

The Process for Setting Recreational Regulations for Summer Flounder, Scup, And Black Sea Bass



Overview

- Describe the specifications process
- Timing of data inputs and decisions for setting recreational regulations
- The regulatory structure
- Challenges and tradeoffs among fishing measures



The Specification Process

- Process by which fishing measures for the upcoming fishing year(s) are set (aka "specs."):
 - Includes data inputs/analyses, public meetings, advice and recommendations made along the way
 - Complex process which includes state and Federal entities with overlapping jurisdiction



Advisory Groups for Specs.

- Council utilizes 3 types of standing advisory groups to throughout specs. decision processes:
- **Scientific and Statistical Committee** - scientific advisors set upper limit on acceptable biological catch limits (as dictated by MSA)
- **Monitoring Committees** (species specific) - technical group - biologist/assessments folks
- **Advisory panels** - fishery perspectives (as required by MSA)

Specs. End-Products

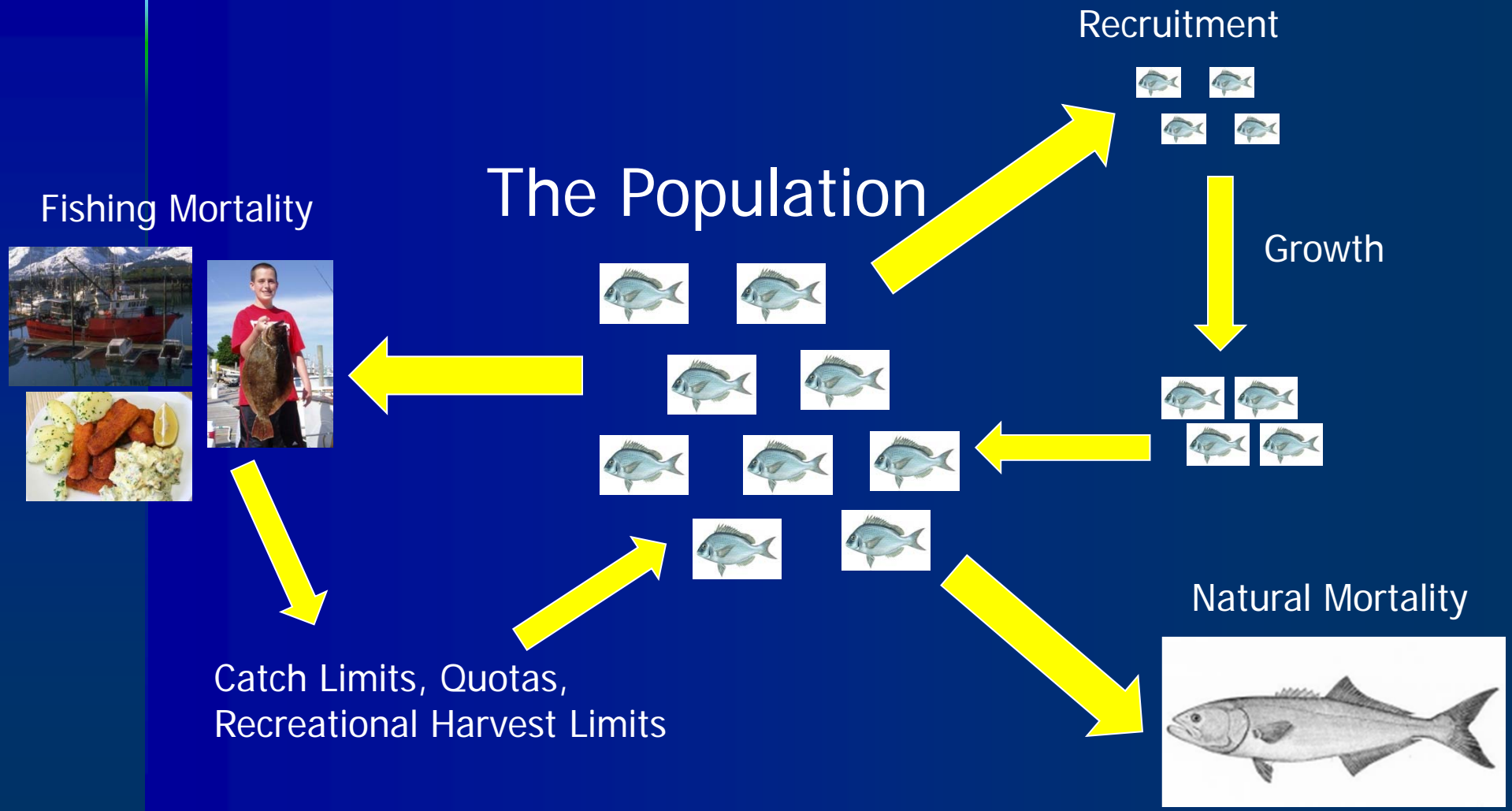
- Council recommendations packaged to inform NMFS and public of impacts and tradeoffs among policy choices (NMFS implements):
 - **“Commercial Package”**
 - Overall catch limits and landings limits (e.g., comm. quota and rec. harvest limit)
 - Commercial management measures
 - **“Recreational Package”**
 - Recreational management measures



Specs End-Products

- Action split into two packages for summer flounder, scup, sea bass, to ensure:
 - Commercial quotas and recreational harvest limits implemented by January 1
 - Recreational data used to develop management measures is the most recent
 - Constraints on when data is available and how fast managers and regulators can move actions through system (regulatory constraints)

