



Advisory Announcement
For Immediate Release: March 28, 2023

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SITKA SOUND HERRING FISHERY UPDATE # 13

Today's aerial survey covered Sitka Sound from Redoubt Bay to Cape Edgecumbe and as far north as the Magoun Islands. Survey conditions were fair with cloudy skies, 20-knot winds, and scattered snow/rain showers. Approximately 10.1 nmi of active herring spawn was seen on the southern and southeastern Kruzof Island shoreline from Cape Edgecumbe to around Shoals Point, and Fred's Creek (Figure 1). Herring predators were concentrated from Inner Point to Fred's Creek, outside of Deep Inlet, and southwest of Povorotni Point.

Department and industry vessels surveyed Sitka Sound from Harbor Point to Fred's Creek and from Indian River to Deep Inlet. Several very large schools of herring were located on sonar near Inner Point and from Deep Inlet to Leesoffskaia Bay. Numerous smaller schools were observed from Harbor Point to Halibut Point.

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

| Time | Area | Tons | % Mature Roe | % Immature Roe | Avg weight | % Female |
|-------|------------------|------|--------------|----------------|------------|----------|
| 9:16 | Leesoffskaia Bay | 100 | 10.2 % | 1.2 % | 126 g | 43.5 % |
| 9:59 | Emgeten Island | 100 | 9.9 % | 1.2 % | 121 g | 45.3 % |
| 10:48 | Deep Inlet | 200 | 11.2 % | 1.4 % | 128 g | 49.5 % |

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 sampled today 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.

An opening of the Sitka Sound herring sac roe fishery occurred today from 1:15 p.m. until 2:32 p.m., as stated in field announcement on VHF channel 10. The open area for this fishery included the waters of Deep Inlet, Aleutkina Bay, and Leesoffskaia Bay south of 57°00.81' N lat and east of 135°21.93' W long. Harvest estimates from today's fishery will be included on the next fishery update.

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 23 indicated that there is a very large biomass of herring distributed within Sitka Sound; 2) there was no herring spawn nor subsistence branch sets observed in the water on the adjacent shoreline of the open area; 3) herring began spawning in Sitka Sound on March 26 and through March 28 the cumulative spawn estimate is 10.3 nautical miles.

The next aerial survey and fishery update are scheduled for Wednesday, March 29.

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>ADF&G</i> | <i>225-5195</i> | <i>772-3801</i> | | <i>747-6688</i> | <i>465-4250</i> | <i>766-2830</i> | <i>784-3255</i> |
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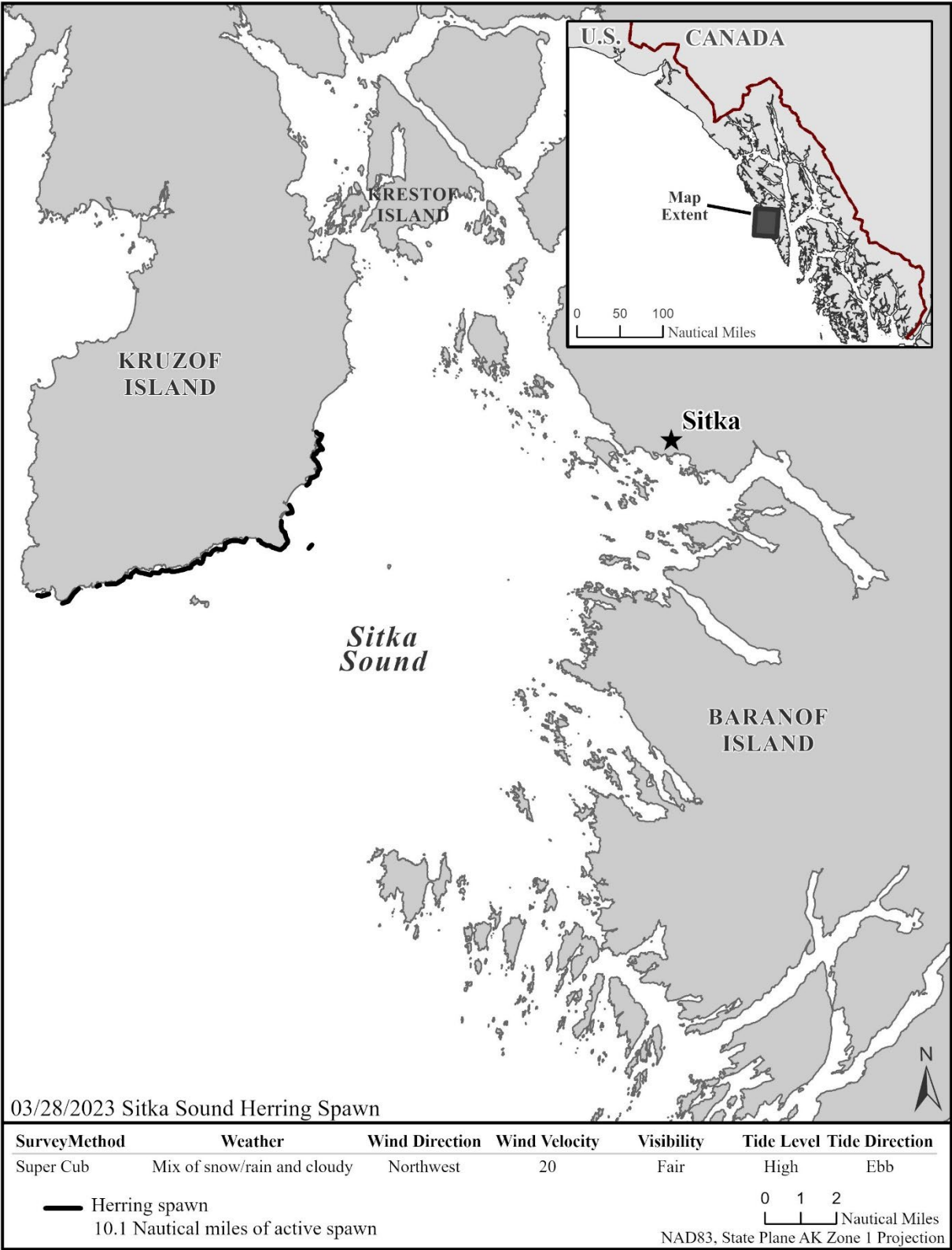


Figure 1.– Map of the active spawning areas in Sitka Sound during the aerial survey on March 28, 2023.