

# The Paradox of Fairness: The Impact of Escalating Complexity on Fishery Management: Extended Abstract

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**Abstract.** In the US and Canada, a commitment to fairness leads to overly complex management regimes that contribute to overexploitation. We illustrate the pattern of increasing complexity in the Scotia/Fundy groundfish fishery in Atlantic Canada, the New England groundfish fishery and the Fraser River salmon fishery in British Columbia, all of which have collapsed or declined in recent years. Increasing complexity proceeds inexorably in publicly managed fisheries. However, the alternatives of transferring ownership to individual fishers or fishing communities appear not to be viable solutions. Rather, we suggest a co-management approach which may be unfair to some fishers but will greatly reduce the pressure to overfish.

**Reference:**

M. C. Healey and T. Hennessey. 1998. The paradox of fairness: the impact of escalating complexity on fishery management. *Marine Policy* 22:109-118.