Science and Data Inputs



Recreational Data Inputs

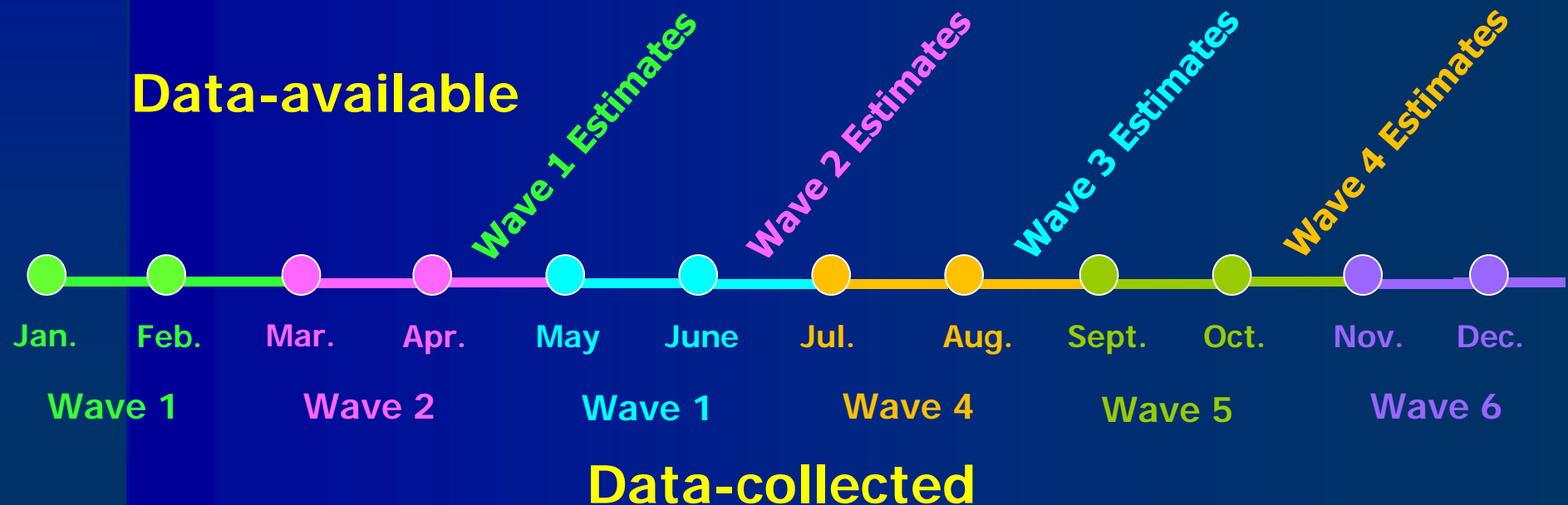
- Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Program (will be MRIP) - national program
- Recreational data collection is challenging:
 - **Scale:** Millions of recreational anglers
 - **Diversity** of participants and fisheries
 - Data collection and communication face some similar challenges (**scale and scope**)

Recreational Data Inputs

- Recreational landings estimates composed of two parts:
 - **effort** (collected through phone survey in our region)
 - **catch rates** (intercept anglers to get catch per angler trips)

Timing: Recreational Data

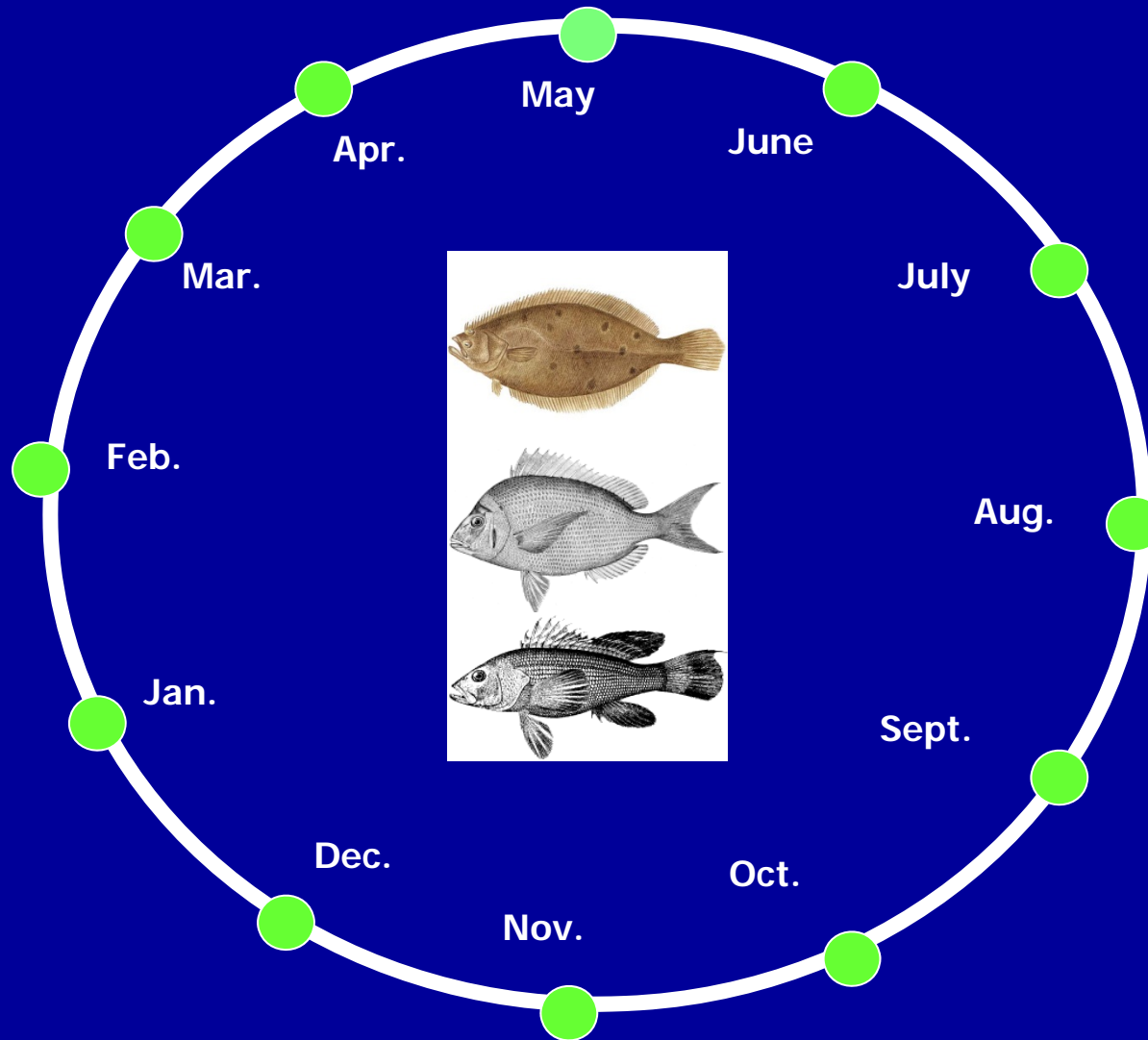
- Effort is collected in two month recall periods, so the estimates literally come in waves.



