

# 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

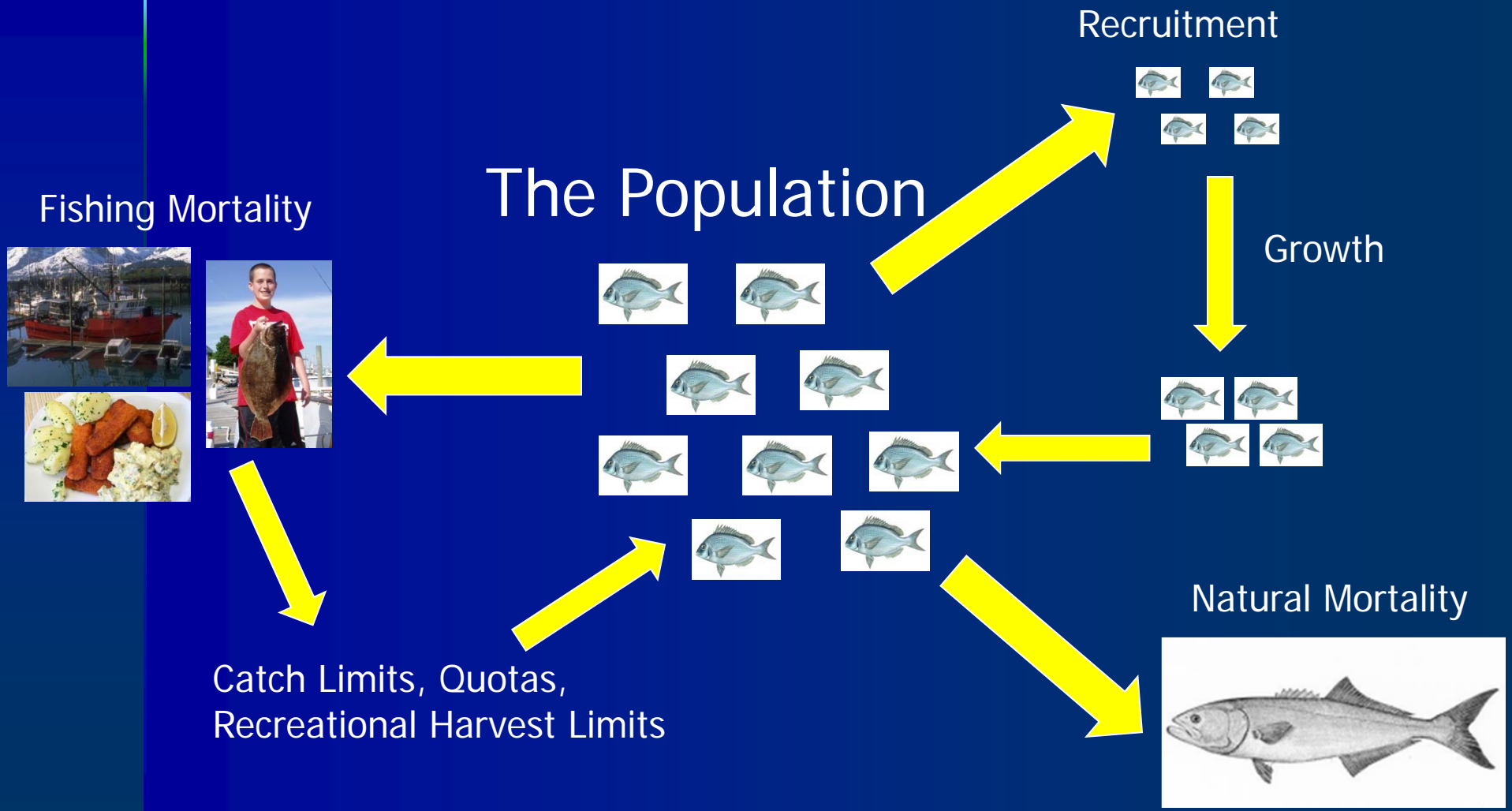
- Council recommendations packaged to inform NMFS and public of impacts and tradeoffs among policy choices (NMFS implements):
  - **“Commercial Package”**
    - Overall catch limits and landings limits (e.g., comm. quota and rec. harvest limit)
    - Commercial management measures
  - **“Recreational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

