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MRAG Americas, Inc.

Alaska Flatfish

RFM 4th Surveillance Audit and 2nd Reassessment Announcement

February 12, 2024

MRAG Americas, Inc. is pleased to announce the beginning of an RFM 4th surveillance audit and 2nd reassessment of the **Alaska flatfish complex fishery**. The assessment will evaluate the fishery for compliance with the Responsible Fisheries Management Fishery Standard.

Table 1.	Relevant RFM Program and scheme documents, including applicable versions and their usage		
Relevant RFM Program	Certified Seafood Collaborative (CSC Responsible Fisheries Management (RFM) Certification Program		
Relevant RFM Program Documents	Document Title	Version	Usage
	RFM Procedure 2: Application to Certification Procedures for the RFM Fishery Standard	V6	Process requirements
	Responsible Fisheries Management Certification Program Fisheries Standard	V1.3 4 th Surveillance, V2.1 Reassessment	Standard
	Responsible Fisheries Management Certification Program Guidance to Performance Evaluation for the Certification of Wild Capture and Enhanced Fisheries in North America	V2.1	Guidance to Standard

Table 2 – Fishery Announcement	
1	Fishery name
	Alaska flatfish complex fishery
2	Certification cycle, assessment type and number
	2 nd reassessment, 3 rd full assessment
3	Statement that the fishery is within scope
	MRAG Americas confirms that the fishery under assessment (as defined by the Units of Assessment described below) is within scope of the relevant RFM Fisheries Standard.
4	Unit(s) of Assessment – UoA(s)
	Geographical Area(s)
	Gulf of Alaska (GOA) and Bering Sea & Aleutian Islands (BSAI) within Alaska jurisdiction (200 nautical miles EEZ)
	Management System
	National Marine Fisheries Service North Pacific Fishery Management Council National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
	Fishing gear(s)/method(s)
	Bottom trawl, longline, pot and jig gear
	Client Group
	Alaska Seafood Cooperative
	Species (common name/scientific name)
	Alaska plaice (<i>Pleuronectes quadrituberculatus</i>) Arrowtooth flounder (<i>Atheresthes stomias</i>) Flathead sole (<i>Hippoglossoides elassodon</i>) Greenland turbot (<i>Reinhardtius hippoglossoides</i>) Kamchatka flounder (<i>Atheresthes evermanni</i>) Northern rock sole (<i>Lepidopsetta polyxstra</i>) Yellowfin sole (<i>Limanda aspera</i>) Southern rock sole (<i>Lepidopsetta bilineatus</i>) Rex sole (<i>Glyptocephalus zachirus</i>)
	Stock(s)
	Alaska plaice (<i>Pleuronectes quadrituberculatus</i>) BSAI Arrowtooth flounder (<i>Atheresthes stomias</i>) BSAI & GOA Flathead sole (<i>Hippoglossoides elassodon</i>) BSAI & GOA Greenland turbot (<i>Reinhardtius hippoglossoides</i>) BSAI Kamchatka flounder (<i>Atheresthes evermanni</i>) BSAI Northern rock sole (<i>Lepidopsetta polyxstra</i>) BSAI & GOA Yellowfin sole (<i>Limanda aspera</i>) BSAI Southern rock sole (<i>Lepidopsetta bilineatus</i>) GOA Rex sole (<i>Glyptocephalus zachirus</i>) GOA
5	Proposed team leader
	Ms. Erin Wilson joined MRAG Americas, Inc. in February 2015, where she currently works as a Senior Fisheries Consultant and Program Manager. She has collaborated as a team member on several MSC assessments and is team leader for all the Alaska Groundfish fisheries and the West Coast Groundfish limited entry trawl fishery. She provides routine audit services for the International Seafood Sustainability Foundation (ISSF) and is the MRAG Project Manager for the ISSF ProActive Vessel Registry (PVR). Prior to joining MRAG Americas, she spent 2 years working at the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) as a Natural Resource Specialist and Biological Technician for the Oregon Marine Reserves. She has collaborated on a multitude of projects that focus on marine science and conservation in both a biological

