


MEMORANDUM

TO: SSC Members  
FROM: Chris Oliver   
Executive Director  
DATE: September 26, 2006  
SUBJECT: Other Species Analysis – SSC only

ESTIMATED TIME 10 HOURS (all D-1 items)
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**ACTION REQUIRED**

- (e) Review plans for BSAI/GOA Groundfish FMP amendment to set specifications for “Other Species” groups

**BACKGROUND**

Council staff will consult with the SSC regarding preparation of an FMP amendment to eliminate the “other species” category and set specifications for squid, shark, skate, sculpin, and octopus (and possibly grenadier). This analysis was initiated by the Council in April 2005, based on recommendations from its Non-Target Species Committee, Groundfish Plan Teams, and Scientific and Statistical Committee. Currently, the two groundfish FMPs require that specifications be set for the “other species” assemblage (BSAI squid and GOA skate specifications are set separately). Management of the assemblage, however, may not offer sufficient protection from overfishing of the component groups because its overfishing level (OFL), allowable biological catch (ABC), and total allowable catch (TAC) is set equal to the sum of the estimates for the groups in the BSAI. The GOA FMP does not authorize the specification of an OFL and ABC for the assemblage; only a TAC is set at less than or equal to the sum of the four groups. Therefore, potentially one (or more) groups (or species within a group) are vulnerable to overfishing because they are managed under specifications that are set above the level deemed appropriate for that group.

In preparation for the development of the analysis:

1. Council staff has prepared an action plan (Item D-1(e)(1)) for the joint FMP amendment and draft outline of the EA/RIR/IRFA (Item D-1(e)(2)).
2. Alaska Fisheries Science Center staff has prepared draft assessment chapters for the groups in both FMP areas. Assessments for the BSAI shark, skate, sculpins, and octopus have been reviewed by the BSAI Groundfish Plan Team and the SSC since November 2004. Draft GOA assessments for sharks, squids, sculpins, and octopus were first reviewed by the SSC in February 2006, and have been revised for GOA Plan Team review in September and SSC review at this meeting. The Plan Teams and SSC will be requested to recommend OFLs and ABCs for each group (and possibly for some species) at their next meetings *for use in the analysis only*.
3. A discussion paper will be prepared for review in April 2007, on: 1) temporal/spatial fishery interactions between the groups and directed groundfish fisheries; and 2) effects of proposed group specifications on the status of the groups themselves and directed fisheries.
4. A preliminary draft analysis is tentatively scheduled for review at the October, 2007 Council meeting; initial review and final action could be scheduled for December 2007 and February 2008, respectively. Implementation could occur as early as 2009.

**ACTION PLAN TO SET SPECIFICATIONS FOR SQUID, SHARK, SKATE, SCULPIN, AND OCTOPUS  
August 10, 2006**

**PROPOSED ACTION** In April 2005, the Council initiated a joint BSAI/GOA Groundfish plan amendment to eliminate the "other species" category and set specifications for squid, shark, skate, sculpin, and octopus (and possibly grenadier), based on recommendations from its Groundfish Plan Teams, Scientific and Statistical Committee, and Non-Target Species Committee.

**PROBLEM STATEMENT/OBJECTIVE** The two groundfish FMPs require that specifications be set for the "other species" assemblage category (BSAI squid and GOA skate specifications are set separately). Management of the assemblage, however, may not offer sufficient protection from overfishing of the component groups because its overfishing level (OFL), allowable biological catch (ABC), and total allowable catch (TAC) is set equal to the sum of the estimates for the groups in the BSAI. The GOA FMP does not authorize the specification of an OFL and ABC for the assemblage; only a TAC is set at less than or equal to the sum of four groups. Therefore, any one (or more) groups (or species within a group) are vulnerable to overfishing because they are managed under specifications that are set above the level deemed appropriate for that group.

**ANALYSIS** An EA/RIR/IRFA for a joint BSAI/GOA plan amendment is required.

**RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES**

- Alternative 1. No action.
- Alternative 2. Set aggregate "other species" OFL and ABC for the GOA.
- Alternative 3. Break out BSAI skates from the other species category
- Alternative 4. Break out BSAI skates and BSAI and GOA sculpins from the other species category
- Alternative 5. Eliminate "other species" assemblage and manage squids, skates, sculpins, sharks, and octopi as separate assemblages under specification process
- Option: Add grenadiers and other non-specified species that are caught in the fishery.

