Science, Service, Stewardship

Recreational Data Timeliness Case Study: Northeast Region Black Sea Bass

Mike Ruccio, Sustainable Fisheries Division

NOAA Fisheries Service, Northeast Regional Office

Recreational Data Timeliness Workshop

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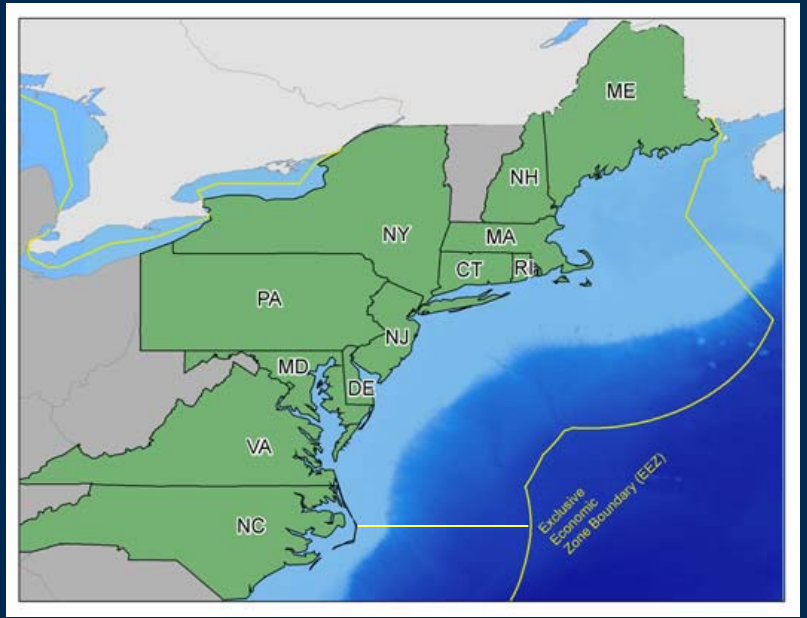
Northern Black Sea Bass Stock (*Centropristis striata*) General Background:

- Cape Hatteras, NC to U.S.-Canada Border
- Structure-oriented, protogynous hermaphrodite
- Temporal and spatial variability in distribution and harvest



- Joint management by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC)

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Primary Data Timeliness Issue:

- Inseason fishery performance monitoring:
  - Ability to monitor landings relative to established recreational harvest limit during fishing season
  - Modify measures to slow harvest, as needed, or close fishery when harvest limit is reached

19" Female Black Sea Bass; Cape Cod Massachusetts
Photo courtesy of Mark Terceiro, NEFSC

