



**Advisory Announcement**  
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## 2022 SOUTHEAST ALASKA HERRING SUMMARY

The department monitors herring stocks in Southeast Alaska that historically have been important to subsistence and/or commercial fisheries. Basic stock assessment includes conducting aerial surveys to document herring spawn, but when warranted may include more extensive stock assessment including collecting herring samples for age, weight and length (AWL) analysis, conducting spawn/egg deposition surveys to determine the spawning biomass, and developing biomass forecasts. The following is a summary of 2022 herring aerial surveys, spawn observations, spawn deposition surveys, and commercial fisheries. In 2022, the persistence of large spawning events for coastal stocks (Craig and Sitka) and poor spawning events for inside stocks (Revilla Channel, West Behm Canal, Ernest Sound, Hobart Bay, Seymour Canal, Hoonah Sound, Tenakee Inlet, and Lynn Canal) observed over the past three or more years indicate continued favorable environmental conditions for the coastal stocks and poor conditions for the inside stocks.

Section 1-F (Revilla Channel) – Aerial surveys were conducted from March 18 through April 7, with herring spawn first observed March 26 on Dog and Double Islands. Spawning continued in Revilla Channel through March 29. Spawn was observed on Double, Cat, Dog, and Village Islands with the most intense spawn occurring on the western shore of Dog Island. The total cumulative spawn mileage of 6.6 nautical miles (nmi) in state waters was just above the recent 10-year (2012–2021) average of 6.1 nmi. Herring samples were obtained for AWL analysis and a spawn deposition survey was completed on April 9. The last commercial fishery occurred in 1998.

Section 1-E and 1-F (West Behm) – Aerial surveys were conducted from April 7 through April 16. Small herring spawn events were observed near Indian Point on April 8 and 9. A subsequent skiff survey showed moderate egg deposition on the Cleveland Peninsula shoreline from Point Francis extending south 1.0 nmi. The total cumulative spawn mileage of 1.4 nmi was below the recent 10-year average of 4.3 nmi. No herring samples were obtained, and a spawn deposition survey was not conducted. The last commercial fishery occurred in 2011.

District 3 (Craig) – Aerial surveys were conducted from March 19 through April 16, with herring spawn first observed April 5 on Fish Egg Island. Continuous spawning began April 7 and continued through April 16. Peak spawning occurred April 10 with 26.4 nmi of spawn observed. Spawn occurred around Abess, Albertos, Ballenas, Fish Egg, East San Fernando, Wadleigh, and San Juan Bautista Islands. The total cumulative spawn mileage of 36.4 nmi was the second highest spawn mileage documented in the Craig/Klawock area behind 2020 (56.1 nmi), and well above the recent 10-year average of 22.7 nmi. Samples were obtained and a spawn deposition survey was completed. The biomass forecast and GHL will be available in late fall/early winter.

The 2021/22 Craig herring guideline harvest level (GHL) was 12,650 tons of herring and was allocated between the winter food and bait fishery (60%) and the spawn-on-kelp fishery (40% plus any remaining winter food and bait GHL). The 2021/22 Craig winter food and bait fishery GHL was 7,590 tons. The fishery opened October 1 and closed February 28. A total of 398.1 tons was harvested by two vessels. The unharvested portion of the GHL was added to the spawn-on-kelp pound fishery for a final GHL of 12,252 tons. The spawn-on-kelp fishery opened by regulation on March 17 and herring were first introduced to pound structures on April 7. There was a total of 60 pound structures actively fished with 119 permits landing 193.5 tons of spawn-on-kelp product. Final exvessel value will be available in the fall.

District 7 (Ernest Sound) – Aerial surveys were conducted from April 14 through April 21 with a follow up skiff survey on April 22. About 1.2 miles of herring spawn was observed on April 14 along the shoreline in Vixen Inlet. AWL samples were obtained from the April 14 event (the first in several years), but it appears that was not the only day of spawning. During the skiff survey an additional 1.4 nmi of spawn was observed to the east of Vixen Inlet with a narrow but visible band of spawn along the entire east side of the inlet. Estimated total mileage of spawn was ~ 2.6 nmi which represents an improvement over 2021. A spawn deposition survey was not conducted. A commercial fishery last took place in 2014.

District 10 (Hobart Bay/Port Houghton) – Aerial surveys were conducted from April 22 through May 12 with two skiff surveys on May 13 and May 24. Approximately 3 nmi of herring spawn was observed from Port Houghton to just south of Windham Bay. The total amount of spawn observed was similar to the past couple of years but the distribution was much more disbursed and consisted mostly of single days in the observed locations. Skiff surveys on May 13 and 22 confirmed the distribution and added approximately 0.8 nmi to the total. Peak spawning in Hobart Bay occurred on May 12 (~1.0 nmi) and AWL samples were collected from that event for the first time in several years. A spawn deposition survey was not conducted. A commercial fishery last took place in 2010.

