



## Advisory Announcement

*For Immediate Release: April 5, 2022*

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## SITKA SOUND HERRING FISHERY UPDATE # 19

The aerial survey conducted on April 4 covered Sitka Sound from Windy Passage to Krestof Sound. Weather during the flight was good with 5-knot winds and mostly cloudy skies. Viewing conditions were excellent. There was approximately 19.1 nautical miles (nmi) of herring spawn observed on April 4. Active spawning areas include Krestof Sound, Magoun Islands, Promisla Bay, Eastern Bay, Siginaka Islands, Big and Little Gavanski Islands, Chaichei and Kasiana Islands, and along the Sitka road system from Starrigavan Bay to Watson Point, (Figure 1). The cumulative herring spawn mileage to date is 45.5 nmi.

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

Time	Area	Tons	% Mature Roe	% Immature Roe	Avg weight	% Female
11:38	Redoubt Bay	75 T	14.7 %	0 %	135	58.6 %
12:09	Indian River	100 T	12.8 %	0 %	140	50.0 %

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 areas evaluated today were 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 4, 2022, from 2:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m., as stated in field announcement on VHF channel 10. Open waters for this fishery included the area south of 56°57.13' N lat, north of 56°52.33' N lat, and east of 135°28.24' W long (Figure 2). Additional open waters for this period included the area south of 57°02.88' N lat, north of 57°01.57' N lat, east of 135°20.20' W long, and west of 135°14.96' W long (Figure 2).

Harvest results from today's fishery will be included in the next fishery update. Total harvest in the fishery through April 3 is approximately 14,300-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) approximately 8.6 nmi of herring spawn was observed on April 4 within regulatory closed waters; 3) the cumulative herring spawn mileage to date in all of Sitka Sound is approximately 45.5 nmi.

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. 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 Tuesday, April 5.

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>AWT</i>	225-5111	772-3983	874-3215	747-3254	465-4000	766-2533	784-3220