**STAFF RESOURCES**

NPFMC Jane DiCosimo (project leader), Diana Stram and Diana Evans (EA)  
NOAA AKR Andy Smoker, Dave Ackley, Mary Furuness, Tom Pearson, Rance Morrison, Jen Hogan (discussion paper); Kristin Mabry, Steve Lewis (GIS); Melanie Brown (regional coordinator); Steve Davis, Sally Bibb (liaison)  
NOAA AFSC Anne Hollowed, Jennifer Ferdinand (liaison)  
NOAA GCAK John Lepore (legal review)  
Contractor TBA (RIR/IRFA)  
HQ No national policy implications

**TIMELINE TO IMPLEMENTATION**

August 2006 interagency staff meeting to draft the action plan for this analysis  
October 2006 Council, AP, and SSC reviews action plan and analytical outline  
November 2006- AFSC prepares stock assessments for the groups  
- Plan Teams recommend 2007-2008 group OFLs and ABCs for analysis  
December 2006 SSC recommends 2007-2008 groups OFLs and ABCs for analysis

March 2007 - SF In-Season Management staff prepares discussion paper on:  
 1) temporal/spatial fishery interactions between groups and directed groundfish fisheries; and  
 2) effects of proposed group specifications on groups and directed fisheries  
 - Non-Target Species Committee, Council, AP, and SSC reviews paper

April 2007 Council awards contract for RIR/IRFA

June 2007 Preliminary Review of draft analysis

September 2007 Non-Target Species Committee and Plan Teams review draft analysis

October 2007 Initial Review of EA/RIR/IRFA

December 2007 Final Action on EA/RIR/IRFA

Summer 2008 Publication of proposed rule

November 2008 Plan Teams recommend group OFLs and ABCs for 2009/2010

December 2008 Council (and AP and SSC) recommends group OFLs, ABCs, and TACs for 2009/2010

January 2009 Implementation of FMP amendments (no later than March 2009)

March 2009 Implementation of group specifications, with other groundfish specifications

**APPLICABLE LAWS NEPA, MSA, EO 12866, RFA**

**MAJOR ISSUES**

- Protect non-target species from overfishing as intermediate step in long range plan to revise policy
- Most non-target species are managed under Tier 5 or 6 (data poor), yet these specifications are managed equal to those set at Tier 1 or 3 (less uncertainty)
- Difficulty in managing small TACs, with CDQ and area suballocations
- Complex temporal/spatial patterns of how fleets shift effort between directed fisheries
- Historical patterns of how fleets respond to high levels of incidental catches  
 - Can not predict future patterns – case by case basis
- How SF –In Season Management responds when catches approach TAC, ABC, and OFL
- Geographic hotspots where high levels of incidental catches occur (e.g. BS octopus in Areas 517/519)
- Adding grenadier TAC would further constrain other groundfish TACs under BSAI OY cap
- Determining if specifications should be set for other non-specified species would unduly burden this analysis and compromise the proposed timeline (defer to “next step”)
- Would increase workload on recordkeeping and reporting systems (would be mitigated by electronic reporting), In-Season Management, Groundfish Plan Teams, and SSC
- Already increased workload on AFSC RACE, REFM, and Observer Programs
- No enforcement or legal issues identified

