
ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



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SITKA SOUND SAC ROE HERRING FISHERY ANNOUNCEMENT

Sitka...The Alaska Department of Fish and Game has mapped 55.8 nautical miles (nmi) of herring spawn in 2019 from March 24 through April 13 (Figure 1). The spawn deposition survey was conducted on April 12–15. Final results from this year’s stock assessment will not be available until November 2019, however some general information can be derived from the data collected to date.

Nearly all of the herring spawn for 2019 occurred along the shorelines of Kruzof Island, Hayward Strait, the Magoun Islands, Promisla Bay, and Eastern Bay (Figure 1). Little herring spawn was observed in the islands near Sitka, which typically receive substantial spawn. The lack of spawn in the islands near Sitka also occurred in 2018 and is historically unusual. The estimate of 55.8 nmi of herring spawn is slightly less than the long-term (1999-2018) average spawn mileage of 59.6 nmi. While the 2019 spawn mileage estimate was below average, preliminary results of the spawn deposition survey revealed that the offshore width and density of herring spawn were greater than average. This was especially true of the spawn on the Kruzof Island shoreline. In 2005, 2008, and 2018, a similar situation occurred where the spawn extended far offshore on Kruzof Island due to the very wide shelf of herring spawning habitat.

No commercial herring sac roe fishing occurred in 2019. Although herring were available to the fishery, fish meeting market requirements were not found despite extensive vessel and aerial surveys conducted between March 17 and March 27.

In 2018, 33.1 nmi of herring spawn was mapped; peak spawn occurred on April 12 and the last spawn was observed on April 29. The 2018 model estimated post fishery biomass was 56,248 tons.

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

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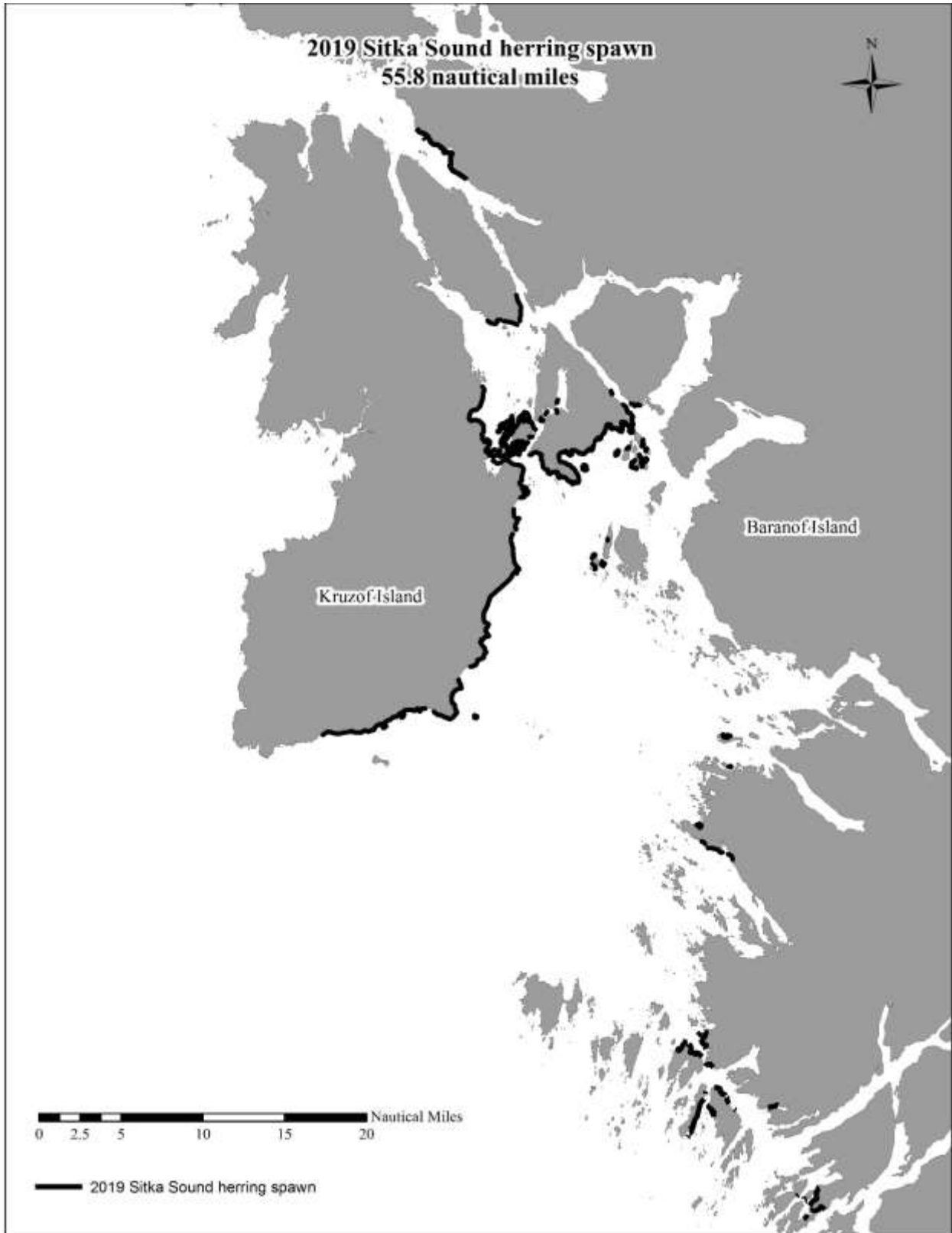


Figure 1. 2019 Sitka Sound herring spawn.