



Advisory Announcement
For Immediate Release: April 5, 2022

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SITKA SOUND HERRING FISHERY UPDATE # 20

The aerial survey conducted on April 5 covered Sitka Sound from Windy Passage to Salisbury Sound. Weather during the flight was good with 20-knot winds and cloudy skies. Viewing conditions were good. There was approximately 6.7 nautical miles (nmi) of herring spawn observed on April 5. Active spawning areas include Magoun Islands, Eastern Bay, Signakna Islands, Apple and Kasiana Islands, Whiting Harbor, and along the Sitka road system from Halibut Point to Watson Point, (Figure 1). The cumulative herring spawn mileage to date is 48.6 nmi.

No test sets were conducted today.

An opening of the Sitka Sound herring sac roe fishery occurred on April 5, 2022, from 11:00 a.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 57°00.80' N lat, north of 56°52.33' N lat, and east of 135°28.24' W long (Figure 2).

The harvest estimate from the fishery that occurred on April 4 was approximately 2,150 tons of herring. Harvest results from today's fishery will be included in the next fishery update. Total harvest in the fishery through April 4 is approximately 16,400-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 cumulative herring spawn within regulatory closed waters to date is approximately 16.4 nmi; 3) the cumulative herring spawn mileage to date in all of Sitka Sound is approximately 48.6 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 Wednesday, April 6.

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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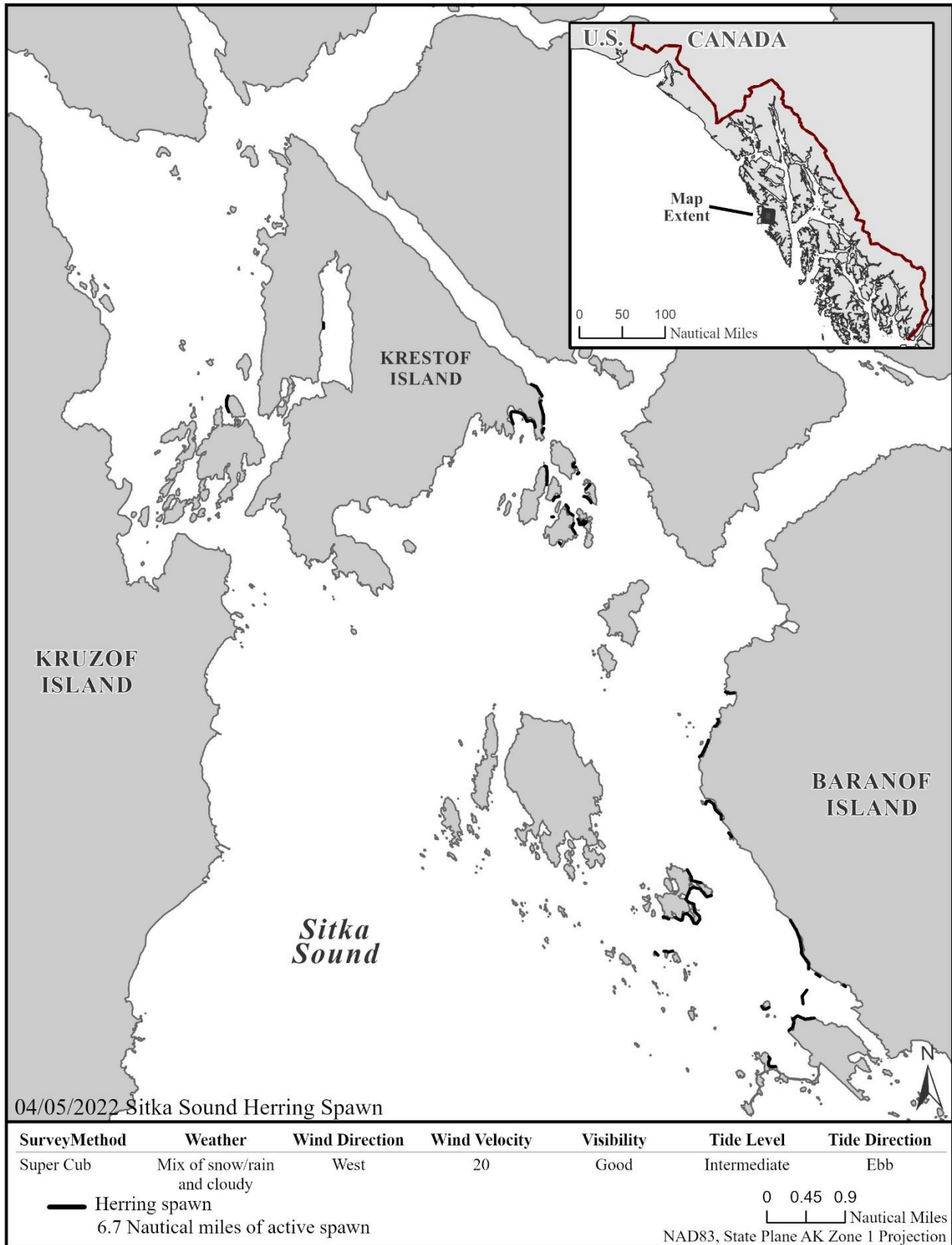


Figure 1.– Map of the active spawning areas in Sitka Sound during the aerial survey on April 5, 2022.

