



**Advisory Announcement**  
**For Immediate Release: March 24, 2023**

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**SITKA SOUND HERRING FISHERY UPDATE # 9**

Today's aerial survey covered Sitka Sound from Povorotni Point to St. Lazaria Island and as far north as Hayward Strait. Survey conditions ranged from good to poor with scattered snow showers and fog, mostly cloudy skies, and variable winds ranging from 5-30 knots. No herring schools or herring spawn were observed. Predators were widely scattered across Sitka Sound. Rafts of sea lions were seen around southeastern Kruzof, Mountain Point, and south of Hayward Strait. Humpback whales were mostly seen from Inner Point to Hayward Strait, north of Middle Island, and Eastern Channel.

Department and industry vessels surveyed south of Sitka from Indian River to Whale Island and in the northern portion of Sitka Sound from Mountain Point to the Siginaka Islands. Several very large schools of herring were located from Mountain Point to Kamenoi Point, the deeper waters west of the Siginaka Islands, and from Whale Island to Rocky Patch. Several smaller schools of herring were observed between Rocky Patch and Cannon Island.

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

Time	Area	Tons	% Mature Roe	% Immature Roe	Avg weight	% Female
09:15	Rocky Patch	100	13 %	0.9 %	156 g	53.4 %
09:26	Hayward Strait	150	8.3 %	1.2 %	152 g	39.1 %
11:43	Whale Island	50	9.5 %	2.2 %	123 g	47.8 %

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/Rocky Patch 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 Saturday, March 25.

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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