Recreational Data Inputs

- Northeast has highly seasonal fisheries (peaks in waves 3,4,5 (May-October))
- Use preliminary data during current year to inform changes to next years recreational measure.
- Preliminary until April of year+1, when final wave 1-6 is delivered; integrates VTR data in the effort estimates for the For-Hire Survey

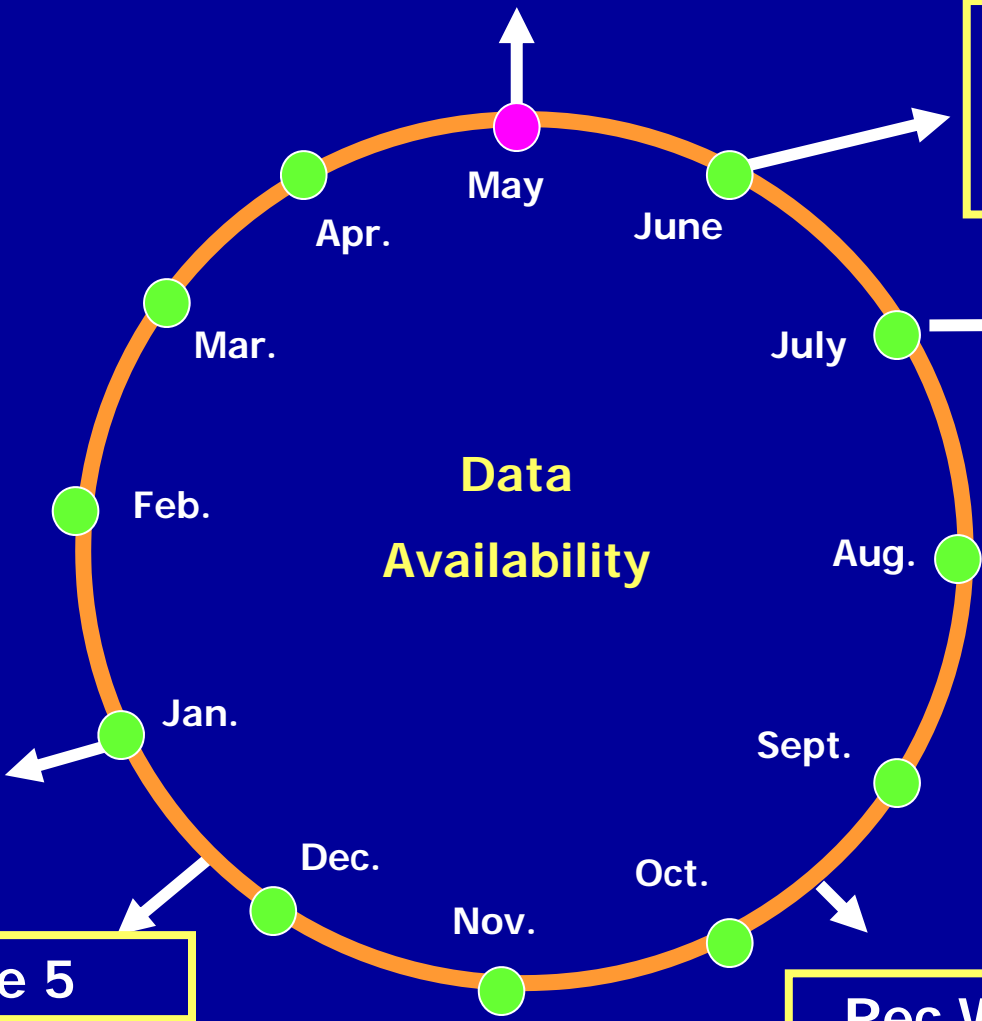
"Wheel of Specifications"



