

STOCK COMPLEX RESTRUCTURING

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 Council initially considered strawman stock complex alternatives for six species groups (nearshore rockfish, shelf rockfish, slope rockfish, flatfish, cartilaginous fish, and roundfish) at the June 2013 meeting. At its June and September meetings, the Council considered but eliminated alternatives for all these species groups from further consideration in this management cycle, other than the cartilaginous fishes and roundfish. This decision addresses concern for the Other Fish complex, currently the most poorly constructed complex in the Groundfish Fishery Management Plan (FMP) since it is comprised of species with disparate life histories, ecological relationships, distributions, and vulnerabilities to overfishing. The first recommended separation of these species is to aggregate the cartilaginous fish species separately from the roundfish species. Further alternatives for these species groups are offered by the Groundfish Management Team (GMT) in Agenda Item H.4.b, GMT Report.

One of the proposed actions in consideration for restructuring the Other Fish complex is to consider bringing new species into the FMP. This may help to determine overfishing limits using catch-based methods for species that have been landed in generic species' market categories (e.g., unidentified skates). The Council decided to consider adding the non-FMP cartilaginous and roundfish species listed in the GMT's September report proposing stock complex alternatives for analysis ([Agenda Item G.8.b, Supplemental GMT Report 7, September 2013](#)). Further, the GMT is recommending the Council consider adding other species to the FMP since they are considered to be in the fishery or candidate Ecosystem Component species according to their analysis (Agenda Item H.4.b, GMT Report 2).

The Council task at this meeting is to adopt a final preferred alternative for groundfish stock complex restructuring. The Council should consider the recommendations of Council advisory bodies and the public before taking action on this item.

Council Action:

- 1. Adopt final preferred alternatives for restructuring stock complexes.**
- 2. Provide guidance on further refinement of stock complex restructuring for future cycles.**

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item H.4.b, GMT Report: Groundfish Management Team Report on Restructuring the Other Fish Complex.
2. Agenda Item H.4.b, GMT Report 2: Groundfish Management Team Report on the Classification of the Other Fish and Like Stocks in the Groundfish FMP.

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 Final Stock Complex Aggregations for Fisheries in 2015 and Beyond, and Provide Guidance on Further Refinement of Stock Complex Restructuring for Future Cycles

PFMC
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