



**Advisory Announcement**  
*For Immediate Release: April 1, 2022*

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**SITKA SOUND HERRING FISHERY UPDATE # 16**

The aerial survey conducted on April 1 covered Sitka Sound from Crawfish Inlet to Salisbury Sound. Viewing conditions were mostly fair with light winds, occasional rain, or fog obstructing views. There was approximately 12.9 nautical miles (nmi) of herring spawn observed today. Active spawning areas include Hayward Strait, eastern Kruzof shoreline, Magoun Islands, Middle Island, Chaichei and Kasiana Islands, near Crow Pass, Eastern Bay, and Promisla Bay (Figure 1). The cumulative herring spawn mileage to date is 21.7 nmi. Herring predators were scattered across Sitka Sound. Most humpback whales were concentrated on the Kruzof Island shoreline and southern Krestof Sound, while most sealions were in Windy Passage. Multiple gray whales were observed near Freds Creek.

Department and industry vessels surveying Sitka Sound on April 1 located very large schools of herring in the shallower waters of southern Krestof Sound. Smaller, scattered schools of herring were observed on the Kruzof Island shore from Inner Point to Kamenoi Point and in Eastern and Promisla Bays; most of the fish observed in these locations were in shallow water near the beaches. Numerous schools of herring were also observed around Middle Island and near the Kasiana Islands.

One successful test set was conducted today, the results are as follows:

Time	Area	Tons	% Mature Roe	% Immature Roe	Avg weight	% Female
09:00	S. Krestof Sound	100 T	10.0 %	0.05%	125	46.0 %

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 area evaluated today was 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.

An opening of the Sitka Sound herring sac roe fishery occurred on April 1, 2022, from 10:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m., as stated in field announcement on VHF channel 10. Initial open waters for this fishery included the area south of 57°10.78' N lat and north of 57°09.20' N lat (Figure 2). Additionally, the waters within the Magoun Islands north of a line from a point at 57°09.63' N lat, 135°34.01' W long to a point at 57°09.63' N lat, 135°34.24' W long were closed to commercial fishing because subsistence roe-on-branch sets were identified by the department in that area of herring spawn. At 2:15 p.m. the southern boundary of the fishery was modified by field announcement on VHF channel 10 to waters north of a line from the Kruzof Island shoreline at 57°09.20' N lat, 135°34.75' W long and Rob Point at 57°09.37' N lat, 135°33.31' W long (Figure 1).

Harvest estimates from today's fishery will be included on the next fishery update. Harvest from the fishery that occurred on March 31, 2022, was approximately 2,100-tons of herring. Total harvest in the fishery through March 31 is approximately 11,100-tons of herring.

The department has determined that the opening described above would not harm a reasonable opportunity for participants in the subsistence fishery to harvest the amount of roe necessary for subsistence uses. When making this determination, the department considered: 1) vessel surveys conducted by the department beginning on March 22 indicated that there is a very

large biomass of herring within Sitka Sound and numerous large schools of herring have been consistently observed within the regulatory closed waters; 2) the lines chosen by the department today intentionally excluded waters with identified subsistence roe-on-branch sets in and near active herring spawn; 3) approximately 3.5 nmi of herring spawn was observed today within regulatory closed waters on Crow, Middle, and near Gagarin Islands.

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 found spotty, light diesel sheen extending from Olga Strait through Neva 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 Saturday, April 2.

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>.

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<i>ADF&amp;G</i>	225-5195	772-3801		747-6688	465-4250	766-2830	784-3255
<i>AWT</i>	225-5111	772-3983	874-3215	747-3254	465-4000	766-2533	784-3220