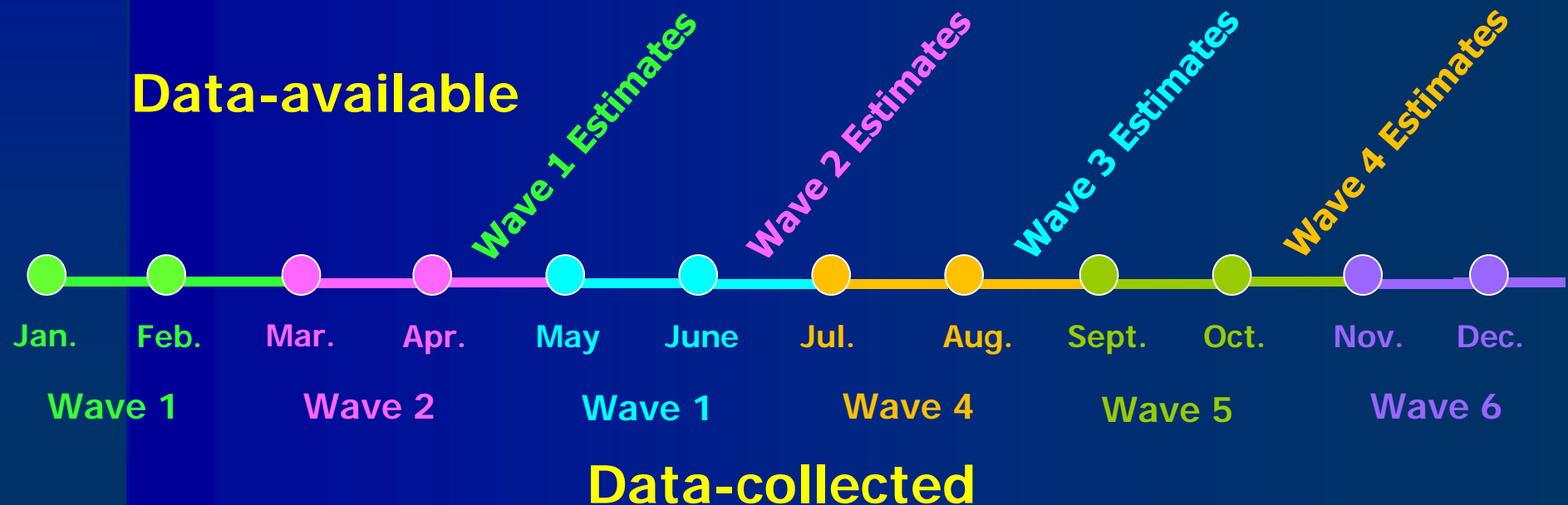


# Recreational Data Inputs

- 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

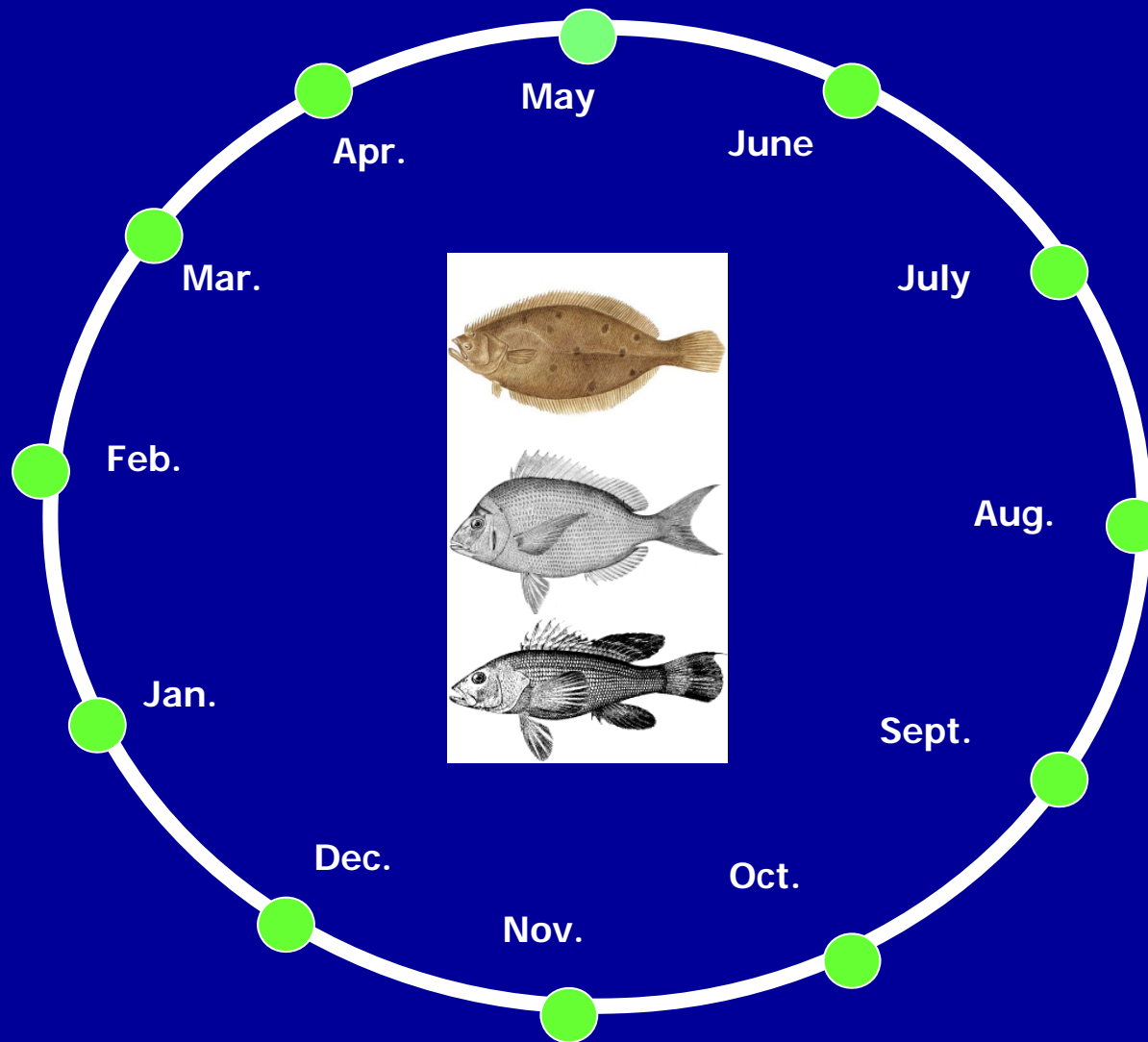
- Effort is collected in two month recall periods, so the estimates literally come in waves.