**Other Species Break-out Analysis  
Draft Outline for Environmental Assessment**

<u>Section</u>	<u>Preparer</u>
Chapter 1 Purpose and Need for Action	Council Staff
1.1 Introduction	
1.2 Action Area	
1.3 Purpose and Need for Action	
1.4 Relationship of this action to other federal laws and actions (MSA, NEPA/PSEIS, Consolidated Appropriations Act, etc.)	
1.5 Document Organization	
Chapter 2 Alternatives	Council Staff
2.0 Range of Alternatives	
2.0.1 Affected management areas	
2.0.2 Affected gear types	
2.1 Alternative 1. No Action	
Historical Overview of the BSAI and GOA Groundfish FMP and Other Species Complex (adapted from PSEIS)	
2.2 Alternative 2. Set aggregate "other species" OFL and ABC for the GOA.	
2.3 Alternative 3. Break out BSAI skates from the other species category	
2.4 Alternative 4. Break out BSAI skates and BSAI and GOA sculpins from the other species category	
2.5 Alternative 5. Eliminate "other species" assemblage and manage squids, skates, sculpins, sharks, and octopi as separate assemblages under specification process	
2.6 Option: Add grenadiers and other non-specified species that are caught in the fishery.	
2.7 Comparison of alternatives	
2.8 Alternatives considered and rejected	
Chapter 3 Affected Environment (Referencing PSEIS Affected Environment Chapter)	Council Staff
3.1 Approach and Methods	
3.2 Identification of Effects, Events, and Actions	
3.3 Biological Conditions	
3.3.1 Target Groundfish Species	
3.3.2 Non-Target Species (includes "other species" and non-specified species)	
3.3.3 Prohibited Species	
3.3.4 Forage Species	
3.3.5 Threatened and Endangered Species	
3.3.7 Habitat and Essential Fish Habitat	
3.3.8 Seabirds	
3.3.9 Marine Mammals	
3.3.10 Ecosystem Considerations	
3.4 Social and Economic Conditions	Staff/Contractor
3.4.1 History of the BSAI and GOA groundfish fisheries	
3.4.2 History of the BSAI and GOA groundfish FMP	
3.4.3 Harvesting Sector Profiles	
3.4.3.1 General fishery harvest patterns	
3.4.3.2 Vessel types used	
3.4.3.3 Gear types used	
3.4.4 Processing Sector Profiles	
3.4.4.1 General processing patterns	
3.4.5 Community Profiles	
3.4.5.1 General groundfish resource use in communities	

Chapter 4 Environmental and Economic Consequences of the Alternatives

4.1 Methodology for analysis	Staff/Contractor
4.1.1 Structure of analysis of alternatives	
4.1.2 Direct, Indirect, and Cumulative Impact Analysis	
4.2 Description of the Predicted effects of the alternatives on GOA groundfish fisheries practices	
4.2.1 Fleet composition and fishing practices ( <i>vessels, skippers, crew, owners</i> )	
4.2.2 Processing practices ( <i>shore-based, floaters, CPs</i> )	
4.2.3 Changes to Federal management	Staff
4.2.3.1 Alternative 1	
4.2.3.2 Alternative 2	
4.2.3.3 Alternative 3	
4.2.3.5 Summary of comparison of the effects of the alternatives	
4.2.4 Changes to State of Alaska groundfish fisheries	Staff
4.2.4.1 State water groundfish fisheries	
4.2.4.1.1 Alternative 1	
4.2.4.1.2 Alternative 2	
4.2.4.1.3 Alternative 3	
4.2.4.1.5 Summary of comparison of the effects of the alternatives	
4.2.4.2 Parallel groundfish fisheries	Staff
4.2.4.2.1 Alternative 1	
4.2.4.2.2 Alternative 2	
4.2.4.2.3 Alternative 3	
4.2.4.2.5 Summary of comparison of the effects of the alternatives	
4.3 Biological Impact Analysis	
4.3.1 Target groundfish fisheries	Staff
4.3.1.1 Alternative 1	
4.3.1.2 Alternative 2	
4.3.1.3 Alternative 3	
4.3.1.5 Summary of comparison of the effects of the alternatives	
4.3.2 Non-Target (includes "other species" and non-specified species)	Staff
4.3.4.1 Alternative 1	
4.3.4.2 Alternative 2	
4.3.4.3 Alternative 3	
4.3.4.5 Summary of comparison of the effects of the alternatives	
4.3.3 Prohibited Species	Staff
4.3.2.1 Alternative 1	
4.3.2.2 Alternative 2	
4.3.2.3 Alternative 3	
4.3.2.5 Summary of comparison of the effects of the alternatives	
4.3.3 Forage Species	Staff
4.3.3.1 Alternative 1	
4.3.3.2 Alternative 2	
4.3.3.3 Alternative 3	
4.3.3.5 Summary of comparison of the effects of the alternatives	
4.3.4 Threatened and Endangered Species	Staff
4.3.6.1 Alternative 1	
4.3.6.2 Alternative 2	
4.3.6.3 Alternative 3	
4.3.6.5 Summary of comparison of the effects of the alternatives	
4.3.5 Habitat and Essential Fish Habitat	Staff
4.3.7.1 Alternative 1	
4.3.7.2 Alternative 2	

