



## Advisory Announcement

*For Immediate Release: March 27, 2022*

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## SITKA SOUND HERRING FISHERY UPDATE # 11

Today's aerial survey covered from Windy Passage to Salisbury Sound. Weather during the flight was good with 5-knot winds and partly cloudy skies. Visibility was hindered at times with sun glare, but overall viewing conditions were good. A number of herring schools were seen in areas of southern Krestof Sound, Hayward Strait, Kruzof Island shoreline, and Crescent Bay (Sitka Harbor). Approximately 1.6 nautical miles (nmi) of herring spawn was observed, including the areas of Mountain Point, Inner Point, and Crow Pass. Herring predators were mostly concentrated along the Kruzof shoreline from Vitkari Rocks to Mud Bay.

Department and industry vessels surveying Sitka Sound located very large schools of herring in the shallower waters of southern Kruzof and Krestof Islands from Shoal's Point to Eastern Bay and in Hayward Strait.

Two successful test sets were conducted today, the results are as follows:

Time	Area	Tons	% Mature Roe	% Immature Roe	Avg weight	% Female
8:56	Hayward Str	110 T	12.30 %	1.20 %	121	59.6 %
9:27	S Mountain Pt	100 T	4.33 %	3.13 %	111	51.9 %

Herring mortality associated with test sets is likely minimal and there is no evidence that the small number of fish taken has any measurable impact on the subsistence fishery. Nevertheless, to ensure reasonable opportunity for subsistence harvest of herring roe would not be negatively impacted by test setting, prior to authorizing test fishing in this area the department considered the following: 1) test setting in the areas evaluated today are well outside the commercial closed waters and core subsistence areas; and 2) the fish encountered during test fishing in this area would represent a small fraction of the overall biomass in the area.

An opening of the Sitka Sound herring sac roe fishery occurred today 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°09.88' N lat, north of 57°07.98' N lat, and west of 135°30.76' W long (Figure 1). Harvest estimates from today's fishery will be included on the next fishery update. Harvest from the fishery that occurred on March 26, 2022, was approximately 450-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 observed within the regulatory closed waters; 2) there was no herring spawn nor known subsistence branch sets observed in the water on the adjacent shoreline of the open area; 3) approximately 0.4 nmi of herring spawn was observed today within regulatory closed waters on Crow Island.

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. Today's aerial survey found spotty, light diesel sheen extending from Olga Strait, Neva Strait, and Salisbury 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 Monday, March 28.

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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<i>AWT</i>	225-5111	772-3983	874-3215	747-3254	465-4000	766-2533	784-3220

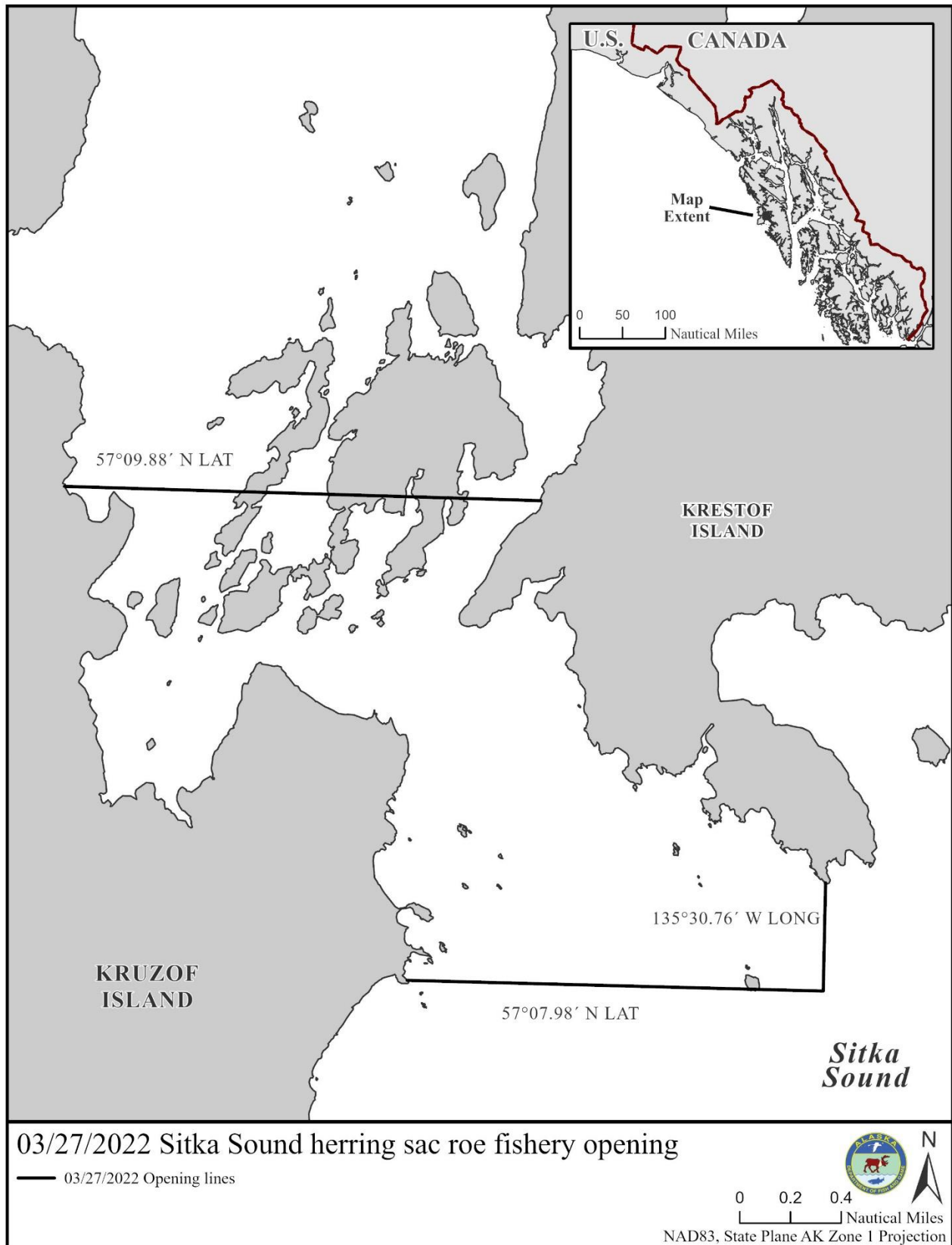


Figure 1.— Map of the area open for the March 27, 2022, Sitka Sound sac roe herring fishery.