



Advisory Announcement
For Immediate Release: April 1, 2023

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

SITKA SOUND HERRING FISHERY UPDATE # 17

Today's aerial survey covered Sitka Sound from as far south as Aspid Cape, to as far north as Magoun Islands, and west to Cape Edgecumbe. Survey conditions today were fair to poor with limited visibility from snow showers, partly cloudy skies, and 10-knot winds. Approximately 1.3 nautical miles (nmi) of active spawn was observed today around Inner Point, near Kresta Point, and by southern Crow Island. Herring predators were concentrated between Frosty Reef and Goddard. Through April 1, the cumulative spawn estimate is approximately 13.0 nmi.

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, and Deep Inlet and Eastern Channel. 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 from Inner Point to Mountain Point.

One successful test set was conducted today; the results are as follows:

Time	Area	Tons	% Mature Roe	% Immature Roe	Avg weight	% Female
10:00	Mountain Point	20	1.3 %	3.5 %	73 g	36.4 %

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 area sampled today was 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 as stated in field announcement on VHF channel 10. The 2 open areas for this fishery included areas north and south of Sitka. South of Sitka included the area of Leesoffskaia Bay and Aleutkina Bay east of 135°17.56' N long and was opened from 2:00 p.m. until 3:15 p.m. (Figure 2). The area north of Sitka included the waters of Neva Strait, St. John Baptist Bay, and Salisbury Sound north of 57°16.91' N lat, south of 57°21.00' N lat, and east of 135°45.82' W long and was opened from 2:00 p.m. until 6:00 p.m. (Figure 3). The emergency order corresponding with today's opening is EO 1H0523. 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) no herring spawn nor known subsistence branch sets were observed in either area; 3) herring have been spawning in Sitka Sound since March 26 through today, April 1, the cumulative spawn estimate is 13.0 nmi; and 4) approximately 0.6 nmi of herring spawn was observed today within regulatory closed waters.

The next aerial survey and fishery update are scheduled for Sunday, April 2.

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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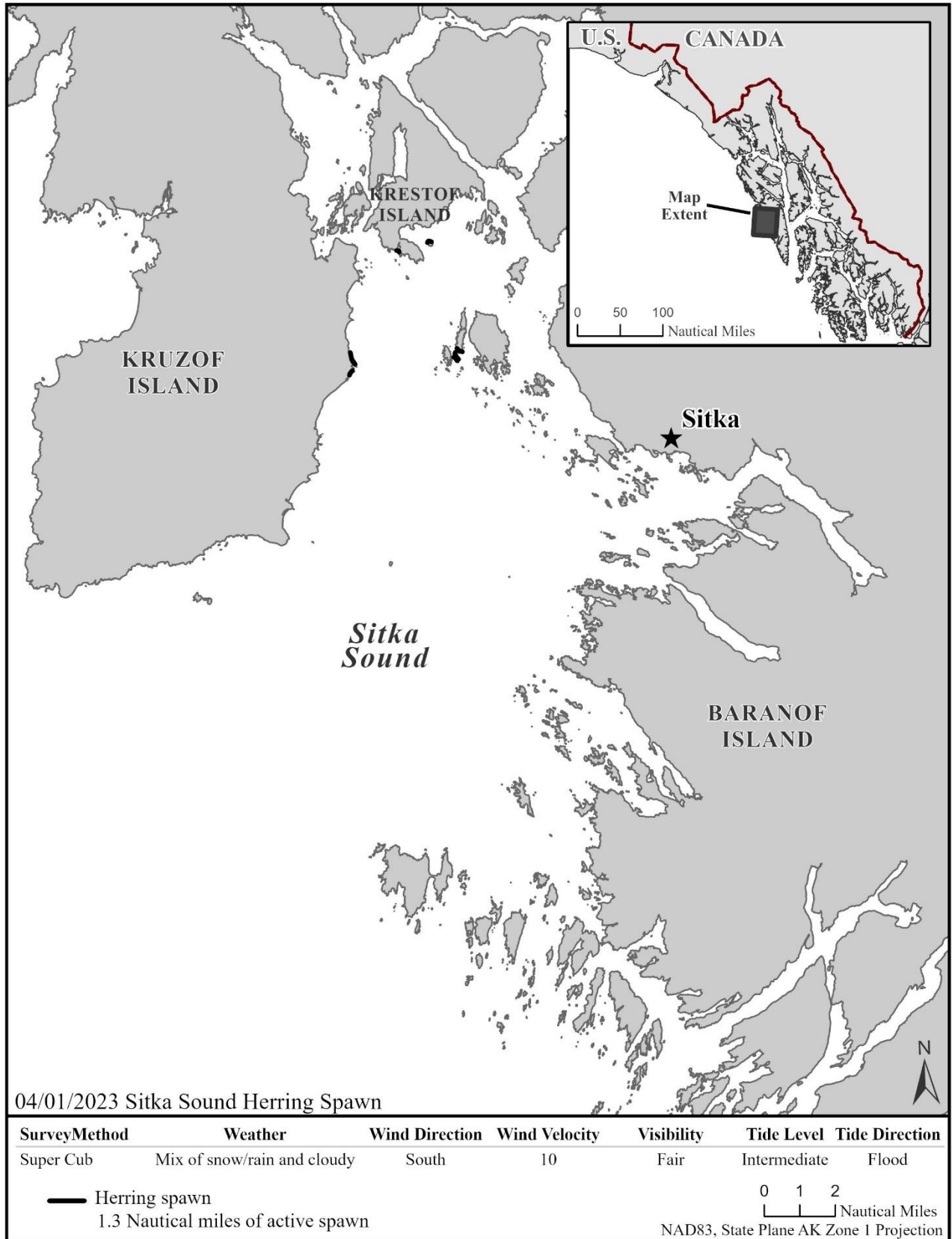