# 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

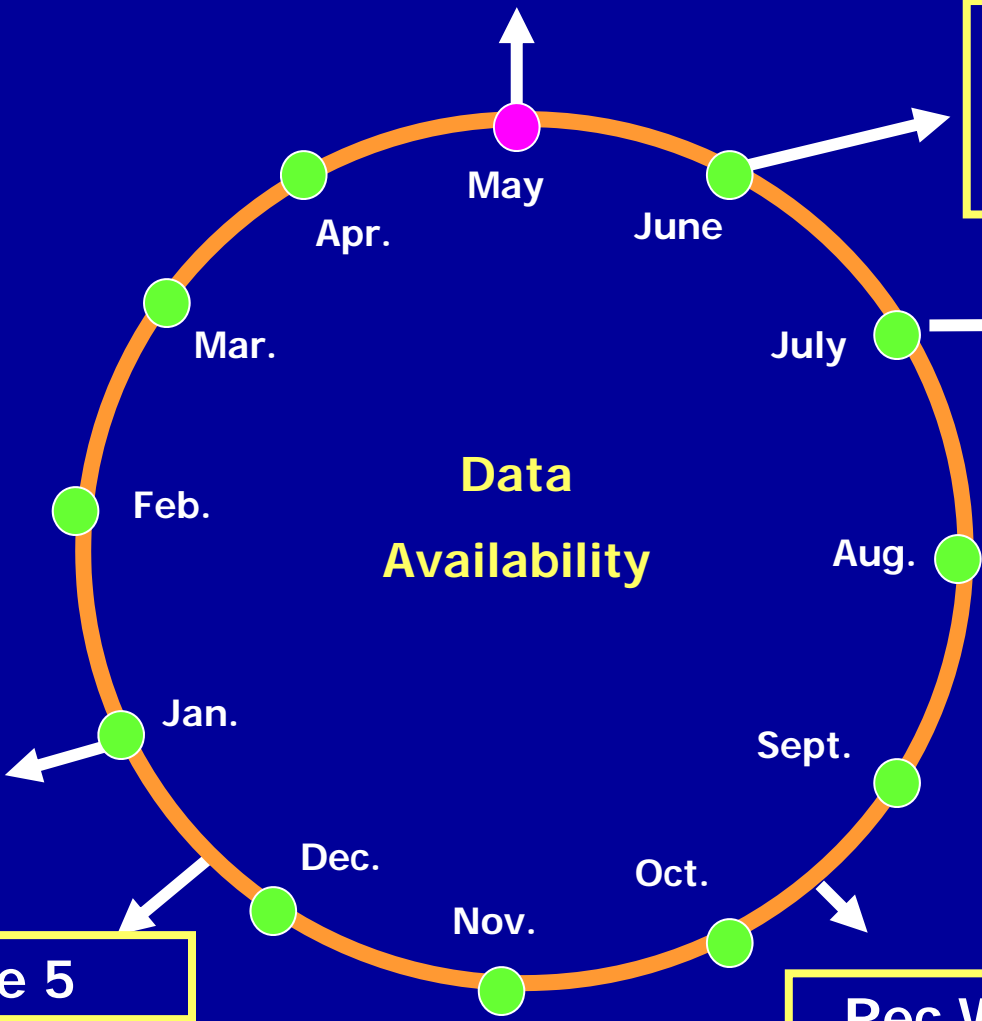
# "Wheel of Specifications"