Prior year data ready.
Assessment Modeling

Peer Review or
Assessment
Update

Reports

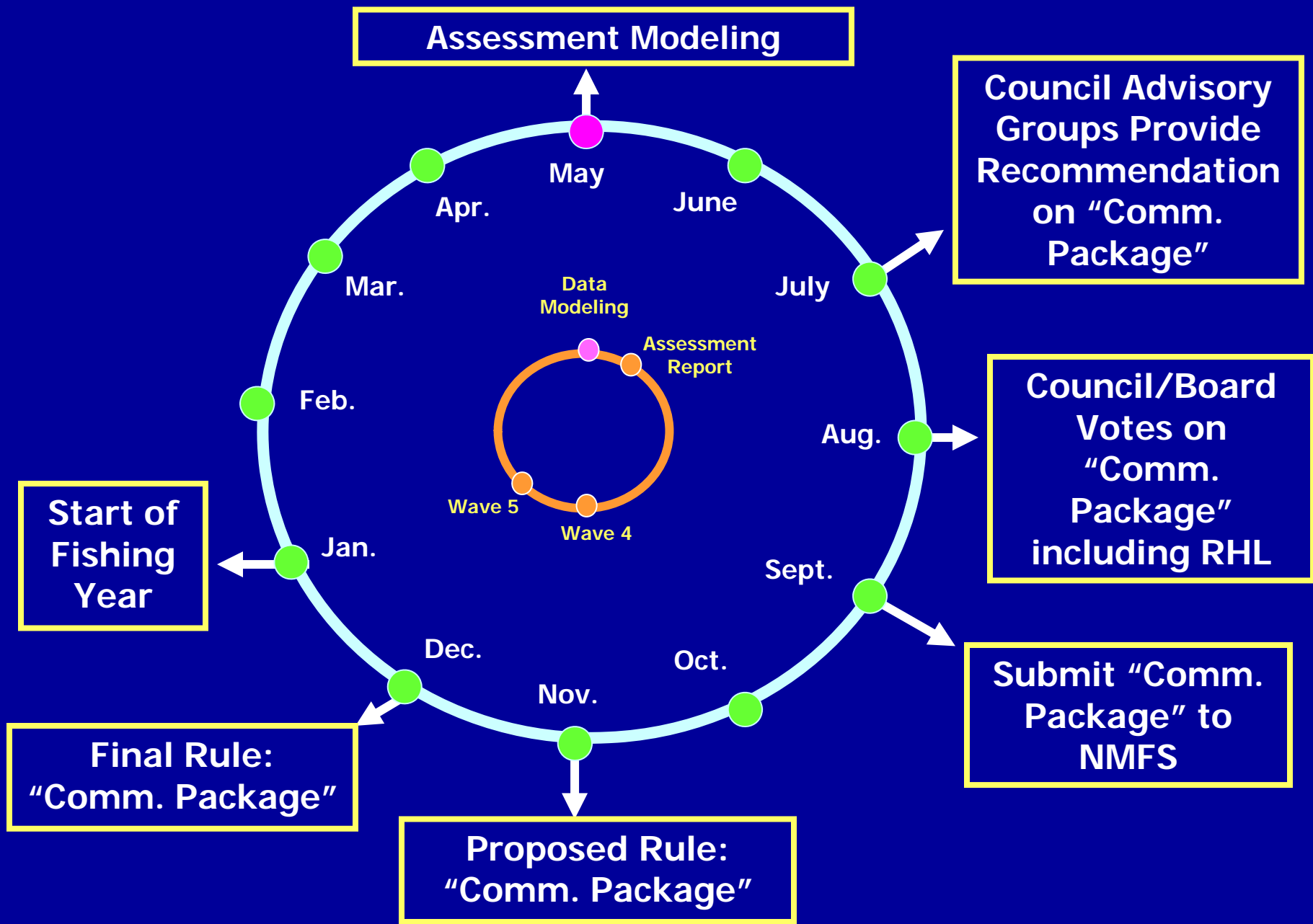


Start of
Fishing
Year

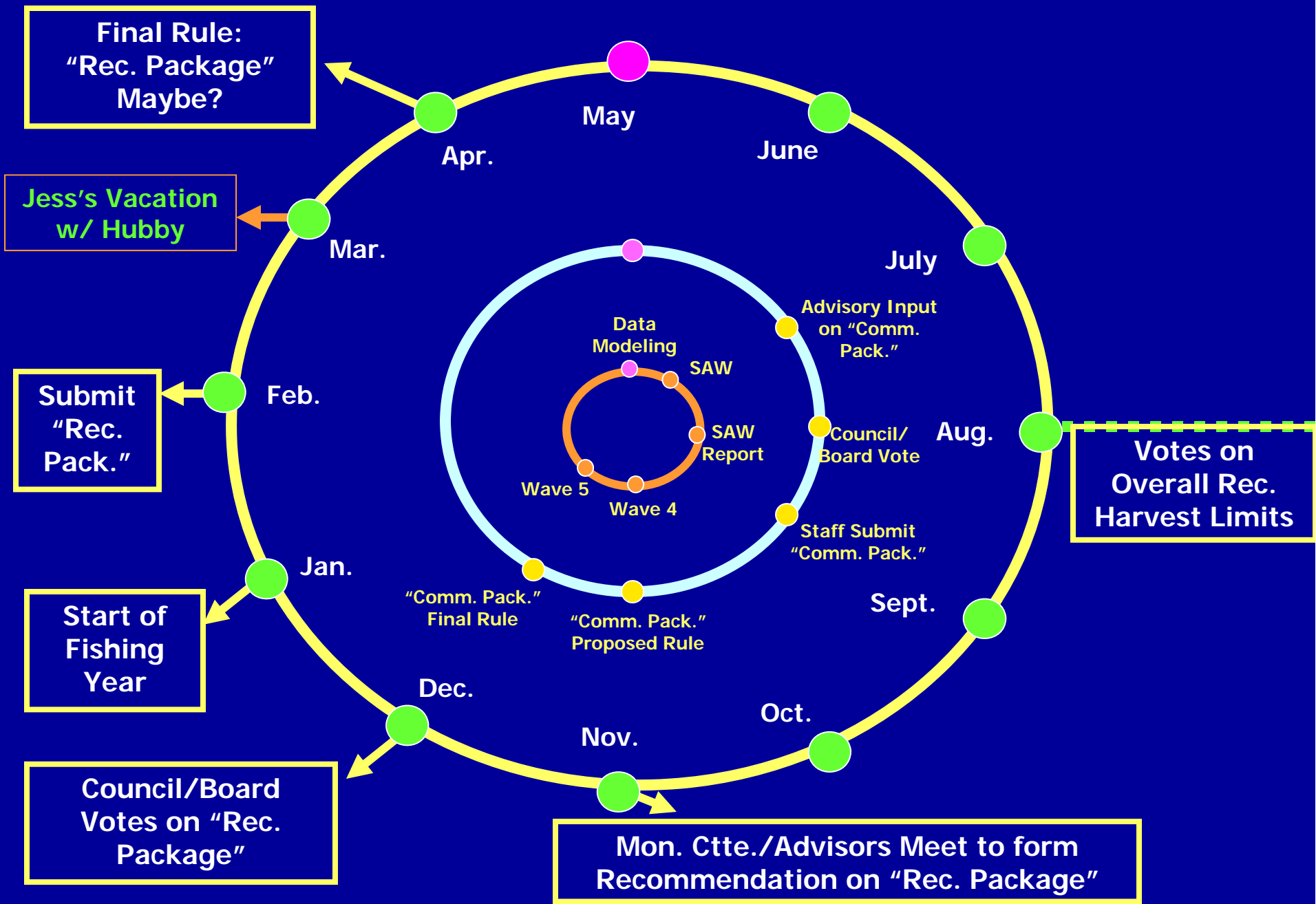
Rec Wave 5

Rec Wave 4