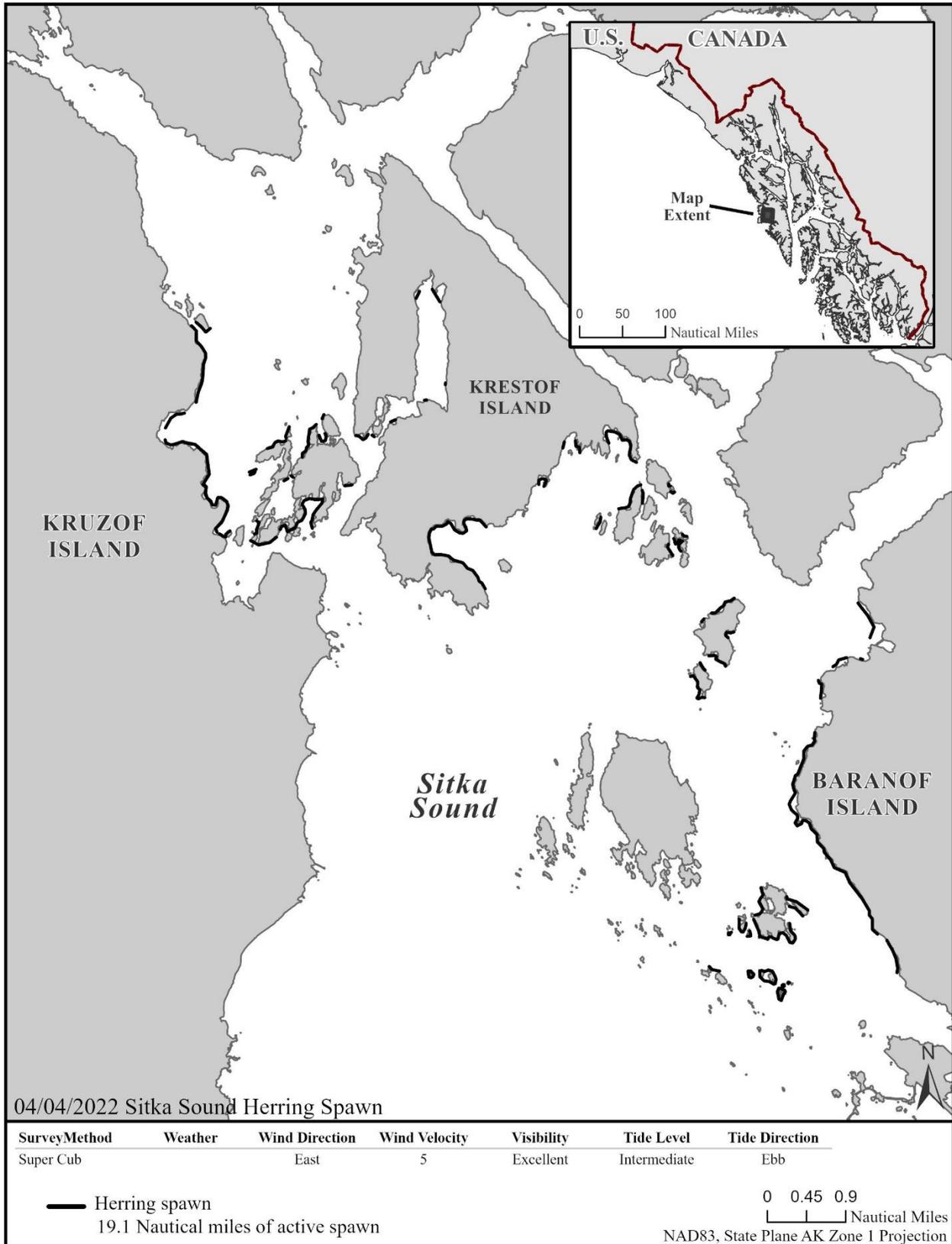


Figure 1.— Map of the active spawning areas in Sitka Sound during the aerial survey on April 4, 2022.

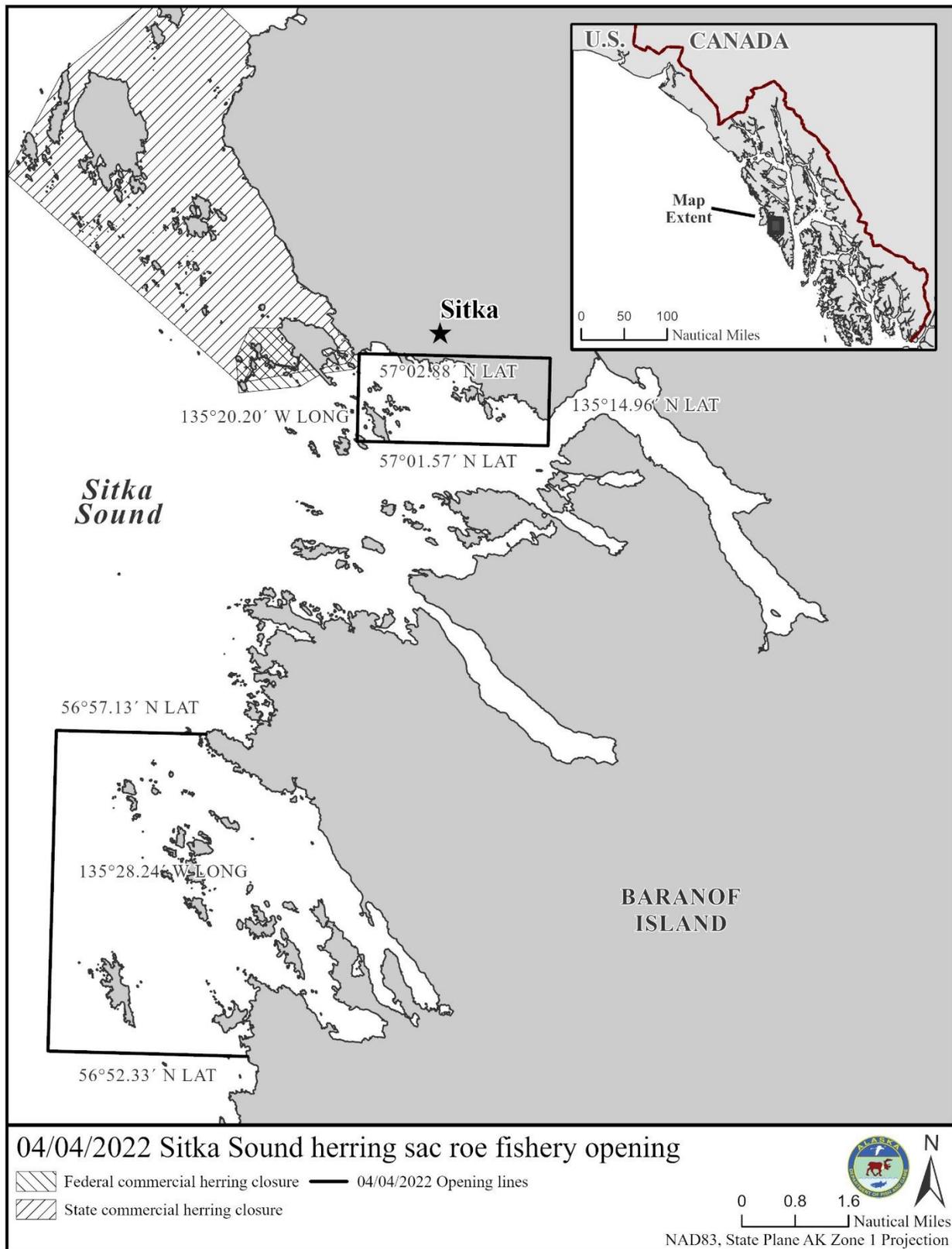


Figure 2.— Map of the area open for the April 4, 2022, Sitka Sound sac roe herring fishery.