Figure 1.– Map of the active spawning areas in Sitka Sound during the aerial survey on April 1, 2023.

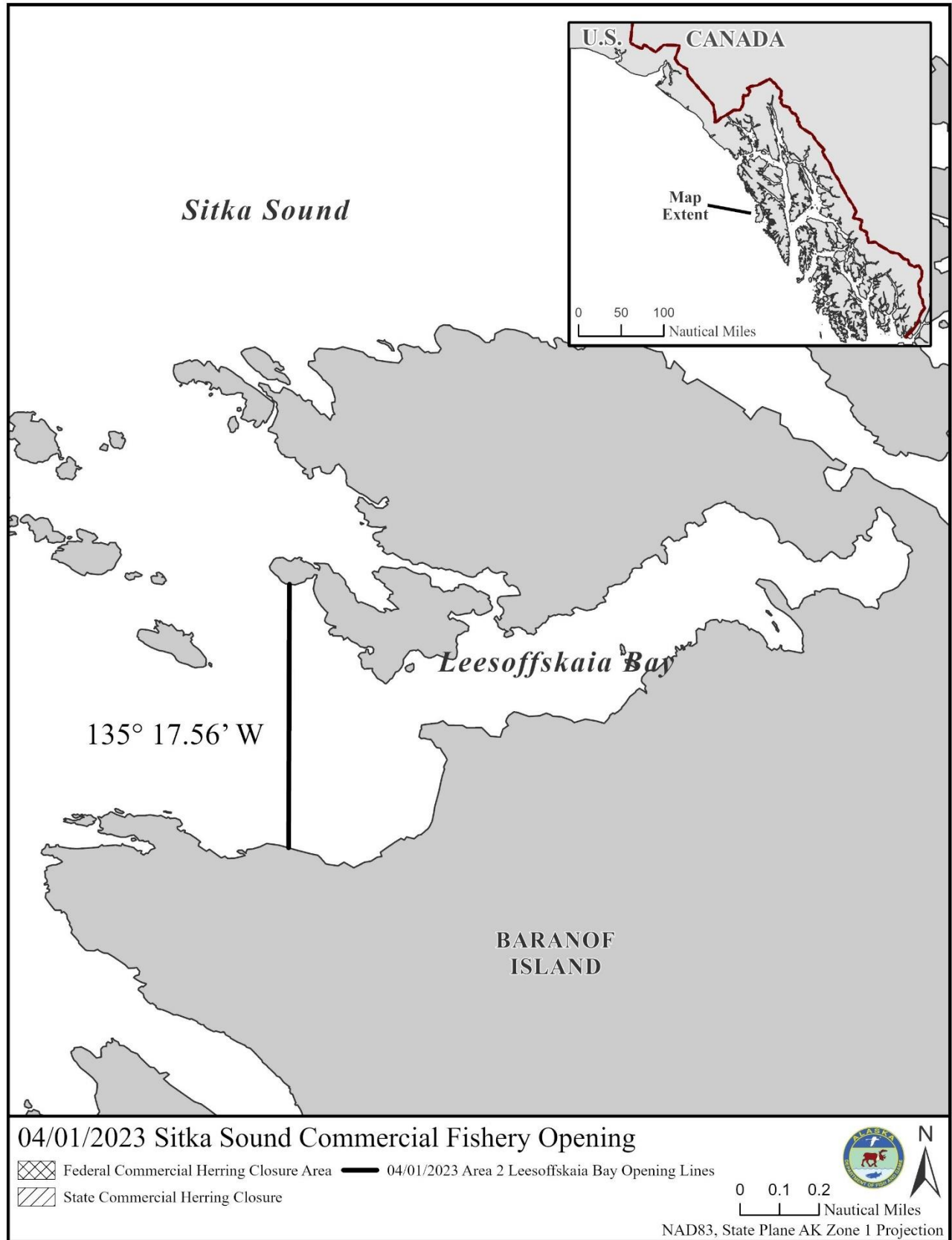


Figure 2.— Map of the Sitka Sound sac roe herring fishery southern opening on April 1, 2023.

