/party regulations may not fish in the Nantucket Lightship Closed Area specified in § 648.81(c)(1) unless the vessel has on board a letter of authorization issued by the Regional Administrator pursuant to §§ 648.81(c)(2)(iii) and 648.89(e)(3).

(3) *Letters of Authorization.* To obtain either of the letters of authorization specified in § 648.89(e)(1) and (e)(2), a vessel owner must request a letter from the Northeast Regional Office of NMFS, either in writing or by phone (see Table 1 to § 600.502 - see ADDRESSES). As a condition of these letters of authorization, the vessel owner must agree to the following:

(i) The letter of authorization must be carried on board the vessel during the period of participation;

(ii) Fish harvested or possessed by the vessel may not be sold or intended for trade, barter or sale, regardless of where the fish are caught;

(iii) The vessel has no gear other than rod and reel or handline gear on board; and

(iv) For the Gulf of Maine charter/party closed area exemption only, the vessel may not use any multispecies DAS during the period of participation.