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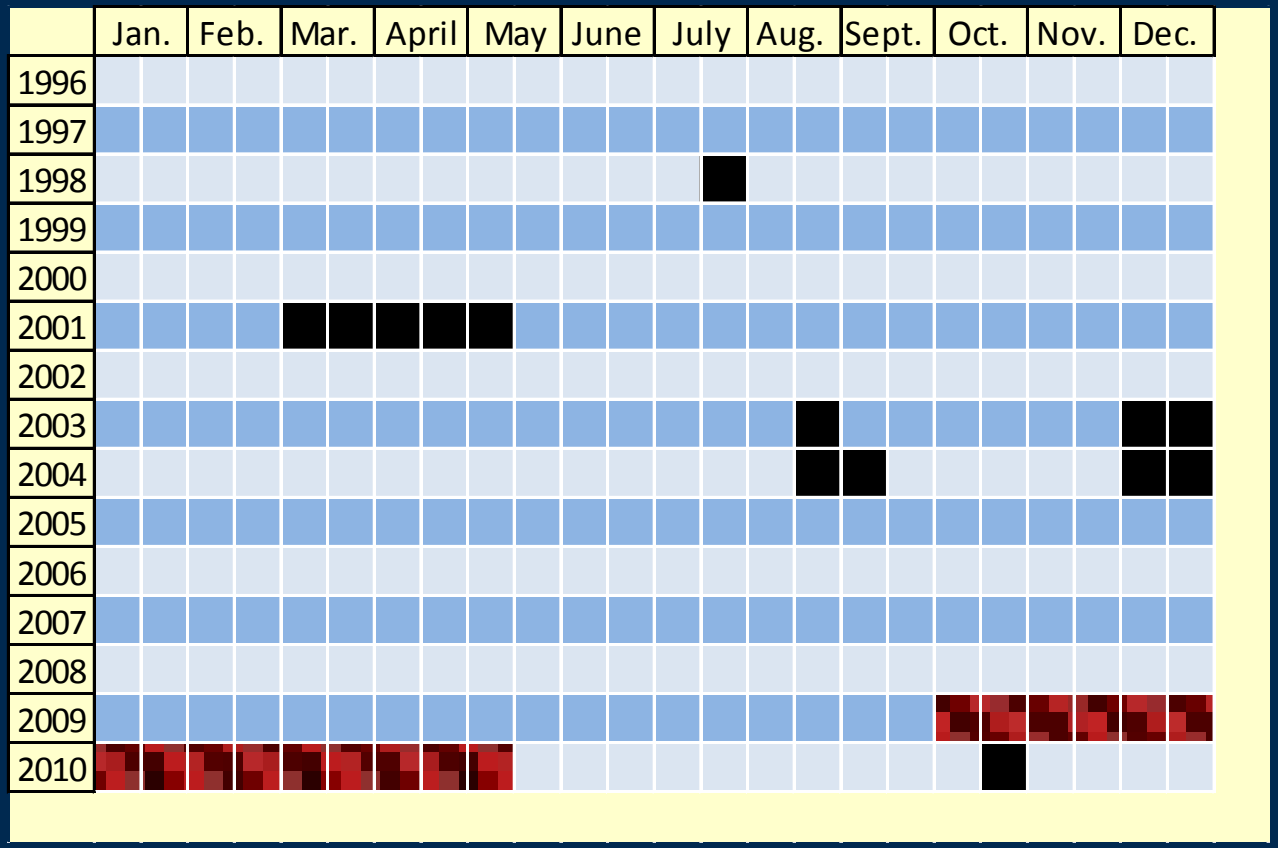
Inseason Fishery Performance Monitoring

Recreational fishing seasons, 1996-2010



Legend:

