

Recreational Saltwater Fishing Regulations



Massachusetts
Saltwater Fishing

Regulations listed below are subject to change during the 2019 season.

Species	Note	Min. Size	Open Periods	Possession Limits
American Eel	(1)	9"	All Year	25 fish
American Shad	(2)	Catch and release only, with exceptions.		
Black Sea Bass	(3,7)	See www.mass.gov/marinefisheries (http://www.mass.gov/marinefisheries) for current regulations		
Blue Marlin		Federal rules apply. Consult NOAA Fisheries.		
Bluefish		None	All Year	10 fish
Cod (North of Cape Cod)	(4,5)	See www.mass.gov/marinefisheries (http://www.mass.gov/marinefisheries) for current regulations		
Cod (South & East of Cape Cod)	(4,5)	See www.mass.gov/marinefisheries (http://www.mass.gov/marinefisheries) for current regulations		
Dab (Plaice)	(4,5)	14"	All Year	No limit
Fluke (Summer Flounder)		See www.mass.gov/marinefisheries (http://www.mass.gov/marinefisheries) for current regulations		

Gray Sole (Witch)	(4,5)	14"	All Year	No limit
Haddock (North of Cape Cod)	(4,5)	See www.mass.gov/marinefisheries (http://www.mass.gov/marinefisheries) for current regulations		
Halibut	(4,5)	41"	All Year	1 fish
Monkfish	(4,5)	None	All Year	No limit
Pollock	(4,5)	None	All Year	No limit
Redfish	(4,5)	None	All Year	No limit
River Herring		Harvest, possession, sale and use are prohibited.		
Sailfish		Federal rules apply. Consult NOAA Fisheries.		
Scup	(7)	See www.mass.gov/marinefisheries (http://www.mass.gov/marinefisheries) for current regulations		
Sharks (excludes spiny dogfish)		See www.mass.gov/marinefisheries (http://www.mass.gov/marinefisheries) for current regulations.		
Smelt		None	Jun. 16 – Mar. 14	50 fish
Spiny Dogfish		None	All year	No limit
Striped Bass	(6)	28"	All year	1 fish
Tautog (10 fish maximum per private/rental vessel, year-round)	(8)	16"	Apr. 1 – May 31	3 fish
			Jun. 1 – Jul. 31	1 fish
			Aug. 1 – Oct. 14	3 fish
			Oct. 15 – Dec. 31	5 fish
Tunas		Federal rules apply. Consult NOAA Fisheries.		
Weakfish		16"	All year	1 fish
White Marlin		Federal rules apply. Consult NOAA Fisheries.		
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"	Mar. 1 – Dec. 31	2 fish
Wolfish	(4,5)	Prohibited		

Yellowtail Flounder	(4,5)	13"	All year	No limit
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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, with no minimum size limit.
- 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.
- 8) When the tautog fishery is open, private anglers are subject to 10-fish maximum tautog limit for the vessel. The most restrictive limit of the per angler bag limit or per vessel maximum limit applies.

<< 2019 Saltwater Fishing Permit

(<http://www.eregulations.com/massachusetts/fishing/saltwater/2019/saltwater-fishing-permit/>)

Saltwater Fish Availability Calendar >>

(<http://www.eregulations.com/massachusetts/fishing/saltwater/fish-availability-calendar/>)

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