



New England Fishery Management Council

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 11, 2019

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Groundfish Recreational Fishing: Council to Hold Listening Sessions to Gauge Interest in Party/Charter Limited Access

The New England Fishery Management Council has scheduled eight listening sessions to solicit public comment on whether it should develop a limited access program for the recreational party/charter boat fishery under the Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan, better known as the groundfish plan.

Seven in-person sessions will be held April 4 through May 9 from Maine to New Jersey, and a final webinar will be held on May 10 for anyone who could not attend an in-person session or who has additional comments to offer.

Council Executive Director Tom Nies said, "We're going out on the road to listen to what people have to say. The Council has not made a decision yet about whether or not it will pursue limited access. We know the recreational fishery has many differing opinions about this issue, so before we begin to sketch out the details of a limited access program in an amendment to the groundfish plan, we first want to hear from impacted fishermen about whether or not they want us to embark down this road."

What Does the Council Want to Know?

Fishermen are encouraged to offer opinions and perspective on the following issues, as well as any others of interest.

- Is a limited access program for the party/charter fishery warranted and/or desirable?
- What should the goals and objectives of the program be?
- Should there be an open access component for the for-hire fleet?



A successful recreational fishing trip aboard the Lady Tracey Ann, which sails from Eastman's Docks in Seabrook, NH. The large cod were caught in May 2007 on Jeffrey's Ledge in the Gulf of Maine. – Mark Godfroy photo



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- What would happen to vessel permits under a limited access program? Should there be restrictions?
- What management measures should be considered? Should catch shares be part of the program?
- How should history in the fishery be considered? Should the Council use the March 30, 2018 control date (see next page for control date details)?
- How should “for-hire” be defined? Should there be an opportunity for new entrants into the program?

What Will Happen Next?

After information is gathered from the listening sessions, the Groundfish Committee will review and discuss the cumulative feedback and consider whether to recommend further action to the full Council. The recommendation may or may not lead to the development of an amendment to the groundfish plan that would pursue limited access.

The Committee’s recommendation will be made with input from the Recreational Advisory Panel and Groundfish Plan Development Team through a series of public meetings during 2019.

Recreational Groundfish Party/Charter Fishery Listening Session Schedule

Port, Date, and Time	Location
Seabrook, NH Thursday, April 4, 2019 5:45 p.m. to 7:45 p.m.	Seabrook Public Library 25 Liberty Lane, Seabrook, NH Telephone: (603) 474-2044
Avalon, NJ Monday, April 8, 2019 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.	Icona Golden Inn* 7849 Dune Drive, Avalon, NJ Telephone: (609) 368-5155
Wells, ME Thursday, April 18, 2019 5:45 p.m. to 7:45 p.m.	Wells Public Library 1434 Post Road, Wells, ME Telephone: (207) 646-8181
Narragansett, RI Tuesday, April 23, 2019 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.	University of Rhode Island, Coastal Institute Auditorium, 218 South Ferry Road, Narragansett, RI Telephone: (401) 423-1934
Chatham, MA Tuesday, May 7, 2019 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.	Chatham Community Center 702 Main Street, Chatham, MA Telephone: (508) 945-5175
Plymouth, MA Wednesday, May 8, 2019 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.	Hampton Inn 10 Plaza Way, Plymouth, MA Telephone: (508) 747-5000
Gloucester, MA Thursday, May 9, 2019 5:45 p.m. to 7:45 p.m.	Sawyer Free Library 2 Dale Ave., Gloucester, MA Telephone: (978) 281-9763
Webinar Register to Participate Friday, May 10, 2019 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.	Webinar Session https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/8873736532644639746 Call: +1 (213) 929-4232, Access Code: 494-243-526

* The Avalon, NJ session is being held at the same location as the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council’s April meeting.



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The Council is collecting public comment until 5 p.m. on Friday, May 17, 2019. Stakeholders have several ways to provide input to the Council.

- Attend one of the in-person listening sessions and/or join the May 10 webinar.
- Email comments to comments@nefmc.org and label them as “Listening Sessions for the Recreational Northeast Multispecies (Groundfish) Party and Charter Fishery.”
- Fax comments to (978) 465-3116 and label them as described above.

Party/Charter Fishery Control Date

Q: Is there a control date for the recreational groundfish party/charter fishery?

A: Yes. **The control date is March 19, 2018.**

Q: Wasn't there an older control date?

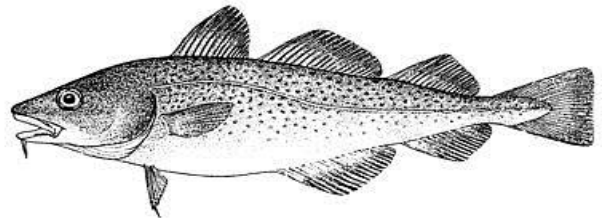
A: Yes. The old date was March 30, 2006. In January 2018, the Council agreed that conditions and issues in the recreational fishery had changed considerably since 2006 and that a new, more current control date would be a more useful indicator of recent activity in the fishery.

Q: What is the control date supposed to do?

A: As described in the March 19, 2018 Federal Register notice, “The control date is intended to discourage speculative entry, investment, or fishing activity in the party/charter fishery while the Council considers if and how participation in the fishery may be affected. The Council may use this control date for entry or participation qualification, along with additional criteria. Performance or fishing effort after the date of publication may not be treated the same as performance or effort before the control date. The Council may choose to use different qualification criteria that do not incorporate the new control date. The Council may also choose to take no further action to control entry or access to the party/charter groundfish fishery.”

- Mail properly labeled written comments to:

Tom Nies, Executive Director
New England Fishery Management Council
50 Water Street, Mill 2
Newburyport, MA 01950



“The listening sessions are an opportunity for members of the public to raise issues and concerns for the Council to consider for a possible limited access program for the recreational party/charter fishery. The Council needs your input to identify important issues.” – Listening Session Background Document

- Visit the [Listening Sessions Webpage](#).
- Download the [Background Document](#).

**The deadline for
public comments is
May 17, 2019**

For more information, contact Dr. Jamie Cournane, the Council's groundfish plan coordinator, at (978) 465-0492 ext. 103, jcournane@nefmc.org.