**PROPOSED ACTION** The Council initiated action in June 2008 to move grenadiers from the non-specified category to the target category based on recommendations from its Groundfish Plan Teams, Scientific and Statistical Committee, and Non-Target Species Committee. In April 2010 the Council requested that this proposed action be included in a discussion paper, along with other trailing amendments, following final action to approve Annual Catch Limit (ACL) amendments to the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands (BSAI) and Gulf of Alaska (GOA) groundfish fishery management plans (FMPs) [http://www.alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/npfmc/current_issues/ACL/ACL_motion410_discpaper.pdf](http://www.alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/npfmc/current_issues/ACL/ACL_motion410_discpaper.pdf). A trailing amendment to consider revising management of BSAI and GOA octopuses was prioritized for action in 2011. The joint groundfish plan teams concurred with the lead grenadier assessment author to consider moving GOA grenadiers in the fishery and BSAI grenadiers into the ecosystem component category. The Council may choose to schedule action for grenadiers in 2011.

Grenadiers (or rattails) are deep-sea fishes that are especially abundant on the continental slope, although some species are found at abyssal depths. At least seven species of grenadier are known to occur in Alaskan waters, but only three are commonly found at depths shallow enough to be encountered in commercial fishing operations or in trawl surveys. Giant grenadiers are the most abundant of seven species of grenadiers known to occur in Alaska. It has the shallowest depth distribution on the continental slope. Very little is known about the life history of giant grenadier. The habitat and ecological relationships of giant grenadier are likewise little known and uncertain.

**PROBLEM STATEMENT/OBJECTIVE** Grenadiers are not included in the groundfish FMPs for either the BSAI or GOA. There are no limits on their catch or retention, no reporting requirements, and no official record of their catch.

Prior to the ACL amendments, grenadiers were considered a non-specified species, which were a “residual category of species and species groups of no current or foreseeable economic value or ecological importance, which are taken in the groundfish fishery as accidental bycatch and are in no apparent danger of depletion” and for which “virtually no data exists (that) would allow population assessments.” Previously the FMPs also defined the “other species” assemblages as including species of “only slight economic value and are generally not targeted upon, but which are either significant components of the ecosystem or have economic potential.” Based on these definitions, Groundfish Plan Teams recommended that grenadiers should be moved into the groundfish FMPs and managed either “in the fishery” or in the ecosystem component category. Because of their abundance on the slope, giant grenadiers are of great ecological importance in this habitat, and they also hold economic potential. In addition, considerable information on giant grenadier exists that can be used for stock assessment (Tier 5 status). In 2010 the joint teams reiterated its previous recommendations that the Council prioritize this for action in 2011. The SSC also has recommended that the Council consider revising management of grenadiers.

**ANALYSIS** An EA is required to amend the groundfish FMPs to add grenadiers as a target category or to move them to a new ecosystem component category.

**RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES**

Alternative 1. (The No Action Alternative) Grenadiers would not be included in the BSAI and GOA Groundfish FMPs.

Alternative 2. Manage grenadiers in the fishery in the BSAI and GOA Groundfish FMPs.

Alternative 3. Manage grenadiers in the ecosystem category in the BSAI and GOA Groundfish FMPs.
APPLICABLE LAWS NEPA, MSA

STAFF RESOURCES
NPFMC Jane DiCosimo
NOAA AKR Melanie Brown, Tom Pearson, Josh Keaton
NOAA AFSC Dave Clausen
NOAA Habitat No habitat implications
NOAA PR No protected resource implications
NOAA GCAK Maura Sullivan
HQ Galen Tromble

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
Dec 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 ACLs on groups and directed fisheries
June 2007 interagency staff meeting to revise the action plan for this analysis
Sept 2007 Groundfish Plan Teams review AKR staff discussion paper on fishery interactions
October 2007 SSC and AP reviews revised action plan and discussion paper
February 2008 Council reviews action plan and discussion papers and identifies preliminary priorities
April 2008 Non-Target Species Committee recommends priorities for action
June 2008 Council reviews committee recommendations and approves draft action plan
June 2009 Interagency action plan meeting
August 2009 AFSC vulnerability analysis released
Nov 2010 Plan Teams review revised joint grenadier stock assessment for use in EA
September 2011 Plan Teams reconfirm interest in proposed action; NMFS AKRO offers to prepare discussion paper on potential management measures if grenadiers are moved to Ecosystem Component Category
June 2012 Council review of NMFS discussion paper
September 2012 Non-Target Species Committee (T)/Plan Team review of paper
? Council, AP, and SSC reviews initial review draft
? Council and AP reviews public review draft and selects preferred alternative
? Submission for NMFS review
September 201? Plan Teams recommend proposed OFLs and ABCs (T)
October 201? Council adopts proposed harvest specifications (T)
November 201? Plan Team recommends final OFLs and ABCs (T)
December 201? Council adopts final harvest specifications (T)
? Approval by the Secretary; implementation of FMP amendments

MAJOR ISSUES
- Consideration of best management to protect grenadier stocks
- Economic consequences of potential closures of target fisheries with incidental grenadiers catches
- Temporal/spatial patterns of how fleets shift effort between directed fisheries to avoid incidental catch
- Geographic hotspots where high levels of incidental catches occur
- Would increase workload on NMFS/ Difficulty in managing small TACs and area suballocations