and =Open Periods

= Closed Periods

= Emergency Inseason Closure

Photo courtesy of Gary Shepherd, NEFSC

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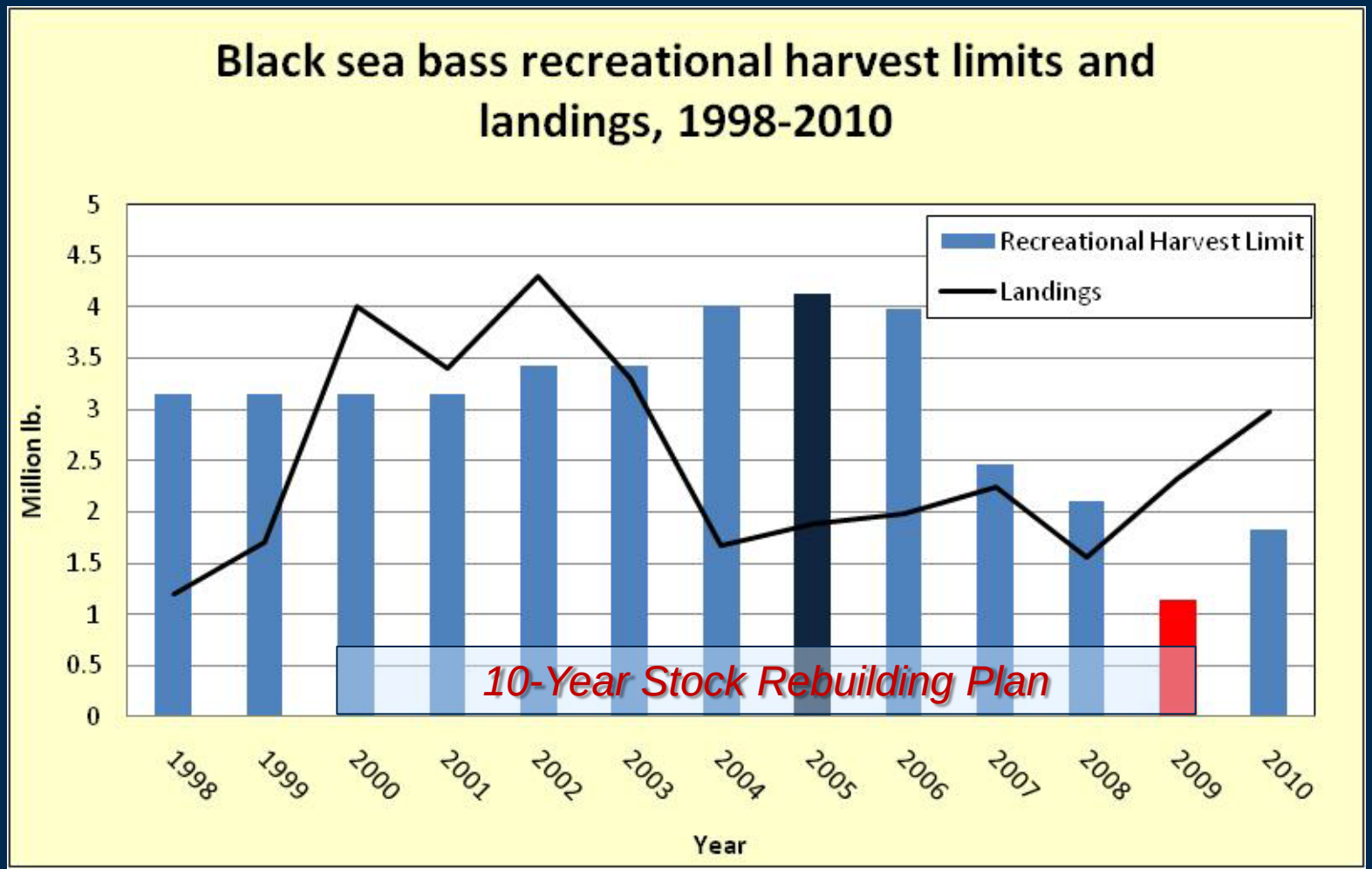
Inseason Fishery Performance Monitoring



