

Angel Drobnica, Chair
North Pacific Fisheries Management Council
1007 West Third St., Suite 400
Anchorage, AK 99501

RE: Comment on D2 – GOA Tanner Crab Protections

Dear Chair Drobnica and Council Members,

My name is Gabriel Prout and I am a third generation fisherman. I am asking the Council to take the next step in reviewing and considering actions to protect Tanner crab in areas where they are most abundant, along with implementing commonsense habitat protections in these regions. This goal can continue by moving the Gulf of Alaska Tanner Crab Protections Discussion Paper to an Initial Review Analysis.

Tanner crab are particularly vulnerable during key periods like mating and molting when their shells are soft. At the same time, bottom-contact fishing gear, including bottom and pelagic trawls, is actively used in the areas that have a high abundance of tanner crab. This gear can be encountered throughout the entire calendar year in these areas.

In addition to safeguarding areas with high crab concentrations, protecting their habitat is just as important. These habitats have long supported crab populations and contribute to the overall biodiversity of the region. Since Tanner crab live on the ocean floor, their environment plays a critical role—not only as a food source and shelter from predators but also in maintaining a healthy ecosystem. We encourage the Council to consider further habitat protections that would support the sustainability of these populations.

Tanner crab are a vital resource for crab fishermen, their families, and the communities of Kodiak and the surrounding areas. We urge the Council to take action during this meeting and move the discussion forward to an Initial Review. This would allow for a thorough consideration of potential protections, such as area closures, to help sustain both the crab population and the fishing industry.

In the recent collapse of the bering sea crab stocks with multi-year closures across king crab and snow crab, the tanner crab fishery in Kodiak provided my family and I a lifeline to sustain our business. It is important this resource is available to those that utilize and participate in harvesting it. I believe a balanced approach can be achieved—one that supports groundfish harvests while ensuring healthy Tanner crab populations for the future.

Thank you,

Gabriel Prout

F/V Silver Spray