	4.3.7.3 Alternative 3	
	4.3.7.5 Summary of comparison of the effects of the alternatives	
4.3.6	Seabirds	Staff
	4.3.8.1 Alternative 1	
	4.3.8.2 Alternative 2	
	4.3.8.3 Alternative 3	
	4.3.8.5 Summary of comparison of the effects of the alternatives	
4.3.7	Marine Mammals	Staff
	4.3.9.1 Alternative 1	
	4.3.9.2 Alternative 2	
	4.3.9.3 Alternative 3	
	4.3.9.5 Summary of comparison of the effects of the alternatives	
4.3.10	Ecosystem Considerations	Staff
	4.3.10.1 Alternative 1	
	4.3.10.2 Alternative 2	
	4.3.10.3 Alternative 3	
	4.3.10.5 Summary of comparison of the effects of the alternatives	
4.4	Economic and Socioeconomic Impact Analysis	Staff/Contractor
	4.4.1 Efficiency and capacity of the harvest sector	
	4.4.1.1 Alternative 1	
	4.4.1.2 Alternative 2	
	4.4.1.3 Alternative 3	
	4.4.1.5 Summary of comparison of the effects of the alternatives	
4.4.2	Efficiency and capacity of the processing sector	
	4.4.2.1 Alternative 1	
	4.4.2.2 Alternative 2	
	4.4.2.3 Alternative 3	
	4.4.2.5 Summary of comparison of the effects of the alternatives	
4.4.3	Distribution of benefits from the fisheries between harvesters and processors	
	4.4.3.1 Alternative 1	
	4.4.3.2 Alternative 2	
	4.4.3.3 Alternative 3	
	4.4.3.5 Summary of comparison of the effects of the alternatives	
4.4.4	Effects on entry to harvesting sector	
	4.4.4.1 Alternative 1	
	4.4.4.2 Alternative 2	
	4.4.4.3 Alternative 3	
	4.4.4.5 Summary of comparison of the effects of the alternatives	
4.4.5	Effects on entry to the processing sector	
	4.4.5.1 Alternative 1	
	4.4.5.2 Alternative 2	
	4.4.5.3 Alternative 3	
	4.4.5.5 Summary of comparison of the effects of the alternatives	
4.4.6	Effects on skippers and crews - wages and employment	
	4.4.6.1 Alternative 1	
	4.4.6.2 Alternative 2	
	4.4.6.3 Alternative 3	
	4.4.6.5 Summary of comparison of the effects of the alternatives	
4.4.7	Effects on consumers (products and prices)	
	4.4.7.1 Alternative 1	
	4.4.7.2 Alternative 2	
	4.4.7.3 Alternative 3	

4.4.7.5	Summary of comparison of the effects of the alternatives	
4.4.8	Effects on environmental benefits	
4.4.8.1	Alternative 1	
4.4.8.2	Alternative 2	
4.4.8.3	Alternative 3	
4.4.8.5	Summary of comparison of the effects of the alternatives	
4.4.9	Environmental Justice	
4.4.9.1	Alternative 1	
4.4.9.2	Alternative 2	
4.4.9.3	Alternative 3	
4.4.10	Monitoring and Enforcement	Staff
4.4.10.1	Alternative 1	
4.4.10.2	Alternative 2	
4.4.10.3	Alternative 3	
4.5	Summary of the cumulative effects of the alternatives	Staff/Contractor
4.5.1	Alternative 1	
4.5.2	Alternative 2	
4.5.3	Alternative 3	
Chapter 5:	List of Preparers	Staff
Chapter 6:	List of Agencies, organizations, and persons	Staff
Chapter 7:	Literature cited	Staff