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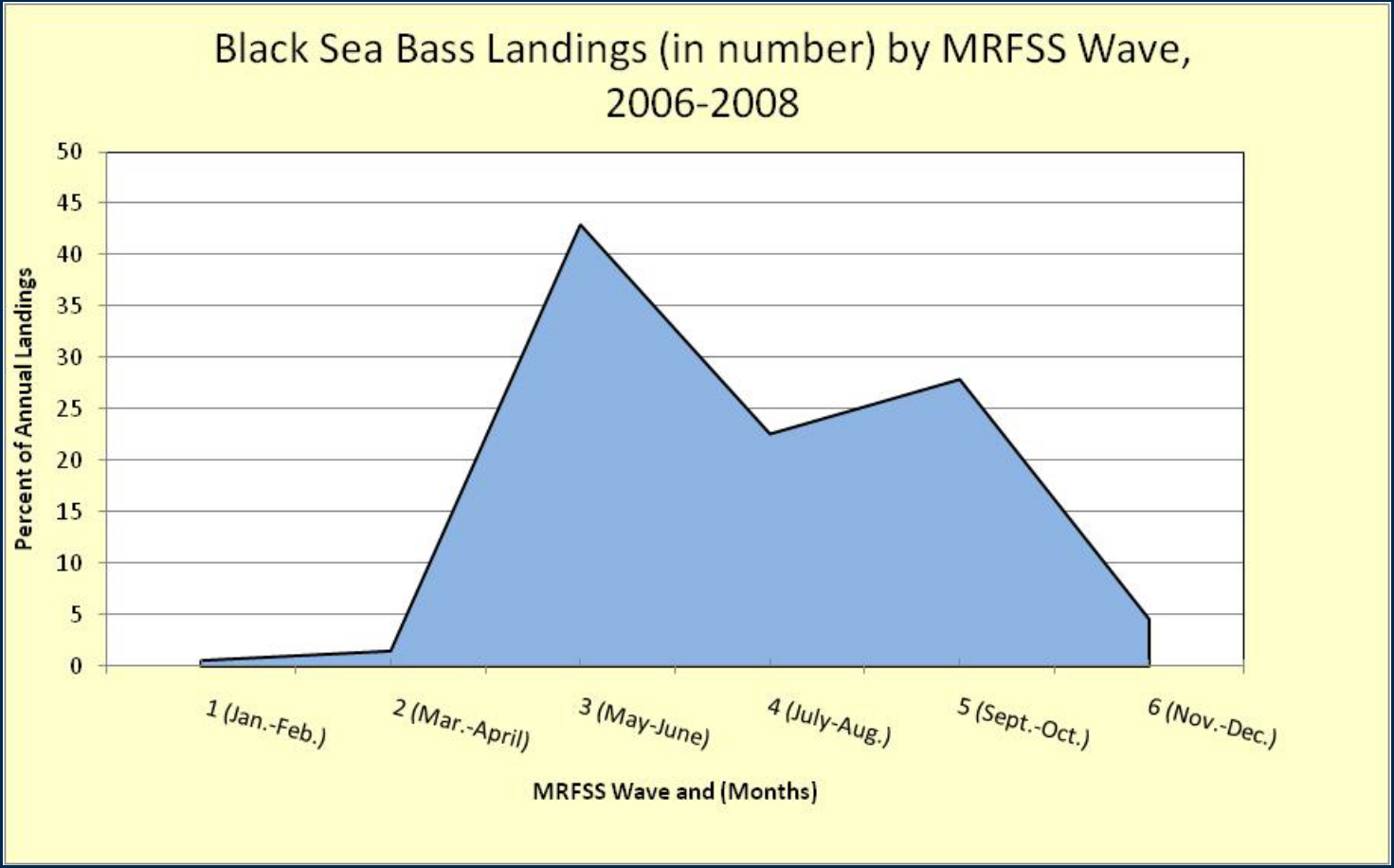
Inseason Fishery Performance Monitoring



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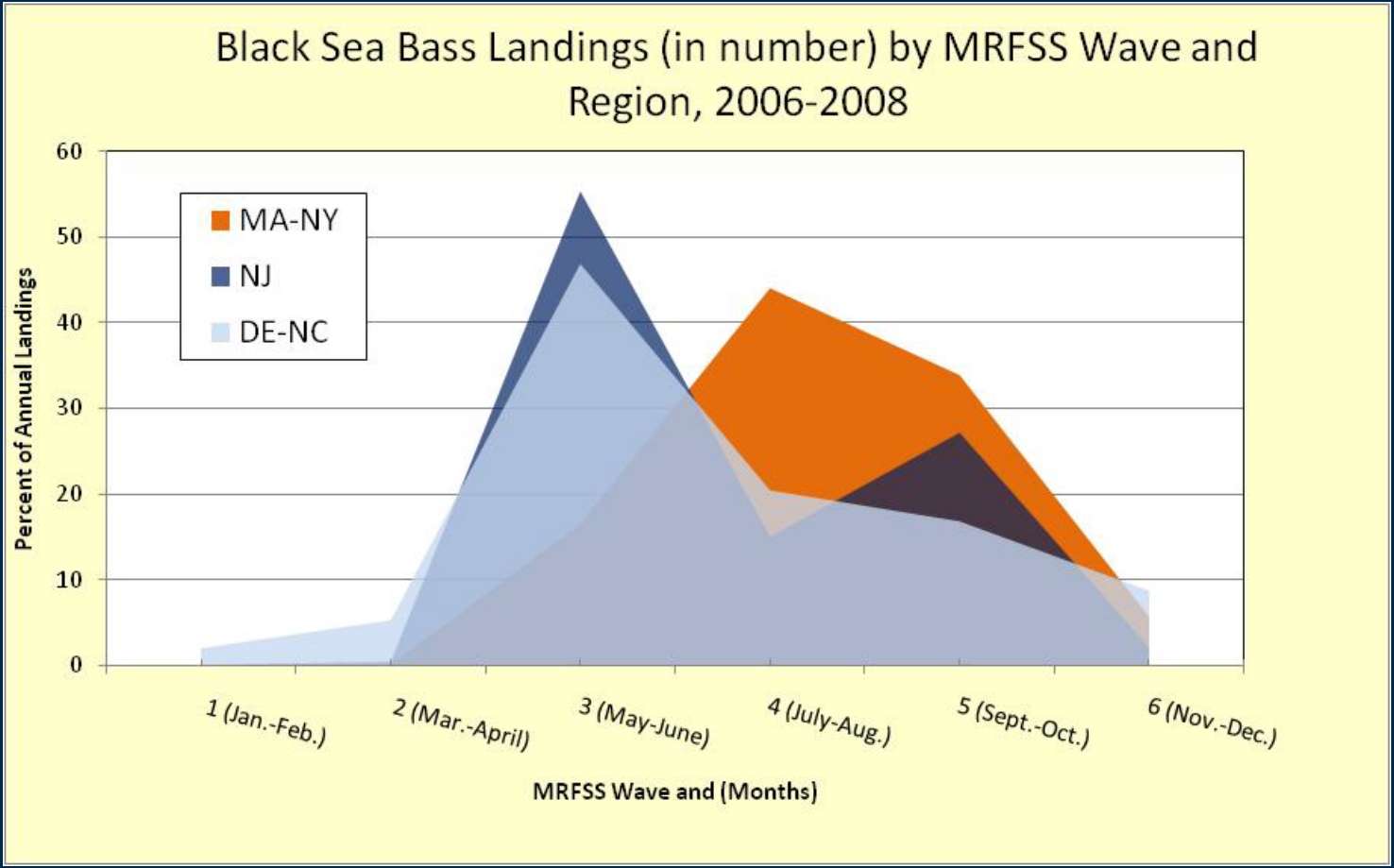
Inseason Fishery Performance Monitoring