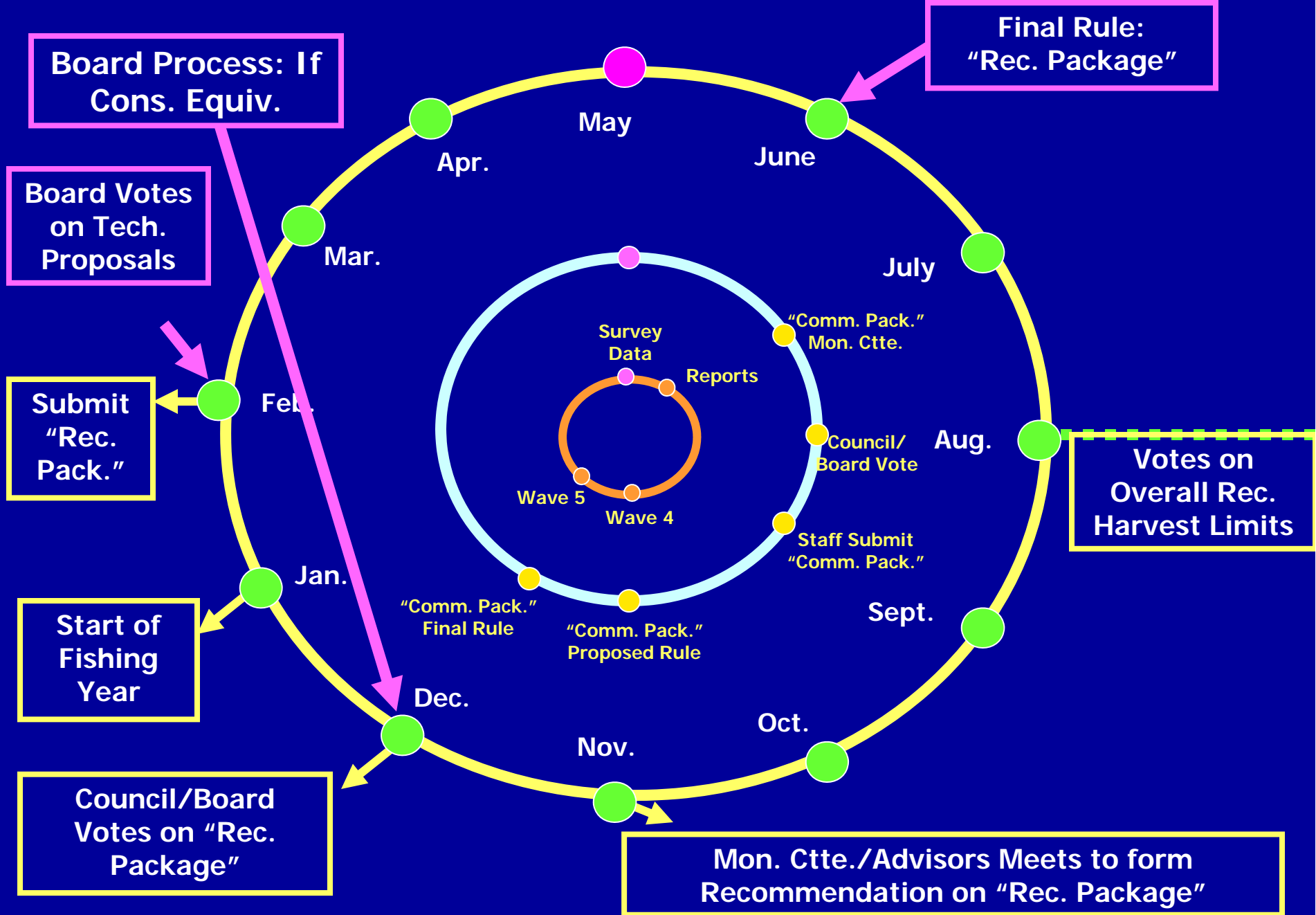
Comm. Package: Catch Limits; Comm. Quota/Measures; RHL



Recreational Package: i.e. Size, Season, Possession Limits



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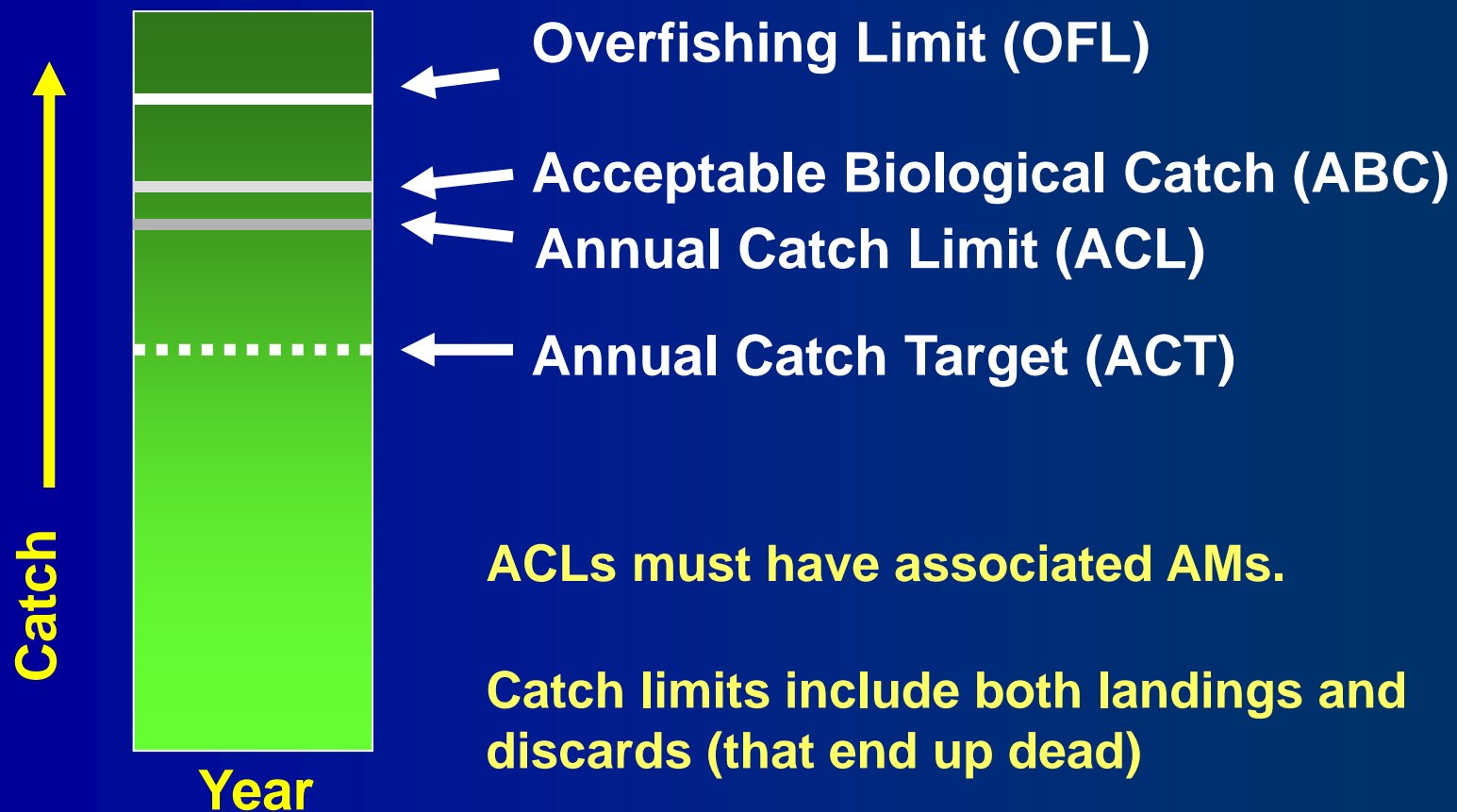


