

STOCK COMPLEX ASSEMBLAGES

The 2006 reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA) included a mandate to end overfishing. The revised National Standard 1 (NS1) guidelines of 2009 recommended a framework for accomplishing the MSA mandate, including criteria for managing stocks in a complex to reduce the risk of overfishing. Stock complex means a group of stocks that are sufficiently similar in geographic distribution, life history, and vulnerabilities to the fishery such that the impact of management actions on the stocks is similar. The framework recommended in the revised NS1 guidelines was incorporated in the groundfish fishery management plan (FMP) under Amendment 23, which was implemented in 2011.

The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) evaluated the structure of the current groundfish stock complexes and reported to the Council in March 2010 that improvements can be made in the composition of the stock complexes and that stock complex restructuring should be done to better align stock complexes according to the revised NS1 guidelines (see [Agenda Item E.4.b, Supplemental GMT Report, March 2010](#)). The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) also considered this issue and agreed with the GMT, adding that restructuring the Other Fish complex should be a top priority since that complex consists of species with different life history characteristics and depth distribution, many with poor information on historical catches (see [Agenda Item I.2.b, Supplemental SSC Report, April 2010](#)). In September 2011, a subgroup of the GMT and Council staff provided an analysis of stocks in the FMP and non-FMP stocks that are “in the fishery” in consideration of restructuring stock complexes (see [Agenda Item G.5.a, Attachment 5, September 2011](#)). The analysis evaluated each stock’s relative vulnerability to overfishing and a more appropriate clustering of stocks in complexes based on their distribution and co-occurrence in the fishery. The analysis also identified nine non-FMP species that are in the fishery and caught in equivalent amounts as some of the FMP species.

The analysis presented in September 2011 has been updated with other catch statistics analyzed to better inform stock complex restructuring (Agenda Item D.3.a, Attachment 1). Strawman stock complex alternatives for six species groups (nearshore rockfish, shelf rockfish, slope rockfish, flatfish, elasmobranchs, and roundfish) are presented in Attachment 1 and it is believed that alternatives for these six groups can be considered independently.

The Council task at this meeting is to decide a range of alternatives for detailed analysis and a decision on preliminary preferred alternatives for each species group, if possible. It is recommended that the Council make adequate progress at this meeting to enable a decision on final preferred alternatives for stock complexes at the June or September meetings. This will facilitate a more orderly process for deciding 2015-2016 harvest specifications, which is slated to start in September. The Council should consider SSC advice on the analyses presented in Attachment 1, as well as the recommendations of the GMT, Groundfish Advisory Subpanel, and public before taking action on this item.

Council Action:

1. **Adopt a Range of Alternatives for Restructuring Stock Complexes.**
2. **Decide preliminary preferred alternatives for restructuring stock complexes, if possible.**

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item D.3.a, Attachment 1: Initial Proposal (Proposed Action, Alternatives, and Considerations) for Restructuring Groundfish Stock Complexes.

Agenda Order:

- a. Agenda Item Overview John DeVore
- b. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies and Management Entities
- c. Public Comment
- d. **Council Action:** Adopt a Range of Alternatives and if Possible, Preliminary Preferred Alternatives, for Stock Complex Assemblages

PFMC
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