USING SURROGATE SPECIES IN MANAGEMENT AND CONSERVATION

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Surrogate species and groups of species are used in management and conservation as proxies for broader sets of species when the number of species of concern is too great to consider them all individually. But surrogate approaches are not applicable to all situations. I discuss how the nature of the ecological system, the objectives and scale of management, and the level of knowledge available influence the decision about using a surrogate approach. I use species-area relationships to define a "surrogate zone" in which the approach may be most effective. Using a surrogate approach necessarily entails a tradeoff between management tailored to individual species and less precise practices that may apply to a broader array of species. Ultimately, the use of a surrogate approach depends on the level of uncertainty that is acceptable to conduct management or conservation activities.