The Wheel

- Staff from all the agencies involved work diligently to make sure all the pieces come together on time.
- Council recommendations forwarded must meet requirements of the MSA to be implemented by NMFS.

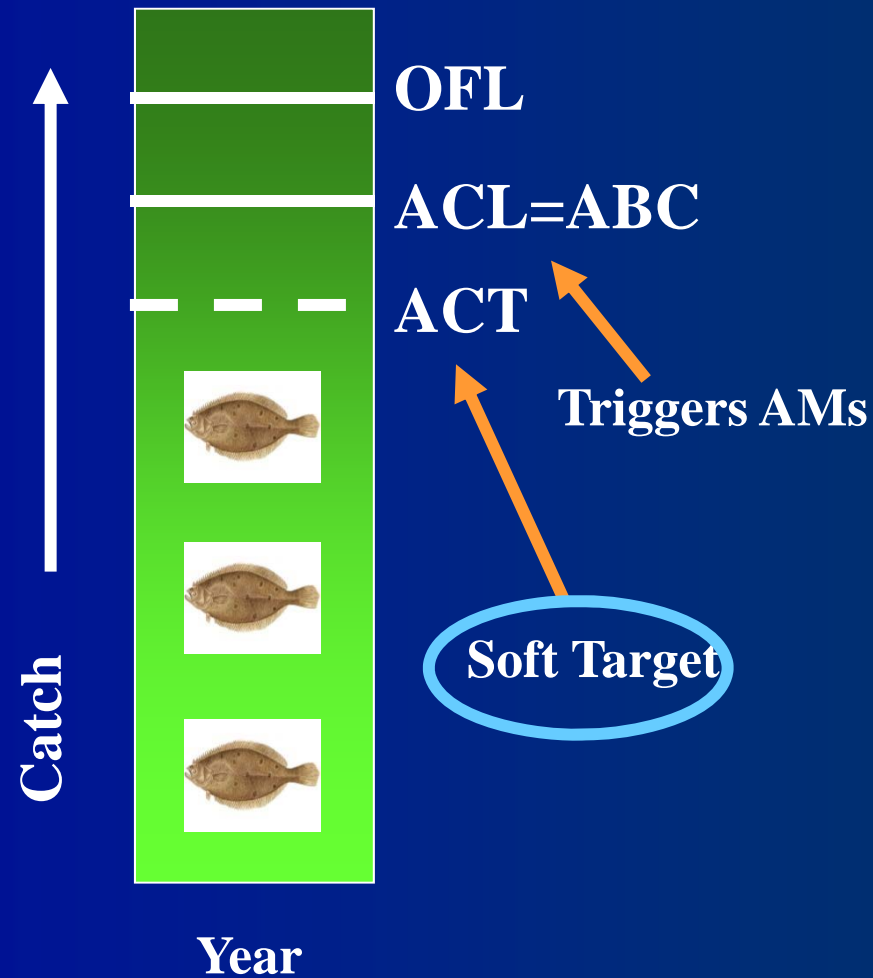


Requirements: New Terms





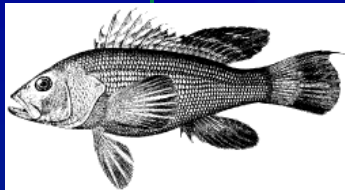
Mid-Atlantic Approach



SSC recommends ABC

| Level | Type of Assessment | Mid Stocks Assessments in Each |
|--------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1 | Data rich, not uncertain | None: TBD by SSC |
| 2 | More scientific uncertainty | Some Mid-Atlantic Stocks may be a 2 or 3 |
| 3 |even more uncertainty | |
| 4 | Data poor and highly uncertain | Poorly assessed stocks, rejected assessment stock, etc. will fall here |

Sector-Specific Accountability



ABC = ACL



XX%

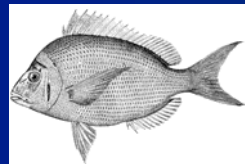
XX%

Rec. ACL

Comm. ACL

Reduced by X%
mgmt. uncertainty

Reduced by Y%
mgmt. uncertainty



Rec. ACT

Comm. ACT

This means that...

- Addressing management uncertainty for summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass is sector-specific (rec. and comm. sector)
- Allow for data quality issues and fishery control to be considered for each fishing sector independently



This also means that...

- Recreational fishery is accountable if the Rec-ACL is exceeded
- There are consequences for exceeding the recreational ACL
 - Not as rigid as commercial sector (i.e., comm. landings overage deducted irrespective of whether comm-ACL is exceeded)
 - Not based on single year data comparisons to smooth data variability

Council Accountability

- Proactive AM: Use of ACTs
- Proactive AM: General inseason closure authority for the NMFS
 - If observed landings exceed the landings limit; Council was concerned about instability in projected data
 - Closure linked to more reliable and estimable component of rec catch; regulations regulate "retention" of fish (landed fish)

Recreational Harvest Limit

- Derived from the recreational ACT
- Landings portion of the catch target around which recreational regulations are developed