Prior year data ready.  
Assessment Modeling

Peer Review or  
Assessment  
Update

Reports

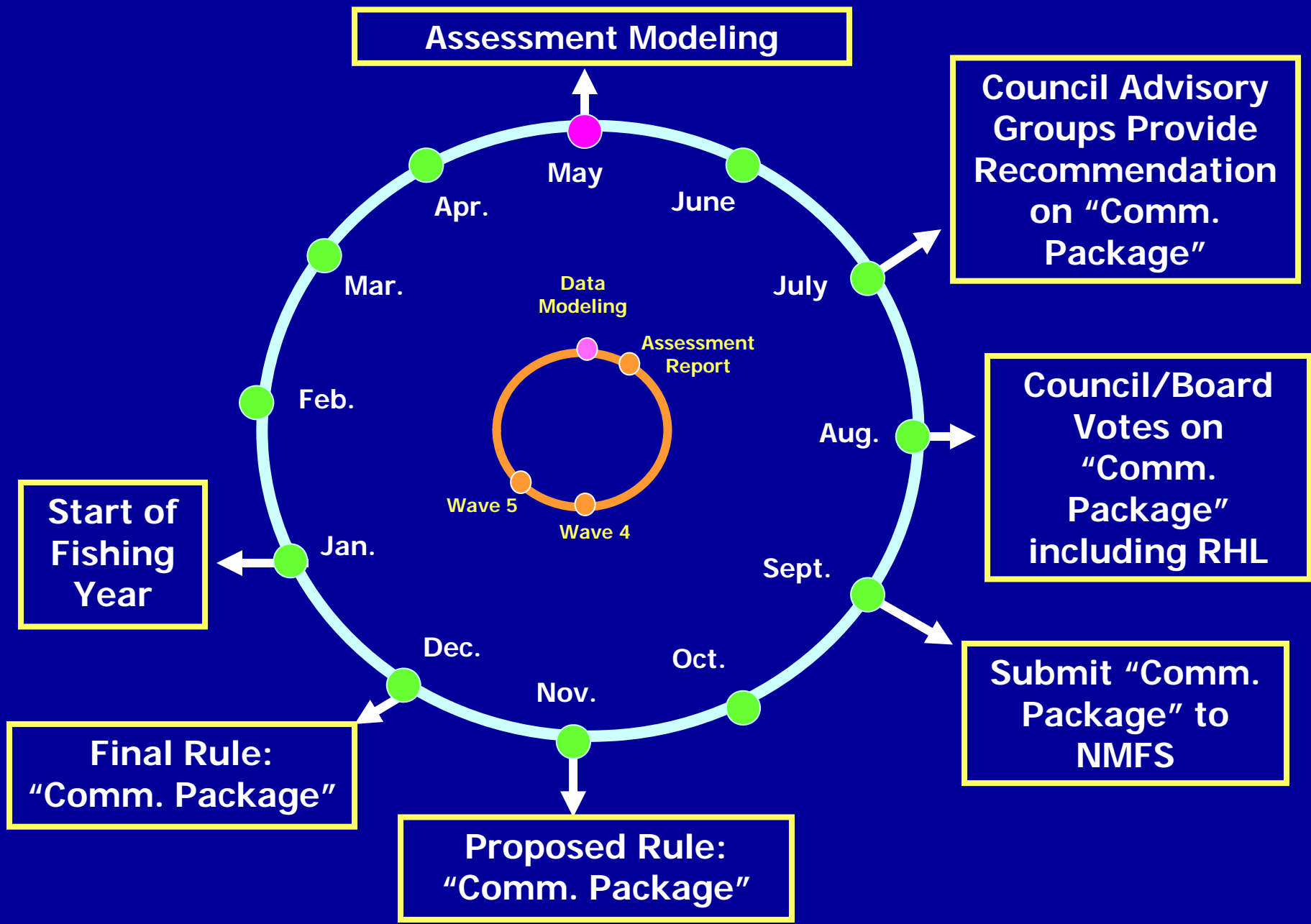


Start of  
Fishing  
Year