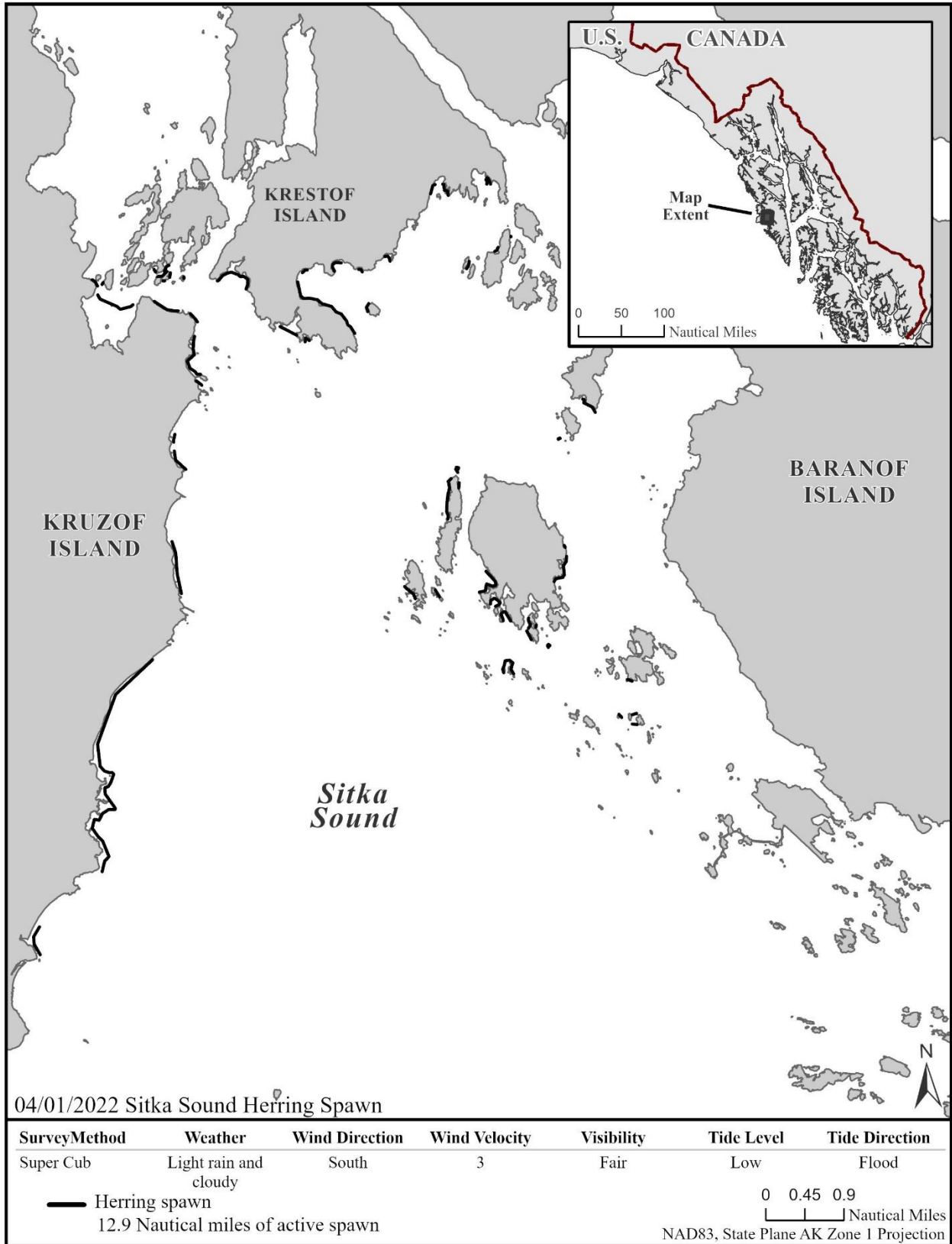


Figure 1.— Map of the active spawning areas in Sitka Sound during the aerial survey on April 1, 2022.

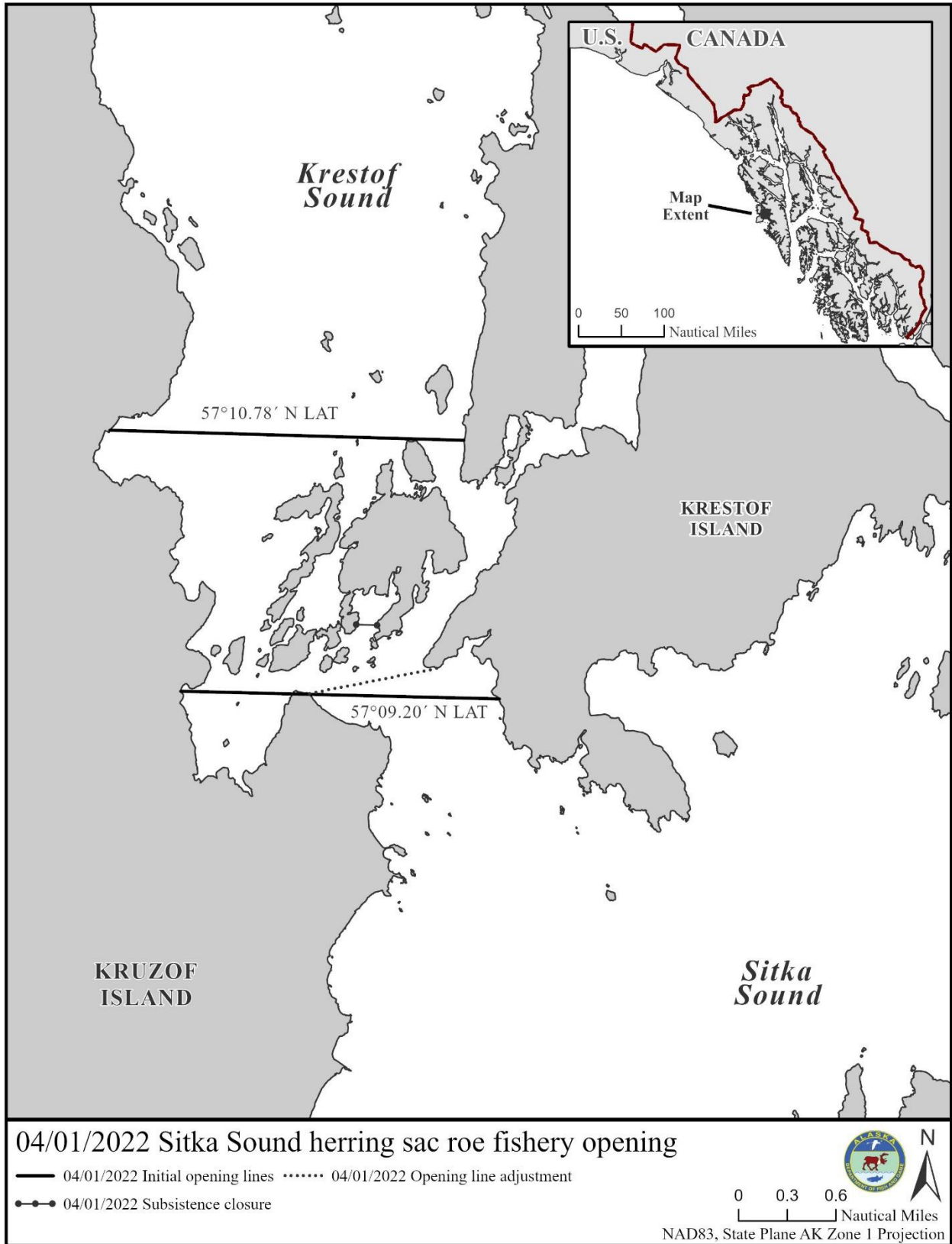


Figure 2.— Map of the area open for the April 1, 2022, Sitka Sound sac roe herring fishery.