
ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



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2019/2020 SOUTHEAST ALASKA WINTER FOOD AND BAIT HERRING FISHERY

Petersburg. . . The Alaska Department of Fish and Game announced today the following information concerning the 2019/2020 Southeast Alaska winter food and bait herring fishery.

The 2019 egg spawn deposition for the Craig/Klawock herring stock was approximately 1.7 times higher than the maximum historical estimate from 1976-2018. Samples from both cast net and the commercial catch during the spawning event indicate that the mature biomass was dominated by age-3 fish, 81% of cast net and 85% of the commercial catch respectively. This large proportion of age-3 fish was observed throughout Southeast Alaska herring stocks, including Ernest Sound, Revilla Channel, Seymour Canal, and Sitka Sound. Because of the very large uncertainty associated with the 2019 age-3 abundance, the department will base the 2019/20 Craig/Klawock guideline harvest level (GHL) on the 2019 spawn deposition estimate of 55,072 tons. Given the proportion of age-3 herring in the mature biomass in 2019, it is anticipated that the population in 2019/20 will be comprised of predominately age-4 individuals.

The total GHL for the Craig/Klawock area will be set at 11,014 tons. Regulations state that 60% of this GHL goes to the winter food and bait fishery and 40% goes to the Section 3-B spawn-on-kelp pound fishery (5 AAC 27.185 (h)). Additionally, any portion not taken by the winter bait fishery is allocated to the spawn-on-kelp fishery and will be announced by March 5, 2020.

Section 3-B and District 4 (Craig/Klawock): **will open at 12:00 noon, Tuesday, October 15, 2019**, in those waters of Section 3-B west of a line from Blanquizal Point to Point Santa Rosalia to Tranquil Point and in those waters of District 4 north and east of a line from Lontana Point to Diver Point. The GHL is **6,608 tons**. This GHL is based on the spawn deposition estimate conducted in 2019 of 55,072 tons and a harvest rate of 20%.

District 7 (Ernest Sound): **will be closed.** Minimal herring spawn was observed, and a spawn deposition survey was not conducted in 2019. Therefore, a forecast for the 2019/20 season was not generated.

District 10 (Hobart Bay/Port Houghton): **will be closed.** Minimal herring spawn was observed, and a spawn deposition survey was not conducted in 2019. Therefore, a forecast for the 2019/20 season was not generated.

District 12 (Tenakee Inlet): **will be closed.** Minimal herring spawn was observed, and a spawn deposition survey was not conducted in 2019. Therefore, a forecast for the 2019/20 season was not generated.

Fishermen and operators of tendering vessels must obtain an ADF&G permit to participate in the Southeast Alaska Winter Food and Bait Herring Fishery (5 AAC 27.179). Permit applications are available at ADF&G area offices in Ketchikan, Sitka, Petersburg, Wrangell, and Douglas free of charge.

For the 2019/20 season, the department is requiring that permits be issued by ADF&G prior to fishing. Terms of the permit stipulate: 1) the amount of herring harvested and delivery location be reported to the Ketchikan office for Section 3-B and District 4 by 12:00 noon on the day after fish were harvested; 2) logbook forms must be completed and submitted with fish tickets; 3) one 5-gallon bucket of herring is to be provided to the department from each delivery for catch sampling purposes.

The Emergency Order corresponding with this announcement is EO 1H0319.

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

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