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# ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

## DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

### NEWS RELEASE



*Cora Campbell, Commissioner*  
*Jeff Regnart, Director*



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Contact:  
Dave Gordon

Phone: (907) 747-6688  
Fax: (907) 747-6693

Sitka Area Office  
304 Lake Street, Room 103  
Sitka, Alaska 99835  
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#### SITKA SOUND HERRING FISHERY ANNOUNCEMENT

Sitka. . . The Alaska Department of Fish and Game announced today the preliminary guideline harvest level (GHL) for the 2012 Sitka Sound sac roe herring fishery is 29,008 tons. This GHL is based on a 20% harvest rate of the forecast biomass of 145,042 tons of mature herring. The forecast indicates that the spawning stock will consist of 13% age-3, 24% age-4, 25% age-5, 14% age-6, 11% age-7, and 13% age-8 and older herring.

The department uses an age-structure-analysis (ASA) model to estimate abundance, survival rates and maturation rates needed to forecast the biomass of mature herring expected to return to Sitka Sound the upcoming spawning season. The ASA model uses a long time series of abundance and age composition data from department surveys conducted during and following the spring fishery. Herring abundance is estimated using aerial surveys designed to map the length of shoreline receiving spawn, and dive surveys which estimate the density of eggs and the average width of the spawn. The department documented 78.3 nautical miles of herring spawn in the greater Sitka Sound area in the spring of 2011. Spawning herring sampled in the spring of 2011 showed an age composition of 7% age-3, 26% age-4, 23% age-5, 24% age-6, 13% age-7, and 8% age-8+. The ASA model estimates that 132,000 tons of herring spawned in the Sitka Sound area in the spring of 2011 and the commercial sac roe herring harvest was 19,430 tons for a total return of 151,430 tons.

The forecast and GHL for the 2012 fishery will be finalized using average weight-at-age from sampling of the winter test fishery, to be conducted during the January 2012. The final forecast will be announced in late-February.

News releases web site: <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=cfnews.main>.

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