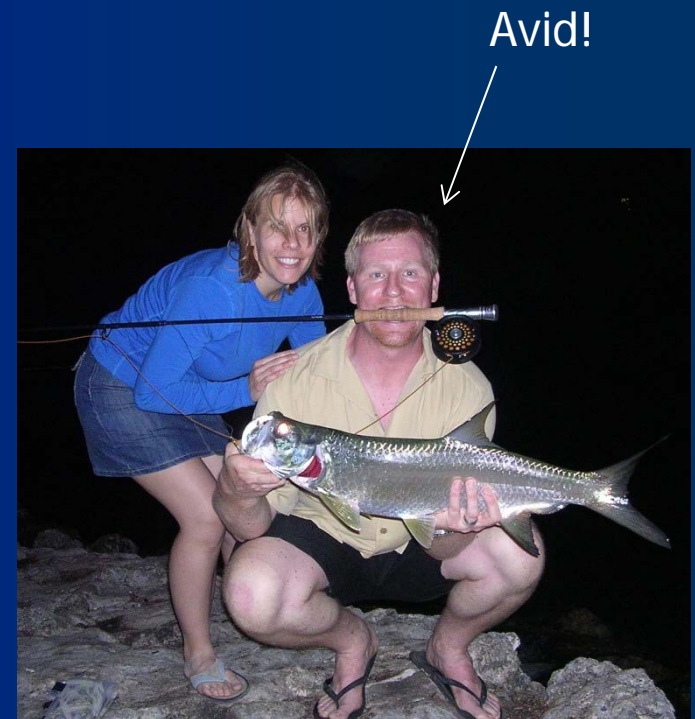


Recreational Measures

- Minimum size, season, possession limits are primary tools for recreational fisheries
- These measures control retention of fish (landings)
- Under the new system of catch limits, discards are part of this too.

Challenges: User Groups

- Different fishing modes (shore, private angler, party charter), different motivations
- Some anglers want to "take one home" versus "fill the freezer"
- Avid versus average angler



Challenges

- Because we have to use current year data to inform upcoming year recreational measures, we assume:
 - Fish availability, angling effort, and angler behavior will be the same
 - Survey and modeling being done on behavior side (sent out through MRFSS)

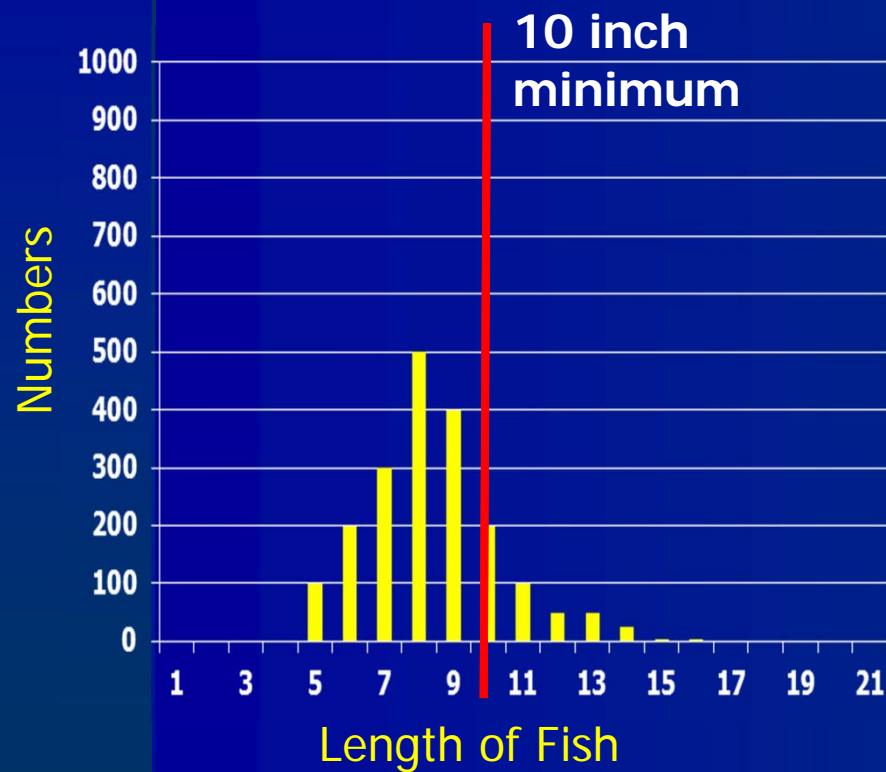
Challenges: Availability

- Stock conditions have changed substantially for all three stocks since 2000.
- More, large fish available to fishermen. May see strong incoming year classes too.
- Want to maximize fishery participation, but don't want to go over the RHL and Rec-ACL.
- Sets up new regime for how regulations function and how effective they are.