**DRAFT**  
**Outline for Other Species Analysis**  
**Environmental Assessment/Regulatory Impact Review/initial Regulatory Flexibility Analysis**

**Chapter 1 Purpose and Need for Action**

- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Purpose and Need for Action
- 1.3 Relationship of This Action to Other Federal Laws and Actions (MSA, NEPA/PSEIS, Consolidated Appropriations Act, Etc.)
- 1.4 Document Organization

**Chapter 2 Alternatives**

- 2.0 Description of Alternatives
  - 2.1 Alternative 1. No Action
    - Historical Overview of the BSAI and GOA Groundfish FMP and Other Species Complex
  - 2.2 Alternative 2. Set Aggregate "Other Species" OFL and ABC for the GOA
  - 2.3 Alternative 3. Break Out BSAI Skates from the Other Species Category
  - 2.4 Alternative 4. Break Out BSAI Skates and BSAI and GOA Sculpins from the Other Species Category
  - 2.5 Alternative 5. Eliminate "Other Species" Assemblage and Manage Squids, Skates, Sculpins, Sharks, and Octopi as Separate Assemblages Under Specification Process
  - 2.6 Option. Add Grenadiers and Other Non-Specified Species that Are Caught in the Fishery.
  - 2.7 Comparison of Alternatives
  - 2.8 Alternatives Considered and Rejected

**Chapter 3 Affected Environment**

- 3.1 North Pacific Environment
- 3.2 Harvest Specifications and in-Season Management
- 3.3 Reasonably Foreseeable Future Actions
  - 3.3.1 Developments in Ecosystem-Sensitive Management
  - 3.3.2 Developments in Fisheries Rationalization
  - 3.3.3 Developments in Traditional Management Tools
  - 3.3.4 Actions by Other Federal, State, and International Agencies
  - 3.3.5 Private Actions
- 3.4 Species Listed Under the Endangered Species Act

**Chapter 4 BSAI and GOA Other Species Assemblages**

- 4.0 History of the BSAI and GOA "Other Species" Assemblages
  - 4.1 BSAI and GOA Sharks
  - 4.2 BSAI Skates
  - 4.3 GOA Squids
  - 4.4 BSAI and GOA Sculpins
  - 4.5 BSAI and GOA Octopuses
  - 4.6 BSAI and GOA Grenadiers
  - 4.7 BSAI and GOA Other Non-Specified Species

**Chapter 5 Target Groundfish Species**

- 5.1 Gadoids, Flatfish, and Other Species
  - 5.1.1 Gadoid Resource
  - 5.1.2 Flatfish Resource
  - 5.1.3 Rockfish Resource
  - 5.1.4 Impacts of Alternative Harvest Strategies on Gadoids, Flatfish, and Rockfish Resources



**5.1.5 Reasonably Foreseeable Future Actions that May Affect the Impact of Groundfish Fishing on Gadoids, Flatfish, and Rockfish Resources**