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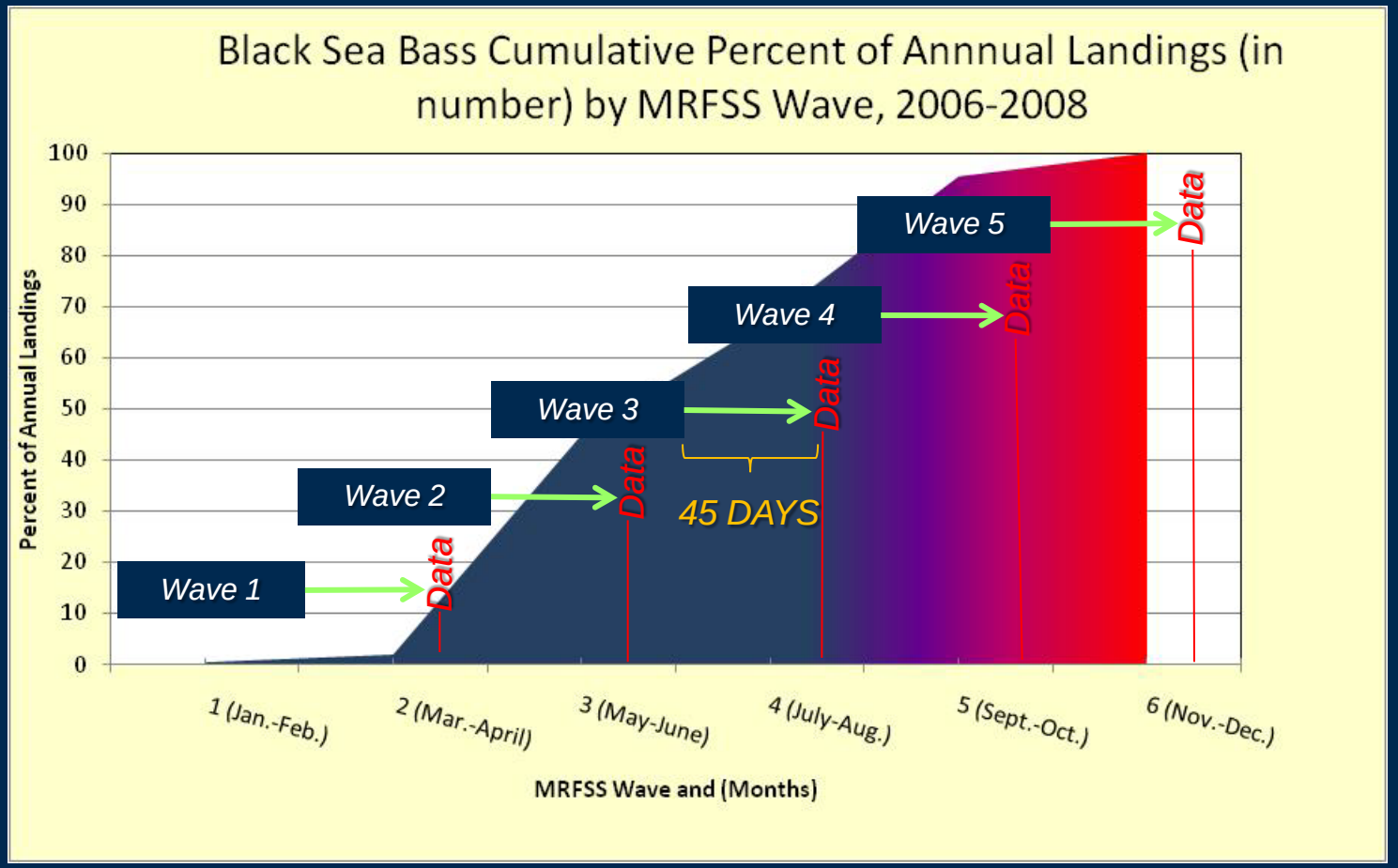
Inseason Fishery Performance Monitoring