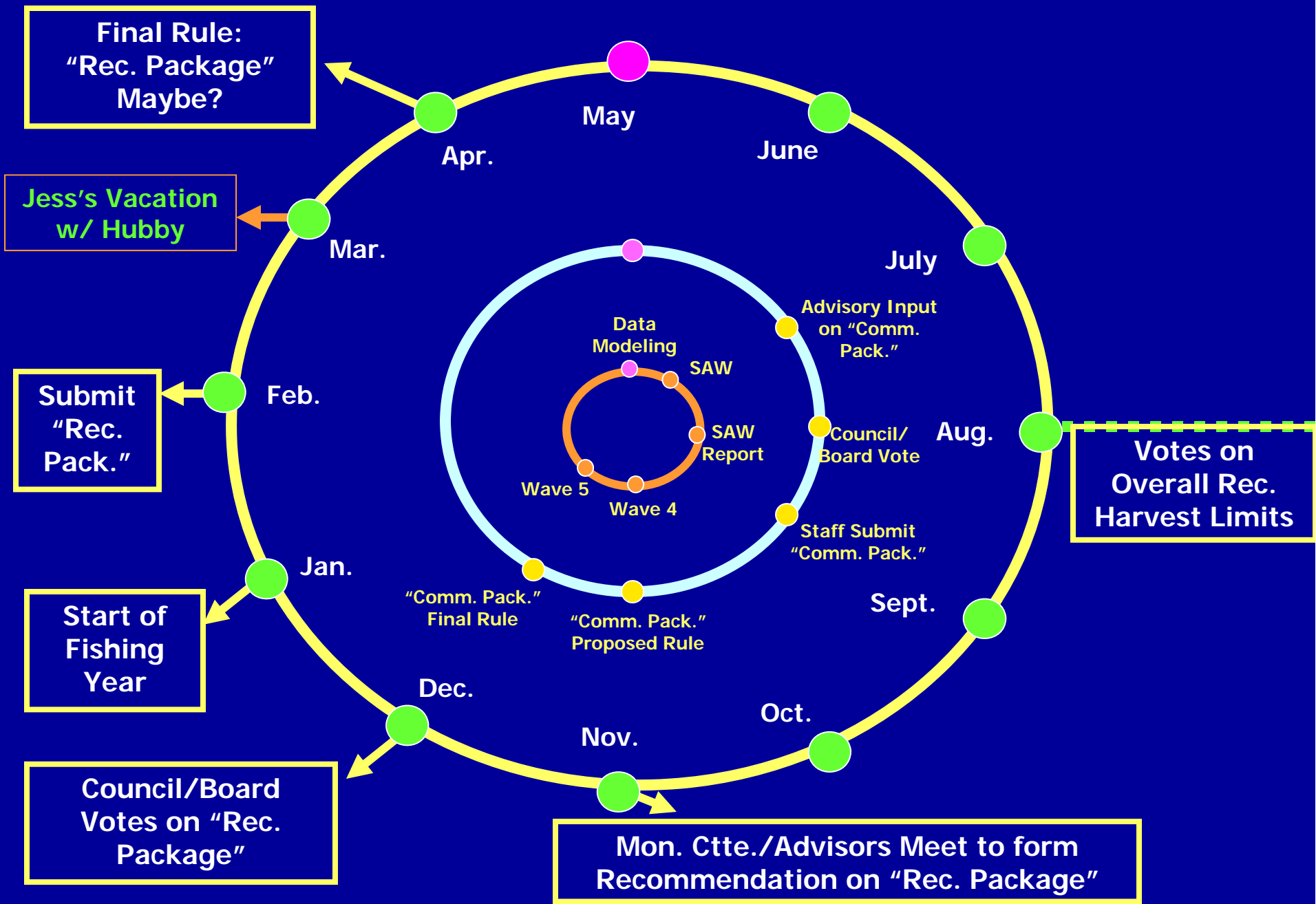
Rec Wave 5

Rec Wave 4

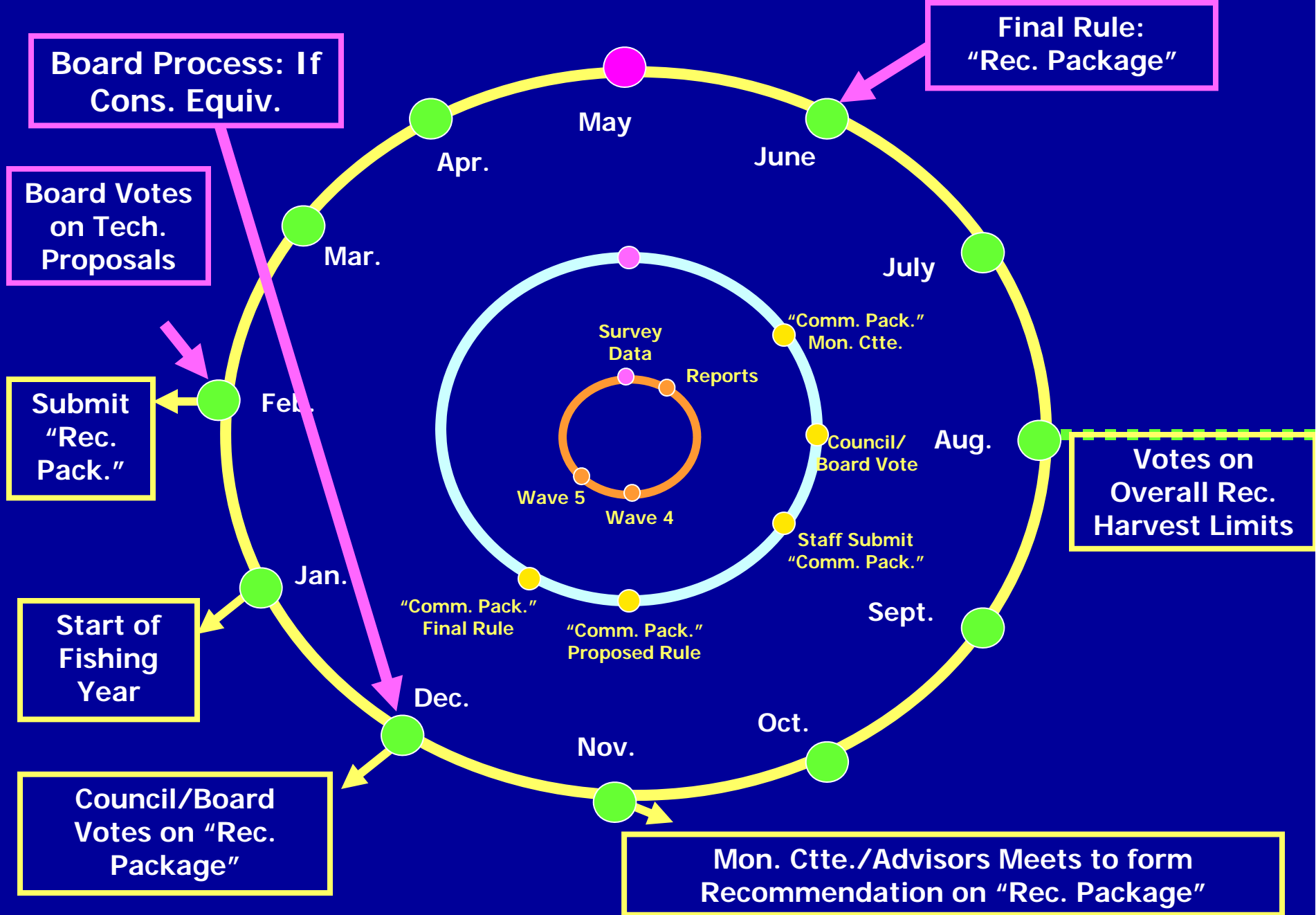
# Comm. Package: Catch Limits; Comm. Quota/Measures; RHL