**Chapter 6 Non-Specified Species**

**6.1 Non-Specified Species Resource**

**6.2 Impacts of Alternative Harvest Strategies on Non-Specified Species**

**6.3 Reasonably Foreseeable Future Actions that May Affect the Impact of Groundfish Fishing on Non-Specified Species**

**Chapter 7 Prohibited Species**

**7.1 Prohibited Species Resource**

**7.2 Impacts of Alternative Harvest Strategies on Prohibited Species**

**7.3 Reasonably Foreseeable Future Actions that May Affect the Impact of Groundfish Fishing on Prohibited Species**

**Chapter 8 Forage Species**

**8.1 Forage Fish Resource**

**8.2 Impacts of Alternative Harvest Strategies on Forage Fish**

**8.3 Reasonably Foreseeable Future Actions that May Affect the Impact of Groundfish Fishing on Forage Fish**

**Chapter 9 Seabirds**

**9.1 Seabird Resource**

**9.2 Impacts of Alternative Harvest Strategies on Seabirds**

**9.3 Reasonably Foreseeable Future Actions that May Affect the Impact of Groundfish Fishing on Seabirds**

**Chapter 10 Marine Mammals**

**10.1 Marine Mammals in the Action Area**

**10.2 ESA Consultations for Marine Mammals**

**10.3 Impacts of Alternatives**

**10.3.1 Incidental Take/Entanglement in Fishing Operations and Marine Debris**

**10.3.2 Harvest of Prey Species**

**10.3.3 Disturbance Effects**

**10.4 Reasonably Foreseeable Future Actions that May Affect the Impacts of the Alternatives on Marine Mammals**

**Chapter 11 Ecosystem Considerations**

**11.1 Key Ecosystem Relationships**

**11.2 Impacts of Alternative Harvest Strategies on Ecosystem Relationships**

**11.3 Reasonably Foreseeable Future Actions that May Affect the Impact of Groundfish Fishing on Ecosystem Relationships**

**Chapter 12 Habitat and Essential Fish Habitat**

**12.1 Description of the Action**

**12.2 Impacts of Alternatives on EFH**

**12.3 Reasonably Foreseeable Future Actions that May Affect the Impact of the Groundfish Fisheries on EFH**

**12.4 Essential Fish Habitat Mitigation**

**Chapter 13 Social and Economic Impacts**

**13.1 Persons that May Be Affected by This Action**

**13.2 Gross Revenue Impacts**

**13.3 Cost Impacts**

- 13.4 Net Returns
- 13.5 Safety and Health Impacts
- 13.6 Impacts on Related Fisheries
- 13.7 Consumer Effects
- 13.8 Management and Enforcement Costs
- 13.9 Excess Capacity
- 13.10 Bycatch and Discards
- 13.11 Communities
- 13.12 Reasonably Foreseeable Future Actions that May Alter the Social and Economic Impacts of This Action

#### Chapter 14 Regulatory Impact Review

- 14.1 Problem Statement
- 14.2 Background
- 14.3 Description of the Alternatives
- 14.4 Existing Conditions in the Fishery
  - 14.4.1 Management of the fisheries
  - 14.4.2 Stocks, biology, and environmental conditions
  - 14.4.3 Harvest sector
  - 14.4.4 Processing sector
  - 14.4.5 Ex-vessel pricing and harvester/processor relationships
  - 14.4.6 Product markets
  - 14.4.7 Community and social conditions
- 14.5 Analysis of the alternatives
  - 14.5.1 Effects on Management, Monitoring, and Enforcement
  - 14.5.2 Effects on Harvest Participation and Fishing Practices
    - 14.5.2.1 Vessel Types
    - 14.5.2.2 Gear Types
  - 14.5.3 Effects on Participation in the Processing Sector
  - 14.5.4 Effects on Efficiency
  - 14.5.5 Effects on Overall Production Efficiency
  - 14.5.6 Effects on Consumers
  - 14.5.7 Effects on Management, Monitoring, and Enforcement Costs
  - 14.5.8 Effects on Environmental/Non-Use Benefits
  - 14.5.9 Effects on Net Benefits to the Nation
  - 14.5.10 Effects on Entry into the Fisheries
  - 14.5.11 Effects on Fishing Crew
  - 14.5.12 Effects on Safety
  - 14.5.13 Effects on Other Fisheries

#### Chapter 15 Regulatory Flexibility Analysis

- 5.1 Introduction
  - 5.1.1 Definition of a Small Entity
- 5.2 A Description of the Reasons Why Action by the Agency Is Being Considered
- 5.3 Objectives of, and the Legal Basis For, the Proposed Rule
- 5.4 A Description of, and Where Feasible, an Estimate of the Number of Small Entities to Which the Proposed Rule Will Apply
- 5.5 A Description of the Projected Reporting, Record Keeping, and Other Compliance Requirements of the Proposed Rule
- 5.6 Identification, to the Extent Practicable, of All Relevant Federal Rules That May Duplicate, Overlap, Or Conflict with the Proposed Rule
- 5.7 A Description of Any Significant Alternatives to the Proposed Rule that Accomplish the Stated Objectives of

The Magnuson-Stevens Act and Any Other Applicable Statutes, and that Would Minimize Any Significant Adverse Economic Impact of the Proposed Rule on Small Entities

Chapter 16 List of Preparers

Chapter 17 List of Agencies, Organizations, and Persons

Chapter 18 Literature Cited