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Inseason Fishery Performance Monitoring—Issues and Challenges

- Current data schedule provides two meaningful but untimely opportunities to assess fishery performance
- Significant pulse of landings in Wave 3 (May-June) but not a reliable predictor of Waves 4-6
- Data schedule (45 day lag from end of waves) makes reactive management difficult for Waves 4 and 5

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Inseason Fishery Performance Monitoring—2009 Emergency Closure

- Wave 3 (May-June) data, available mid-August, indicated 89 percent of the 1.14 million lb recreational harvest limit (quota) had been landed
- Significant landings historically occur in Waves 4-6, averaging 55 percent of annual coastwide harvest
- *Projected* landings for Waves 4-6 utilized, indicating potential overage of double or triple the landing limit
- *Actual* landings for 2009 were double the recreational harvest limit

Photo Courtesy of M. Terceiro, NEFSC

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Inseason Fishery Performance Monitoring—2009 Emergency Closure

- Closure was unprecedented in the Northeast Region
- Highly controversial action; applied to Federal waters only
- Closure challenged in Federal court, recent decision in favor of NMFS

Photo Courtesy of M. Terceiro, NEFSC

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Inseason Fishery Performance Monitoring—Closing Thoughts

- Two month waves make micro management difficult; issue compounded by 45-day data delay
- Shorter data periods and more timely release of data *may* improve the potential to manage inseason; however, some amount of projection and estimation will be required
- Improvements in timeliness could be applied differentially to ‘core’ fishing seasons
- The ability to modify measures (i.e., size, season, and bag limit) rather than close the black sea bass fishery would be widely preferred by anglers

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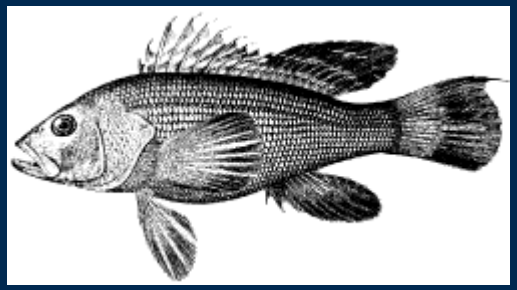
Questions?



Photos courtesy of Gary Shepherd and Mark Terceiro, Northeast Fisheries Science Center