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



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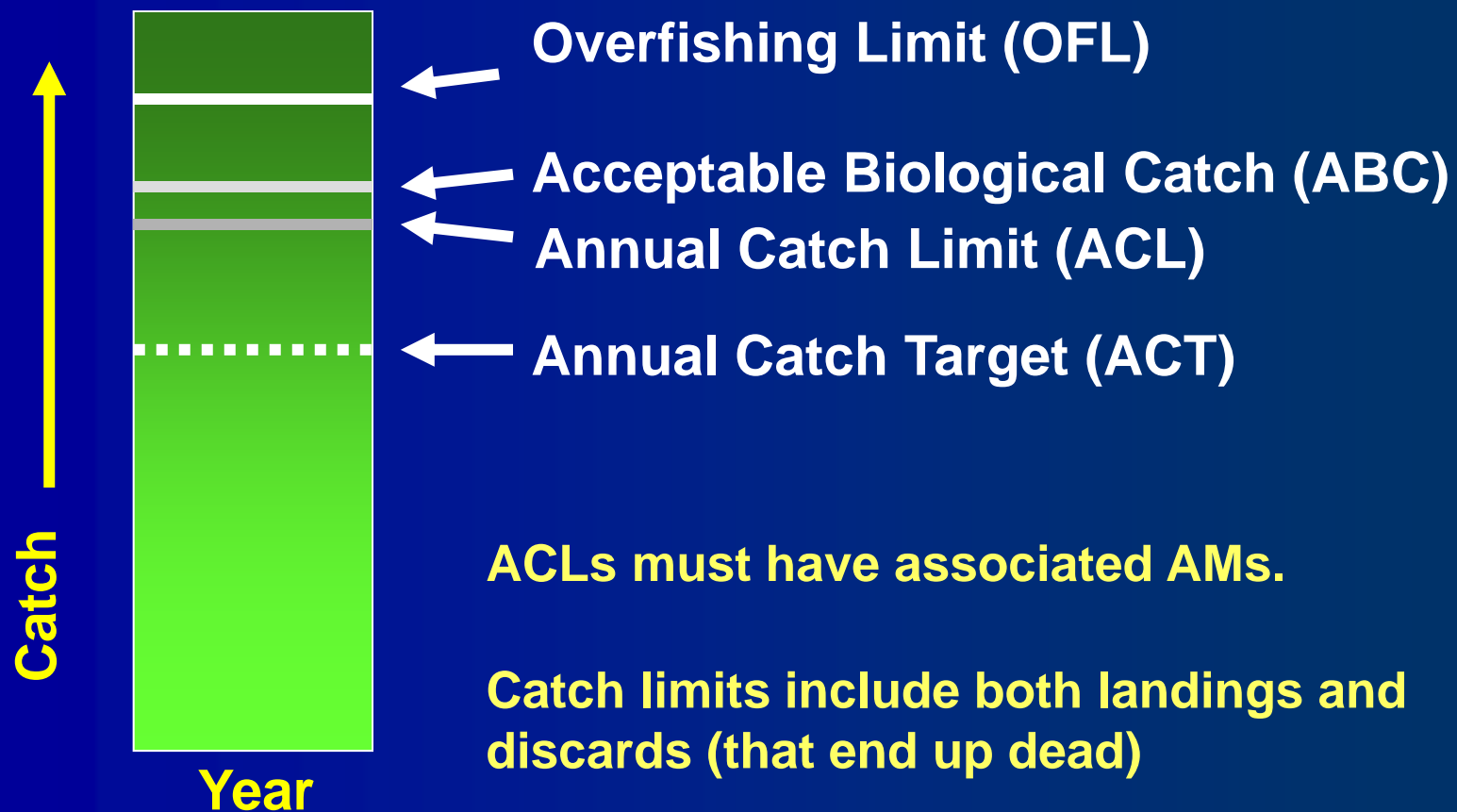


# The Wheel

- 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.