Section 11-D (Seymour Canal) – Aerial surveys were conducted from April 15 through June 2. On May 21, 0.1 nmi of spawn was observed north of Twin Islands and a spot spawn was observed on May 22 inside Sorethumb Cove. On May 31, 1.3 nmi of active spawn was observed near Point Hugh with minor spawning occurring within the same area on June 1 and 2. This is the latest spawning event recorded for the Seymour Canal herring stock, further extending last year's record by another week. This year's cumulative 1.4 nmi of spawn is well below the recent 10-year average spawn mileage of 4.3 nmi. AWL samples of spawning herring were obtained, but a spawn deposition survey was not conducted. A commercial fishery last occurred in 2014.

Section 12-A (Tenakee Inlet and Chatham Strait) – Aerial surveys were conducted from April 15 through May 18. No herring spawn was observed inside Tenakee Inlet similar to the past three seasons. On April 28, two spot spawns were observed off Point Hayes at the northern entrance of Peril Strait, but no measurable spawn was observed on the Chatham Strait shoreline from Point Hayes north to the entrance of Tenakee Inlet. No herring samples were obtained, and a spawn deposition survey was not conducted. The recent 10-year average spawn mileage in Tenakee Inlet and the Chatham Strait shoreline between Tenakee Inlet and Peril Strait is 2.2 nmi. A commercial fishery last occurred in 2014.

Section 13-A/B (Sitka Sound) – Aerial surveys were conducted from March 8 through April 28. Herring spawn was observed from March 27–April 28; active spawn peaked on April 4 when 19.1 nmi of herring spawn was observed. The total cumulative spawn mileage of 91.5 nmi was the fifth largest estimate since 1953 and was higher than both the recent 10-year average of 63.0 nmi and the 40-year (1982–2021) average of 60.2 nmi. AWL samples were obtained and a spawn deposition survey was completed.

The commercial herring sac roe fishery total harvest was approximately 25,090 tons of herring with an average mature roe percentage of 11.7%. This year's harvest was the largest in the history of the sac roe fishery accounting for 56% of the 2022 guideline harvest level of 45,164 tons. The fishery was opened for 15 days between March 26 and April 10 with an average daily harvest of approximately 1,700 tons of herring. For more detailed information on the 2022 Sitka Sound herring stock and fishery, see the *Sitka Sound Sac Roe Herring Fishery Summary* announcement from May 5, 2022.

Section 13-C (Hoonah Sound) – Four aerial surveys were conducted between April 18 and April 28. Except for a small amount of herring spawn observed at Point Hayes on April 28, no herring or herring spawn were observed. No spawn has been documented in Hoonah Sound since 2015 and the 2006–2015 average miles of spawn was 9.0 nmi. The commercial spawn-on-kelp fishery last took place in 2012.

Sections 11-A, 15-B, and 15-C (Lynn Canal) – Aerial surveys were conducted from April 15 through May 18, with a total cumulative herring spawn mileage estimate of 1.4 nmi. On May 9, 1.3 nmi of spawn was documented south of Point Sherman with an additional 0.1 nmi observed nearby on May 11. Although slightly larger than last year's observed mileage, this is one of the smallest total cumulative spawn mileages documented for the Lynn Canal spawning stock since regular observations began in 1972 and well below the recent 10-year average of 4.8 nmi. The spawns observed near Point Sherman in 2021 and 2022 were the furthest north herring spawn documented for this area. Commercial fisheries last occurred in 1982 and the commercial sac roe herring fishery was repealed by the Board of Fisheries in 2018.

Additional herring spawn events were observed by ADF&G or documented by pilots in other areas throughout Southeast Alaska on the way to or from surveys of the above listed areas. Typically, these additional spawning events are minor, but there were some relatively larger than normal spawn events observed in Sea Otter Sound and Kasaan Bay. Sea Otter Sound had three days of active spawn with a total cumulative spawn mileage estimate of 9.2 nmi of moderate to heavy spawn. Kasaan Bay had two days of active spawn with a total cumulative spawn mileage estimate of 5.3 nmi. Other herring spawn events observed around the region included: 0.8 nmi observed along the road system south of Ketchikan near Buggies Beach from April 16-18; >2.0 nmi photographed on the eastern Catherine Island shoreline on April 29; 1.7 nmi in Farragut Bay from May 7-9; and 3.6 nmi in northern Stephens Passage on May 20–23 with AWL samples obtained.

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