



**Advisory Announcement**  
**For Immediate Release: March 31, 2023**

**CONTACT: Aaron Dupuis**  
**Sitka Area Management Biologist**  
**aaron.dupuis@alaska.gov**  
**(907) 747-6688**

**SITKA SOUND HERRING FISHERY UPDATE # 16**

Today's aerial survey covered Sitka Sound from as far south as Elovai Island, to as far north as Salisbury Sound, and west to Cape Edgecumbe. Survey conditions today were poor with limited visibility from a wintry mix, overcast skies, and 20-knot winds. Herring schools were seen from the aerial survey in Aleutkina Bay. Only a small area of active spawn was observed today near Fred's Creek. Herring predators were concentrated between Frosty Reef and Goddard. Through March 31, the cumulative spawn estimate is approximately 11.6 nautical miles.

Department and industry vessels surveyed Sitka Sound and Salisbury Sound, from Sukoi Inlet to St. John Baptist Bay, the southeastern Kruzof Island shoreline from Fred's Creek to Rob Point, Deep Inlet and Eastern Channel, and near Frosty Reef. Several schools of herring were located on sonar in St. John Baptist Bay, Leesoffskaia and Aleuketna Bays. Several very large schools of herring were observed on sonar near Frosty Reef and Torsar Island. There was no opening for the Sitka Sound herring sac roe fishery today. The harvest estimate from the fishery that occurred on March 30 was approximately 1,860 tons of herring. An estimated 3,080 tons of herring have been harvested to date.

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

Time	Area	Tons	% Mature Roe	% Immature Roe	Avg weight	% Female
7:43	Leesoffskaia Bay	200	10.8 %	1.2 %	113 g	50.2 %
11:32	N Torsar Island	50	6.4 %	1.5 %	102 g	37.6 %
11:54	Frosty Reef	75	7.7 %	1.2 %	106 g	43.2 %

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 these areas the department considered the following: 1) the areas sampled today were 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, April 1.

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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