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NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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C5 Gulf of Alaska Tanner Crab Protections

June 2026

Action Memo

Council Staff: Anita Kroska, Taylor Holman
Other presenters: Jon McCracken (McCracken and Associates)
Action Required: 1) Review initial draft of RIR/EA analysis
2) Consider next steps, potentially requesting additional analysis, identifying a preliminary preferred alternative, and/or releasing the analysis for final action

BACKGROUND

This is an Initial Review Analysis to consider management measures intended to conserve and protect Gulf of Alaska (GOA) Tanner crab while minimizing negative impacts on Central GOA groundfish fisheries. The alternatives and options under consideration were selected by the Council at their April 2025 meeting, following the review of a discussion paper.

The first proposed action (**Alternative 2**) considers implementing a closure in one of two areas on the east side of Kodiak Island, applicable to one or multiple groundfish gear types (groundfish pot gear, pelagic trawl gear, nonpelagic trawl gear), on either a seasonal or year-round basis.

The second proposed action (**Alternative 3**) evaluates the existing crab protection closures in place around Kodiak Island, which were implemented to minimize impacts of groundfish fisheries on GOA crab (the Marmot Bay Tanner Crab Protection Area and all Type I, II, and III red king crab closures). The paper identifies the objective of each existing crab protection area around Kodiak Island to allow the Council to consider options for modification or removal. In its current form, Alternative 3 is still under development because the Council has not yet identified specific elements of existing Federal crab protection closures that it wishes to modify or remove through a regulatory or FMP amendment. Therefore, Alternative 3 is broken out in a separate section (Section 7) within the analytical document.

If the Council wishes to move forward with this action, the Council may provide input and recommendations, refine the alternatives and options under consideration, request additional analysis, identify a preliminary preferred alternative, and/or schedule the analysis for final action.

Items Highlighted for SSC Review and Input

As usual at initial review, the SSC is asked to determine if the analysis is adequate to allow the Council to understand the impacts of the alternatives given what information is currently available, and if so, to release for final action. Additional points of focus for the SSC's review include: advice for setting clear, measurable objectives when initiating new closure areas; specific objectives that may be appropriate for protecting Tanner crab; and methods for measuring the effectiveness of these objectives in the future.