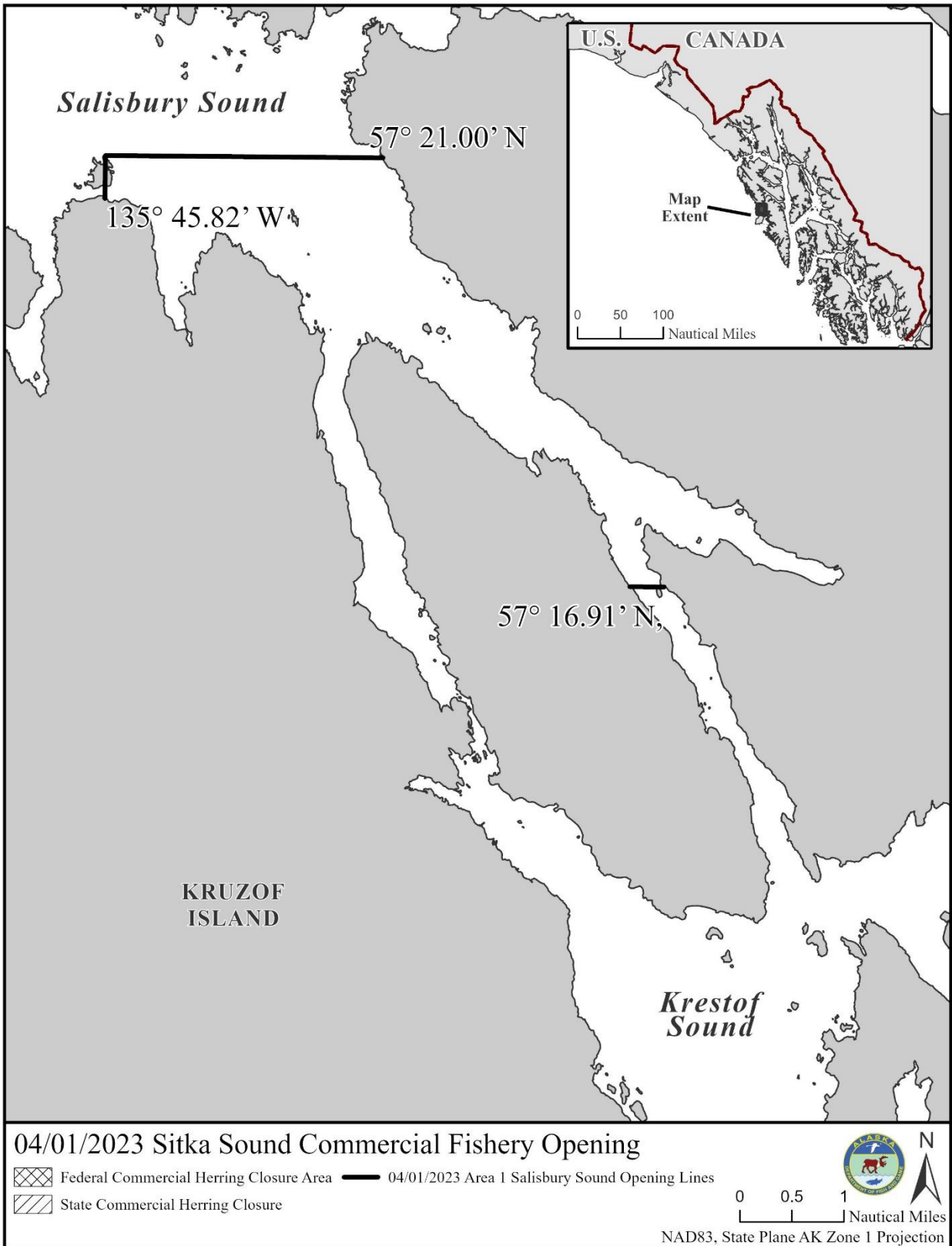


Figure 3.– Map of the Sitka Sound sac roe herring fishery northern opening on April 1, 2023.