

**STATE OF MAINE  
DEPARTMENT OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE**

**Notice of Agency Rulemaking Adoption**

**AGENCY:** Department of Marine Resources  
**CHAPTER NUMBER AND RULE TITLE:** Chapter 43 Bluefish possession limit  
**ADOPTION FILING NUMBER:**

**CONCISE SUMMARY:**

The Commissioner adopts this emergency rulemaking to modify the bluefish recreational possession limit in accordance with recent changes adopted by NOAA Fisheries (50 CFR Part 648 [Docket No. 260209-0039]). Bluefish is regulated by the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC) and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC). The 2025 management track stock assessment projected that the bluefish stock would reach its rebuilding target in 2025, allowing for a higher recreational bag limit. As a result, this emergency rulemaking increases the bluefish possession limit from 3 fish to 5 fish, in alignment with the private angler bag limit established by MAFMC and ASMFC.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** April 2, 2026

**AGENCY CONTACT PERSON:**

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Agency Name: Department of Marine Resources

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**DEPARTMENT OF MARINE RESOURCES**

**CHAPTER 43 - BLUEFISH**

**TITLE INDEX**

**43.01** Bluefish Limits

## 43.01 Bluefish Limits

### 1. Method of Taking

#### A. Daily and Possession Limits

Except as provided in 43.01(A)(1) it shall be unlawful for any person to take, catch, kill, or possess more than 3 bluefish per day.

#### (1) Exemptions

The daily limit and possession limit shall not apply to persons licensed under 12 M.R.S. §6501 and §6421. The possession limit shall not apply to persons licensed under 12 M.R.S. §6851 and §6852.

B. It is unlawful to use multiple (more than two) barbed or barbless treble hooks on any artificial lure or flies while fishing for bluefish.

C. It is unlawful to use any hook other than a circle hook when using bait. For purposes of this chapter the definition of circle hook means "a non-offset hook with a point that points 90° back toward the shaft of the hook".

For the purposes of this chapter, bait is defined as any marine or freshwater organism live or dead, whole or parts thereof, and earthworms, including but not limited to, night crawlers (*Lumbricus terrestris*).

D. Any striped bass killed during the take of bluefish becomes part of the daily bag limit in accordance with Chapter 42.02.

**STATE OF MAINE**  
**DEPARTMENT OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE**

**Rulemaking Fact Sheet**

*(see 5 M.R.S. § 8057-A(1))*

**Agency:** Department of Marine Resources

**Name, Address, Telephone Number, and Email Address of Agency Contact Person:**

Corrin Flora

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**Chapter Number and Rule Title:** Chapter 43: Bluefish possession limit

**Type of Rule:** Routine Technical

**Statutory Authority:** 12 M.R.S. 6171(3)(C)

**Public Hearing(s)** *(include day, date, time, and location)*: NA

**Comment Deadline(s)** *(include day, date, and time)*: NA

**Principal Reason(s) or Purpose for Proposing this Rule** [see 5 M.R.S. § 8057-A(1)(A)]:

The Commissioner adopts this emergency rulemaking to modify the bluefish recreational possession limit in accordance with recent changes adopted by NOAA Fisheries. Bluefish is regulated by the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC) and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC). The 2025 management track stock assessment projected that the bluefish stock would reach its rebuilding target in 2025, allowing for a higher recreational bag limit. As a result, this emergency rulemaking increases the bluefish possession limit from 3 fish to 5 fish, in alignment with the private angler bag limit established by MAFMC and ASMFC.

**Is Material Incorporated by Reference into the Rule** [see 5 M.R.S. § 8056(2-A)]? No

**Brief Summary of Relevant Information Considered During Development of the Rule (including up to 3 primary sources relied upon)**[see 5 M.R.S. §§ 8057-A(1)(E) & 8063-B]:

This rule considered the NOAA Fisheries final rule issued in the Federal Register (50 CFR Part 648 [Docket No. 260209-0039]) which set specifications for fishing years 2026-2027 bluefish recreational fishery management measures.

**Estimated Fiscal Impact of the Rule** [see 5 M.R.S. § 8057-A(1)(C)]:

Enforcement of this amendment would not require additional activity in the agency. Existing enforcement personnel will monitor compliance during routine patrols.

**FOR EXISTING RULES WITH FISCAL IMPACT OF \$1 MILLION OR MORE, ALSO INCLUDE:**

**Economic Impact, Whether or Not Quantifiable in Monetary Terms** [see 5 M.R.S. § 8057-A(2)(A)]:

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**Individuals, Major Interest Groups and Types of Businesses Affected and How They Will Be Affected** [see 5 M.R.S. § 8057-A(2)(B)]:

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**Benefits of the Rule** [see 5 M.R.S. § 8057-A(2)(C)]:

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