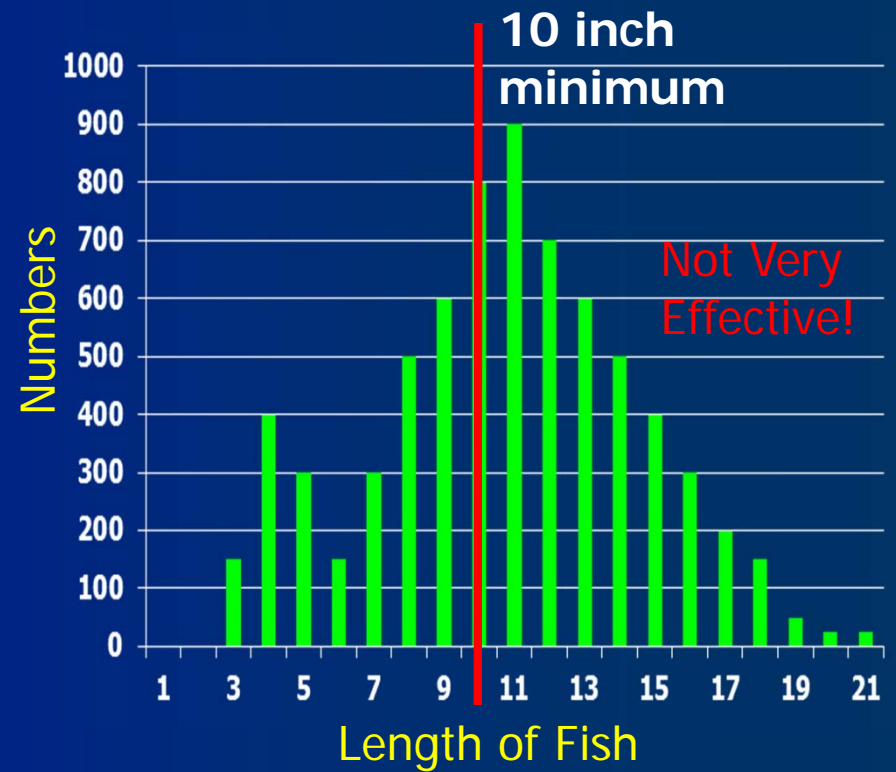


Changing Paradigms

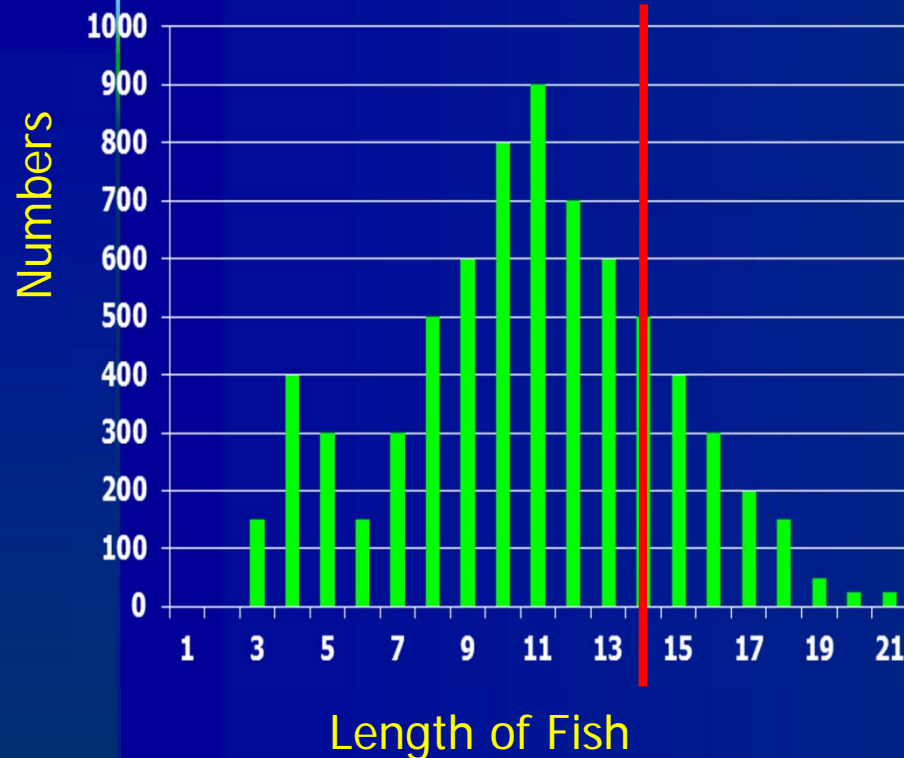
Pre-rebuilding



Post-rebuilding



Changing Paradigms



- Shift the minimum size over to reduce landings, potentially end up with more discarding
- Bring in season and possession limits to shift the balance back over

Possession Limits



| | | |
|--------------------------------|----|-------|
| Catch per angler trip | 1 | 53.35 |
| | 2 | 72.41 |
| | 3 | 81.14 |
| | 4 | 88.03 |
| | 5 | 94.12 |
| | 6 | 95.33 |
| | 7 | 96.75 |
| | 8 | 97.36 |
| | 9 | 97.97 |
| | 10 | 98.38 |

Proportions
of Anglers

Bag/Size Tables

| Bag | Size (TL) | | | |
|-----|-----------|--------|--------|--------|
| | 12.5 | 13 | 13.5 | 14 |
| 1 | 0.5555 | 0.6065 | 0.6828 | 0.7142 |
| 2 | 0.3864 | 0.4714 | 0.5765 | 0.6292 |
| 3 | 0.3016 | 0.4127 | 0.5412 | 0.6044 |
| 4 | 0.2449 | 0.3858 | 0.5214 | 0.5929 |
| 5 | 0.2156 | 0.3701 | 0.5068 | 0.5851 |
| 6 | 0.2001 | 0.3556 | 0.4964 | 0.5806 |
| 7 | 0.1863 | 0.3423 | 0.4879 | 0.5806 |
| 8 | 0.1736 | 0.3300 | 0.4824 | 0.5805 |
| 9 | 0.1655 | 0.3249 | 0.4810 | 0.5805 |
| 10 | 0.1581 | 0.3198 | 0.4796 | 0.5805 |

Seasons (Prop./days)

| State | Wave 1 | Wave 2 | Wave 3 | Wave 4 | Wave 5 | Wave 6 |
|-----------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| MA | 0.0000 | 0.0000 | 0.4620 | 0.3721 | 0.7992 | 0.0000 |
| RI | 0.0000 | 0.0001 | 0.0800 | 0.5265 | 0.9208 | 0.1033 |
| CT | 0.0000 | 0.0000 | 0.1319 | 1.3139 | 0.0176 | 0.1544 |
| NY | 0.0000 | 0.0000 | 0.4054 | 0.6294 | 0.4840 | 0.1101 |
| NJ | 0.0000 | 0.0062 | 0.9087 | 0.2418 | 0.4456 | 0.0330 |
| DE | 0.0000 | 0.0549 | 0.7852 | 0.3596 | 0.3970 | 0.0367 |
| MD | 0.0000 | 0.0104 | 0.9331 | 0.2449 | 0.3400 | 0.1069 |
| VA | 0.0000 | 0.0975 | 0.8508 | 0.2932 | 0.2522 | 0.1409 |
| NC^a | 0.2440 | 0.2928 | 0.4908 | 0.2976 | 0.0727 | 0.2445 |
| | | | | | | |
| Coast | 0.0026 | 0.0150 | 0.7168 | 0.3589 | 0.4804 | 0.0599 |

Challenges: Effort

- Limiting regulations for one species, may cause effort to shift to other rec species
- Even if the fishery is closed, there can be catch-and-release fishing (that's still effort!)
- Hooks in the water catch what's there

Challenges: Angler Behavior

- We're complicated creatures
- Individual expectations of what constitutes a satisfactory recreational fishing experience vary
- The END.