



Advisory Announcement
For Immediate Release: March 22, 2022

CONTACT: Aaron Dupuis
Sitka Area Management Biologist
aaron.dupuis@alaska.gov
(907) 747-6688

SITKA SOUND HERRING FISHERY UPDATE # 6

Early in the morning of March 21, a grounded vessel in Neva Strait spilled an unknown quantity of diesel fuel. A known source of the release was the vessel's 13,000-gallon capacity forward port tank, which has since been almost fully pumped out by Hanson Maritime. A cleanup response is currently underway which includes continued free product recovery, sealing of the vessel's manifolds, and plugging the fuel vents. From aerial surveys conducted in the area on March 21 and March 22, it appeared that sheening was limited to the southern end of Neva Strait and extending to the north as far as Kane Island in Salisbury Sound. The department is currently working with DEC to track the geographic extent of the spilled fuel and to assess potential impacts to the subsistence and commercial herring fisheries in Sitka Sound. Because the State of Alaska has a zero-tolerance policy with respect to fuel contamination of seafood, the department will not open a commercial fishery or conduct test fishing in areas where there is a risk of fuel contamination of gear, vessels, or harvested fish.

The Sitka Sound herring sac roe fishery was placed on 2-hour notice effective at 8:00 a.m., Tuesday, March 22.

Today's aerial survey was brief and covered Sitka Sound from Makhnati Island to Krestof Sound. Weather during the flight was very poor with 45-knot winds, low overcast skies, and rain. Difficult viewing conditions affected the survey with air turbulence, many white caps, and low visibility due to rain. No herring schools or spawn were observed. For herring predators that were seen, humpback whales were concentrated in Hayward Strait between Guide Island and Kamenoi Point.

The *R/V Kestrel* arrived in Sitka Sound at 8:30 a.m. and began surveying for herring schools. While high winds and rough seas limited the area the *R/V Kestrel* could survey, numerous large schools of herring were observed in Hayward Strait.

The next aerial survey and fishery update are scheduled for Wednesday, March 23.

All aerial herring survey data can be reviewed online, including spawn lines and photos, in an interactive map application found at: <https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareasoutheast.herring#maps> or scan:



Advisory Announcement web site: <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=cfnews.main>.

Office	Ketchikan	Petersburg	Wrangell	Sitka	Juneau	Haines	Yakutat
ADF&G	225-5195	772-3801		747-6688	465-4250	766-2830	784-3255
AWT	225-5111	772-3983	874-3215	747-3254	465-4000	766-2533	784-3220