



Advisory Announcement
For Immediate Release: March 24, 2022

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

SITKA SOUND HERRING FISHERY UPDATE # 8

Today's aerial survey covered from Salisbury Sound to Shoals Point in Sitka Sound. Weather during the flight was fair with 15-knot E winds, overcast skies, and good viewing conditions. No herring spawn was observed. Herring predators were concentrated on the Kruzof Island shoreline from Shoals Point to Hayward Strait and in Promisla and Eastern Bays. Industry pilots observed visible schools of herring from the air on the western shore of Shoals Point.

The *R/V Kestrel* surveyed Sitka Sound for herring schools throughout the day. Numerous large schools were observed in shallower waters from Fred's Creek up into Hayward Strait and extending into Promisla and Eastern Bays. Additionally, numerous schools were observed along the Sitka road system from Watson Point to the northern end of Middle Island.

Five successful test sets were conducted today, the results are as follows:

- 9:45 a.m., Mountain Point, 30-ton set, mature roe – 11.2%, immature roe – 1.5%, average weight – 134 g, and 53.6% female.
- 10:30 a.m., Kamenoi Point, 50-ton set, mature roe – 10.07%, immature roe – 0.6%, average weight – 117 g, and 48.1% female.
- 12:30 p.m., Hayward Strait, 15-ton set, mature roe – 9.8%, immature roe – 1.5%, average weight – 127 g, and 51% female.
- 14:20 p.m., Promisla Bay, 75-ton set, mature roe – 9.7%, immature roe – 1.7%, average weight – 121 g and 44% female.
- 14:30 p.m., Eastern Bay, 100-ton set, mature roe - 11%, immature roe – 0.77%, average weight – 131 g and 48% female.

Herring mortality associated with test sets is likely minimal and there is no evidence that the small number of fish taken has any measurable impact on the subsistence fishery. Nevertheless, to ensure reasonable opportunity for subsistence harvest of herring roe would not be negatively impacted by test setting, prior to authorizing test fishing in this area the department considered the following: 1) test setting in the areas evaluated today are well outside the commercial closed waters and core subsistence areas; and 2) the fish encountered during test fishing in this area would represent a small fraction of the overall biomass in the area.

The department continues to work with the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) in response to the grounding of the vessel in Neva Strait. This includes tracking the geographic extent of the spilled fuel and assessing any potential impacts to the subsistence and commercial herring fisheries in Sitka Sound. Today's aerial survey showed the diesel sheen extended from Salisbury Sound through Neva Strait and lighter sheening was observed in Krestof Sound and Olga Strait. Sheening was not apparent in Nakwasina Sound, Hayward Strait, and the waters east of the Siginaka Islands. Multiple flights conducted throughout the day showed that visible sheen did not continue to spread south through the Magoun Islands and Olga Strait. 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. More information can be found on the DEC website: <https://dec.alaska.gov/spar/ppr/spill-information/response/2022/01-tug-western-mariner-grounding/>

The next aerial survey and fishery update are scheduled for Friday, March 25.

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>.

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