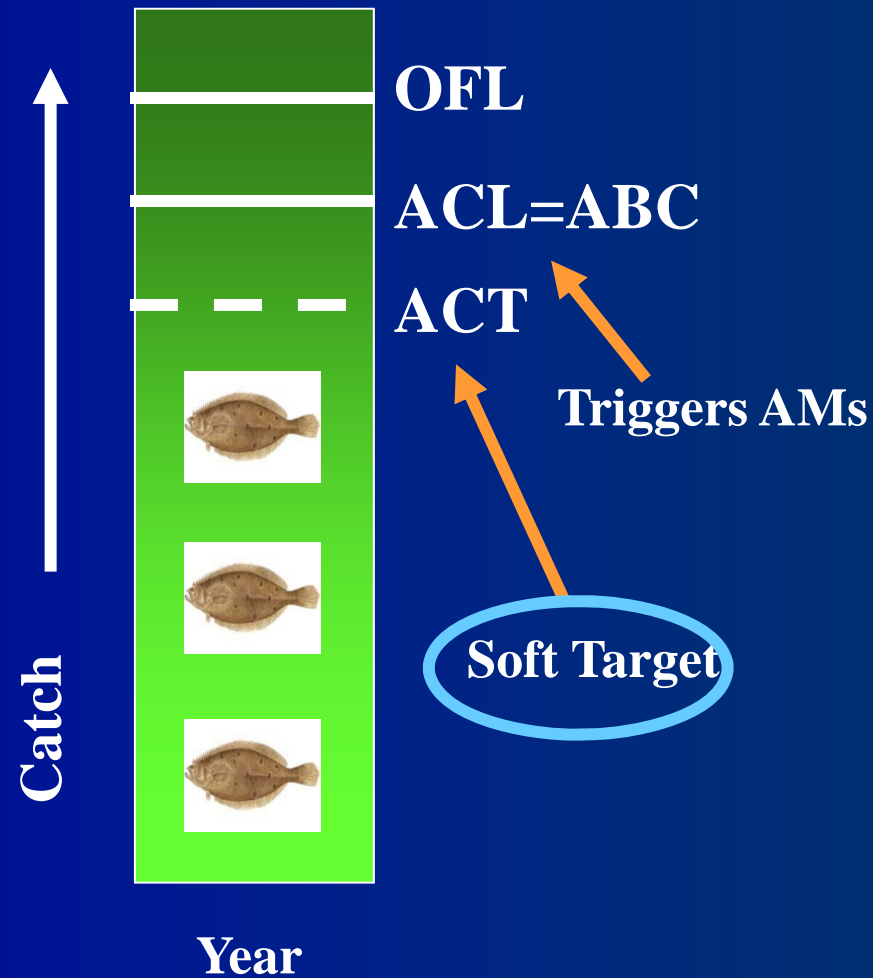


# Requirements: New Terms





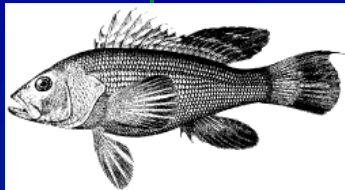
# Mid-Atlantic Approach



# SSC recommends ABC

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

# 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

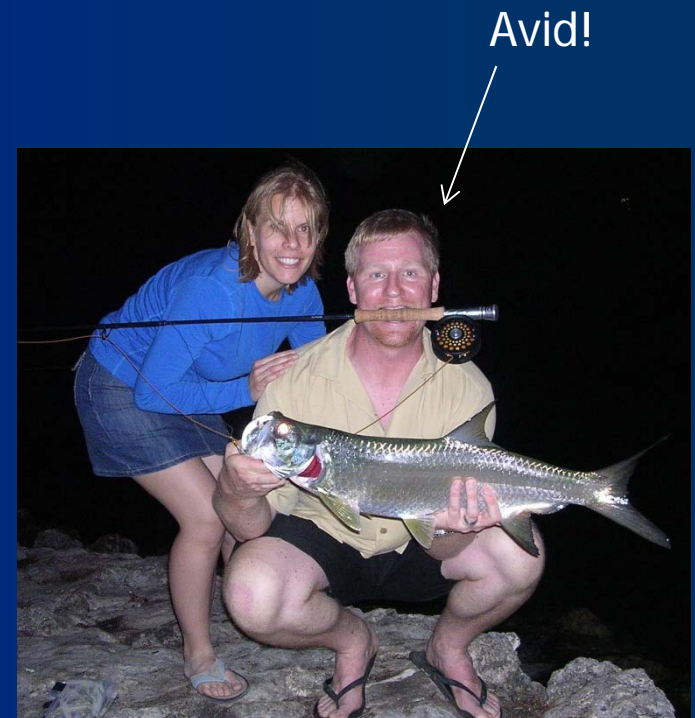


# Recreational Measures

- 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)

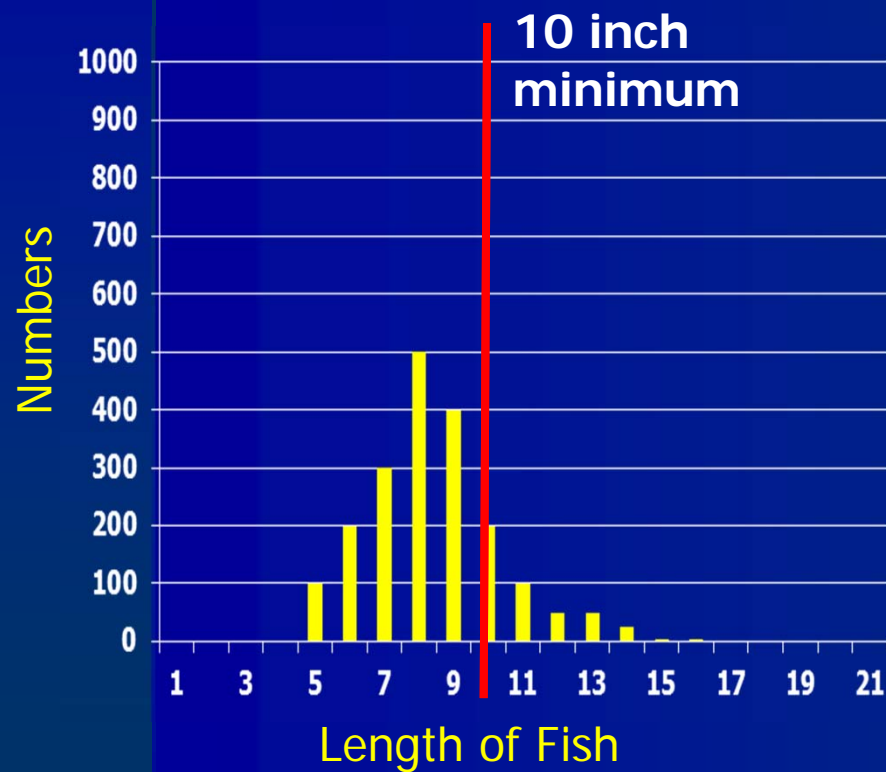
# Challenges: Availability

- 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.