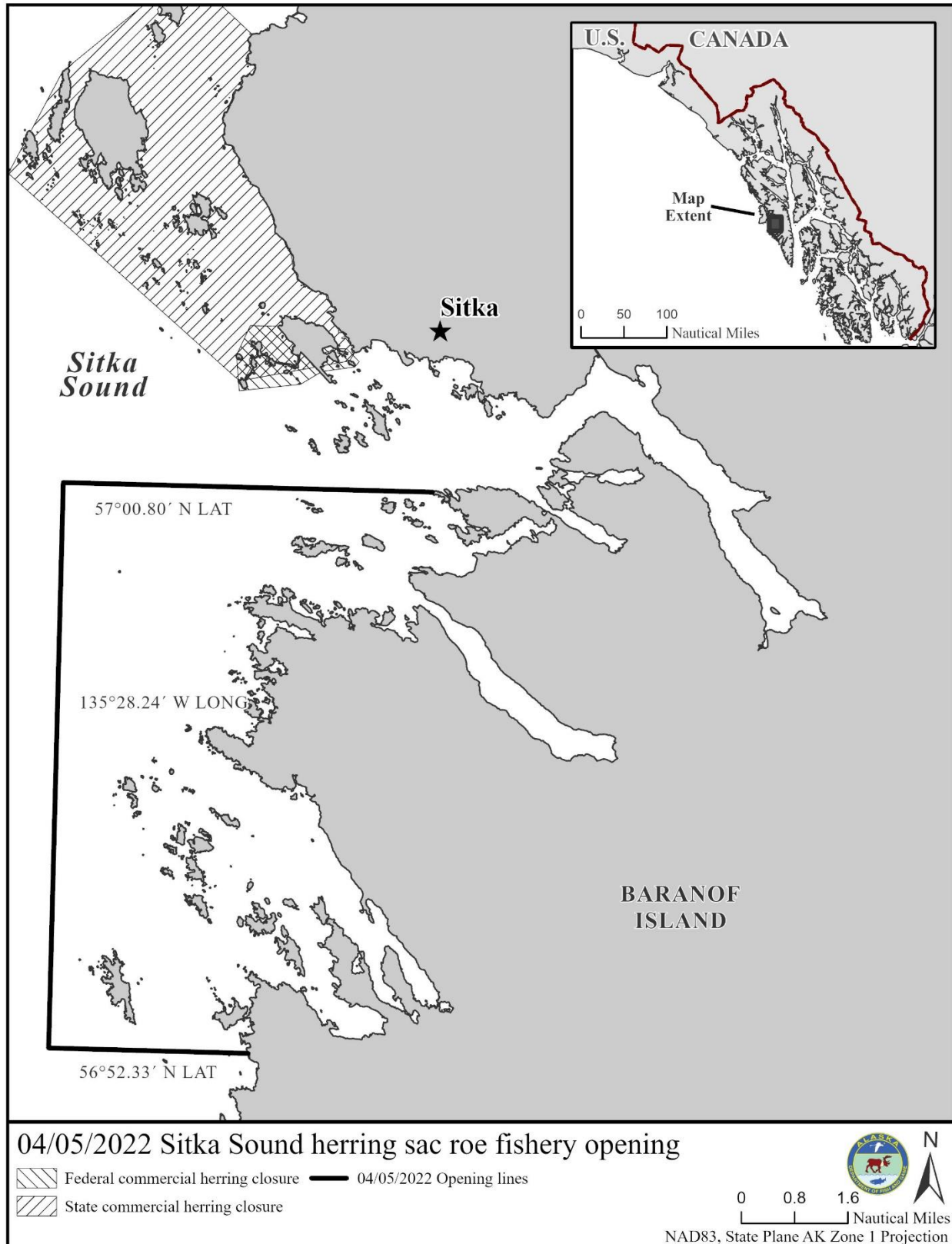


Figure 2.– Map of the area open for the April 5, 2022, Sitka Sound sac roe herring fishery.