



Advisory Announcement
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SITKA SOUND HERRING FISHERY UPDATE # 8

Today's aerial survey covered Sitka Sound from Povorotni Point to St. Lazaria Island and as far north as Krestof Sound. Survey conditions were poor to fair with light rain/snow mix, cloudy skies, and 15-knot winds. No herring schools or herring spawn were observed. Humpback whales were mostly seen along the Kruzof Island shoreline from St. Lazaria Island to Hayward Strait, and north of Crow Island. A large concentration of sea lions was observed at Inner Point, while smaller groups of sea lions were observed in Hayward Strait, Shoals Point, and St. Lazaria Island.

Department vessels surveyed south of Sitka from Indian River to Whale Island and in the northern portion of Sitka Sound from Inner Point to Harbor Point. Several very large schools of herring were located from Inner Point to Kamenoi Point, east of the Siginaka Islands, north of Crow Island and Middle Island, and from Whale Island to Rocky Patch. Smaller schools of herring were located along the eastern shore of Middle Island.

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

Time	Area	Tons	% Mature Roe	% Immature Roe	Avg weight	% Female
09:13	Whale Island	40	10.1 %	1.8 %	155 g	40.2 %
09:52	Hayward Strait	200	7.8 %	1.7 %	147 g	37.8 %

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) the areas of Hayward Strait and Whale Island are outside the commercial closed waters and core subsistence areas; and 2) the fish encountered during test fishing represented a small fraction of the overall biomass in each area.

The next aerial survey and fishery update are scheduled for Friday, March 24.

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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