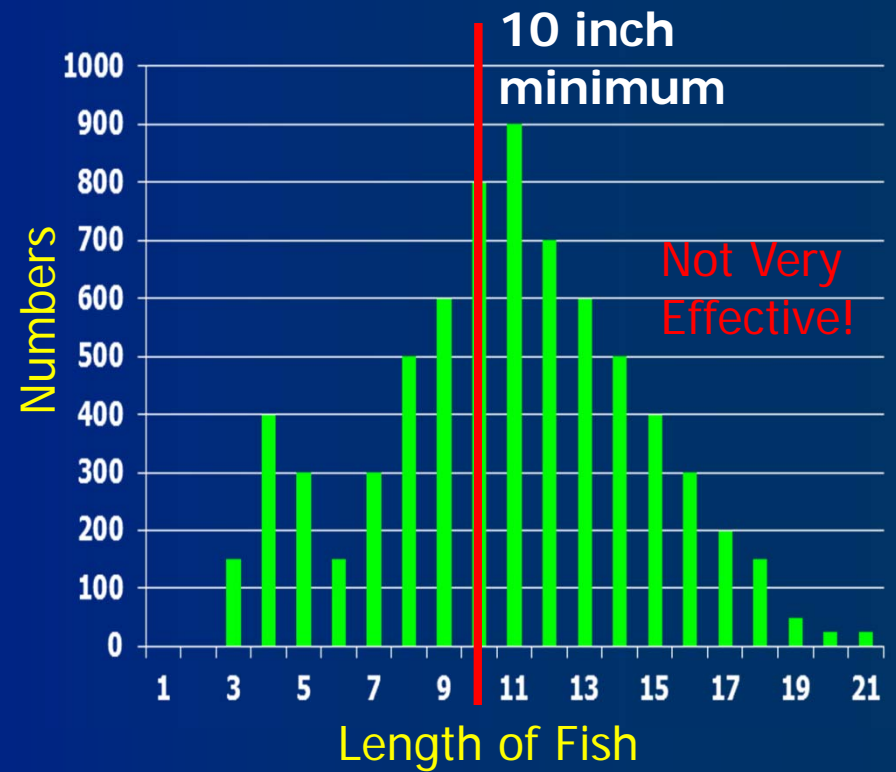


# Changing Paradigms

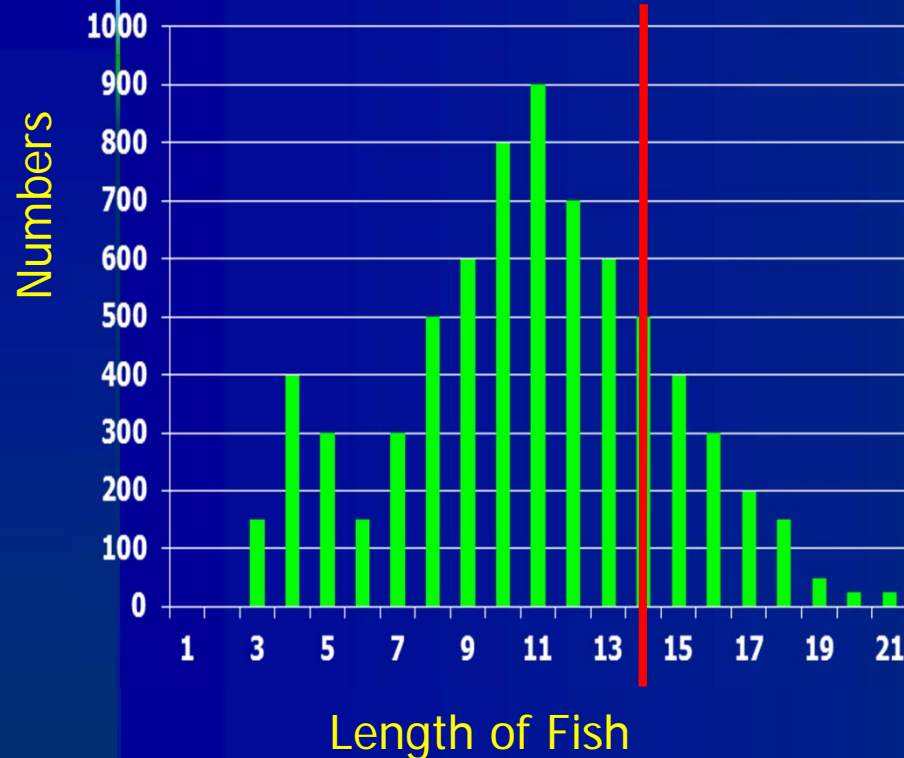
## Pre-rebuilding



## 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
<b>MA</b>	0.0000	0.0000	0.4620	0.3721	0.7992	0.0000
<b>RI</b>	0.0000	0.0001	0.0800	0.5265	0.9208	0.1033
<b>CT</b>	0.0000	0.0000	0.1319	1.3139	0.0176	0.1544
<b>NY</b>	0.0000	0.0000	0.4054	0.6294	0.4840	0.1101
<b>NJ</b>	0.0000	0.0062	0.9087	0.2418	0.4456	0.0330
<b>DE</b>	0.0000	0.0549	0.7852	0.3596	0.3970	0.0367
<b>MD</b>	0.0000	0.0104	0.9331	0.2449	0.3400	0.1069
<b>VA</b>	0.0000	0.0975	0.8508	0.2932	0.2522	0.1409
<b>NC<sup>a</sup></b>	0.2440	0.2928	0.4908	0.2976	0.0727	0.2445
<b>Coast</b>	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.