	<p>and social science aspect. She received a M.Sc. in Marine Resource Management from Oregon State University and a B.S. in Zoology from Colorado State University, along with a Spanish minor.</p> <p>MRAG Americas confirms Ms. Wilson has no conflicts of interest in relation to the fishery under assessment.</p>
6	Proposed team members
	<p>Ms. Amanda Stern-Pirlot is an M.Sc. graduate of the University of Bremen, Center for Marine Tropical Ecology (ZMT) in marine ecology and fisheries biology. Ms. Stern-Pirlot joined MRAG Americas in mid-June 2014 as MSC Certification Manager (now Director of the Fishery Certification Division) and is currently serving on several different assessment teams as team leader and team member. She has worked together with other scientists, conservationists, fisheries managers and producer groups on international fisheries sustainability issues for over 15 years. With the Institute for Marine Research (IFM-GEOMAR) in Kiel, Germany, she led a work package on simple indicators for sustainable within the EU-funded international cooperation project INCOFISH, followed by five years within the Standards Department at the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) in London, developing standards, policies and assessment methods informed by best practices in fisheries management around the globe. Most recently she has worked with the Alaska pollock industry as a resources analyst, within the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council process, focusing on bycatch and ecosystem-based management issues, and managing the day-to-day operations of the offshore pollock cooperative. She has co-authored a dozen publications on fisheries sustainability in the developing world and the functioning of the MSC as an instrument for transforming fisheries to a sustainable basis.</p> <p>MRAG Americas confirms she has no conflicts of interest in relation to the fishery under assessment.</p>
	<p>Dr. Giuseppe Scarcella is an experienced fishery scientist and population analyst and modeller, with wide knowledge and experience in the assessment of demersal stocks. He holds a first degree in Marine Biology and Oceanography (110/110) from the Università Politecnica delle Marche, and a Ph.D. in marine Ecology and Biology from the same university, based on a thesis "Age and growth of two rockfish in the Adriatic Sea". After his degree he was offered a job as project scientist in several research programs about the structure and composition of fish assemblage in artificial reefs, off-shore platform and other artificial habitats in the Italian Research Council – Institute of Marine Science of Ancona (CNR-ISMAR, now CNR-IRBIM). During the years of employment at CNR-ISMAR he has gained experience in benthic ecology, statistical analyses of fish assemblage evolution in artificial habitats, fisheries ecology and impacts of fishing activities, stock assessment, otolith analysis, population dynamic and fisheries management. During the same years he attended courses of uni- multivariate statistics and stock assessment. He is also actively participating in the scientific advice process of FAO GFCM in the Mediterranean Sea. At the moment he is member of the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries for the European Commission (STECF).</p> <p>He is author and co-author of more than 50 scientific paper peer reviewed journals and more than 150 national and international technical reports, most of them focused on the evolution of fish assemblages in artificial habitats and stock assessment of demersal species. For some years now, Dr Scarcella has been working in fisheries certification applying the Marine Stewardship Council standard for sustainable fisheries, currently concentrating on Principle 1 of the Standard. Furthermore, Dr Scarcella holds the credential as Fishery team leader (MSC v2.0) and he completed the MSC procedure training 2.1. He also holds the credential as certifier of Responsible Fisheries Management (RFM).</p> <p>MRAG Americas confirms he has no conflicts of interest in relation to the fishery under assessment.</p> <p>A discussion between team members regarding conflict of interest and biases was held and none were identified.</p>
7	Site Visit
	<p>A site visit for the fishery will occur in Seattle, WA and surrounding areas on March 13, 2024 and will occur in conjunction with the 4th surveillance audit.</p> <p>Stakeholders who would like to submit information or request a meeting with the assessment team are asked to do so by 17:00 UTC on March 12, 2024.</p> <p>Contact: MRAG Americas, Inc.</p>

	<p>certification@mragamericas.com Amanda Stern-Pirlot MRAG Americas, Inc. 8950 Martin Luther King Jr. St. N., Suite 202 St. Petersburg FL 33702 Ph: 1-206-669-0439 Fax: 1-727-563-0207</p> <p>To schedule a meeting please provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Your name and contact details• Your association with the fishery• The issues you would like to discuss• Where and when you would like to meet.
8	Stakeholder opportunities
	<p>As part of this assessment, only registered stakeholders will be afforded an opportunity to provide input on a public draft of the assessment report which will be provided for comment when the defined 30-day period in which registered stakeholders may comment is reached.</p> <p>As this stakeholder input opportunity is limited to registered stakeholders only, interested stakeholders should ensure they register as outlined below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Information on the RFM stakeholder process can be found here: https://rfmcertification.org/stakeholder-involvement/- Contact MRAG Americas as outlined above requesting to be registered as a stakeholder for the fishery.- The above deadline for requesting to consult with the assessment team and the details stakeholders should provide when requesting to be registered as a stakeholder shall apply here.

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Submitted by: Karleen Wagner

Date: February 12, 2024

Appendix 1: Summary of CVs of team leader and team members

The assessment team for this assessment consists of:

- **Erin Wilson** (lead assessor and primarily responsible for fisheries management)
- **Amanda Stern-Pirlot** (assessor and primarily responsible for fisheries impact to the ecosystem)
- **Giuseppe Scarcella** (assessor and primarily responsible for stock assessment and fish biology)

Ms. Erin Wilson joined MRAG Americas, Inc. in February 2015, where she currently works as a Senior Fisheries Consultant and Program Manager. She has collaborated as a team member on several MSC assessments and is team leader for all the Alaska Groundfish fisheries and the West Coast Groundfish limited entry trawl fishery. She provides routine audit services for the International Seafood Sustainability Foundation (ISSF) and is the MRAG Project Manager for the ISSF ProActive Vessel Registry (PVR). Prior to joining MRAG Americas, she spent 2 years working at the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) as a Natural Resource Specialist and Biological Technician for the Oregon Marine Reserves. She has collaborated on a multitude of projects that focus on marine science and conservation in both a biological and social science aspect. She received a M.Sc. in Marine Resource Management from Oregon State University and a B.S. in Zoology from Colorado State University, along with a Spanish minor.

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