



**Advisory Announcement**  
*For Immediate Release: April 4, 2023*

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

**SITKA SOUND HERRING FISHERY UPDATE # 20**

Today's aerial survey covered Sitka Sound from as far south as Windy Passage, to as far north as Krestof Sound, and west to St. Lazaria Island. Survey conditions today were adequate with good visibility, cloudy skies, and 30-knot winds. Herring schools were observed in Leesoffskaia Bay and Redoubt Bay. Approximately 29.3 nautical miles (nmi) of active spawn was observed today along the southern and eastern Kruzof Island shoreline to Hayward Strait, Promisla and Eastern Bays, Siginaka Islands, Big and Little Gavanski Islands, around Middle and Crow Islands, the Kasiana Islands, and from Old Sitka Rocks to Sandy Beach. Herring predators were seen concentrated from Povorotni Point to Frosty Reef. The cumulative spawn estimate through today is approximately 47.1 nmi.

Department and industry vessels surveyed Sitka Sound from Crescent Bay to Redoubt Bay. Several schools of herring were located on sonar throughout the surveyed area. The largest concentration of herring schools was located between Pirates Cove and Redoubt Bay.

Three successful test set was conducted today; the results were:

| Time  | Area         | Tons | % Mature Roe | % Immature Roe | Avg weight | % Female |
|-------|--------------|------|--------------|----------------|------------|----------|
| 8:35  | Redoubt Bay  | 150  | 11.1%        | 0.1 %          | 126 g      | 44.9 %   |
| 8:52  | Kidney Cove  | 50   | 10.7 %       | 0.0 %          | 119 g      | 45.2 %   |
| 10:21 | Cape Burunof | 100  | 11.8 %       | 0.2 %          | 129 g      | 50.0 %   |

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.

An opening of the Sitka Sound herring sac roe fishery occurred today from 12:15 p.m. until 5:00 p.m. as stated in field announcement on VHF channel 10. The open area for this fishery included the waters of Sitka Sound, Redoubt Bay, Pirates Cove, and Samsing Cove north of 56°54.68' N long, south of 56°54.68' N long, east of 135°25.51' W long, and west of 135°21.12' W long (Figure 2). For clarification, the open area included all waters of Redoubt Bay. The emergency order corresponding with today's opening is EO 1H0623. 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 within the area opened today; 3) herring have been spawning in Sitka Sound since March 26 through today, April 4, the cumulative spawn estimate is 47.1 nmi; and 4) a cumulative estimate of approximately 15.6 nmi of herring spawn has been observed within regulatory closed waters this season.

The next aerial survey and fishery update are scheduled for Wednesday, April 5.

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>

| <i>Office</i>    | <i>Ketchikan</i> | <i>Petersburg</i> | <i>Wrangell</i> | <i>Sitka</i>    | <i>Juneau</i>   | <i>Haines</i>   | <i>Yakutat</i>  |
|------------------|------------------|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| <i>ADF&amp;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> |
| <i>AWT</i>       | <i>225-5111</i>  | <i>772-3983</i>   | <i>874-3215</i> | <i>747-3254</i> | <i>465-4000</i> | <i>766-2533</i> | <i>784-3220</i> |

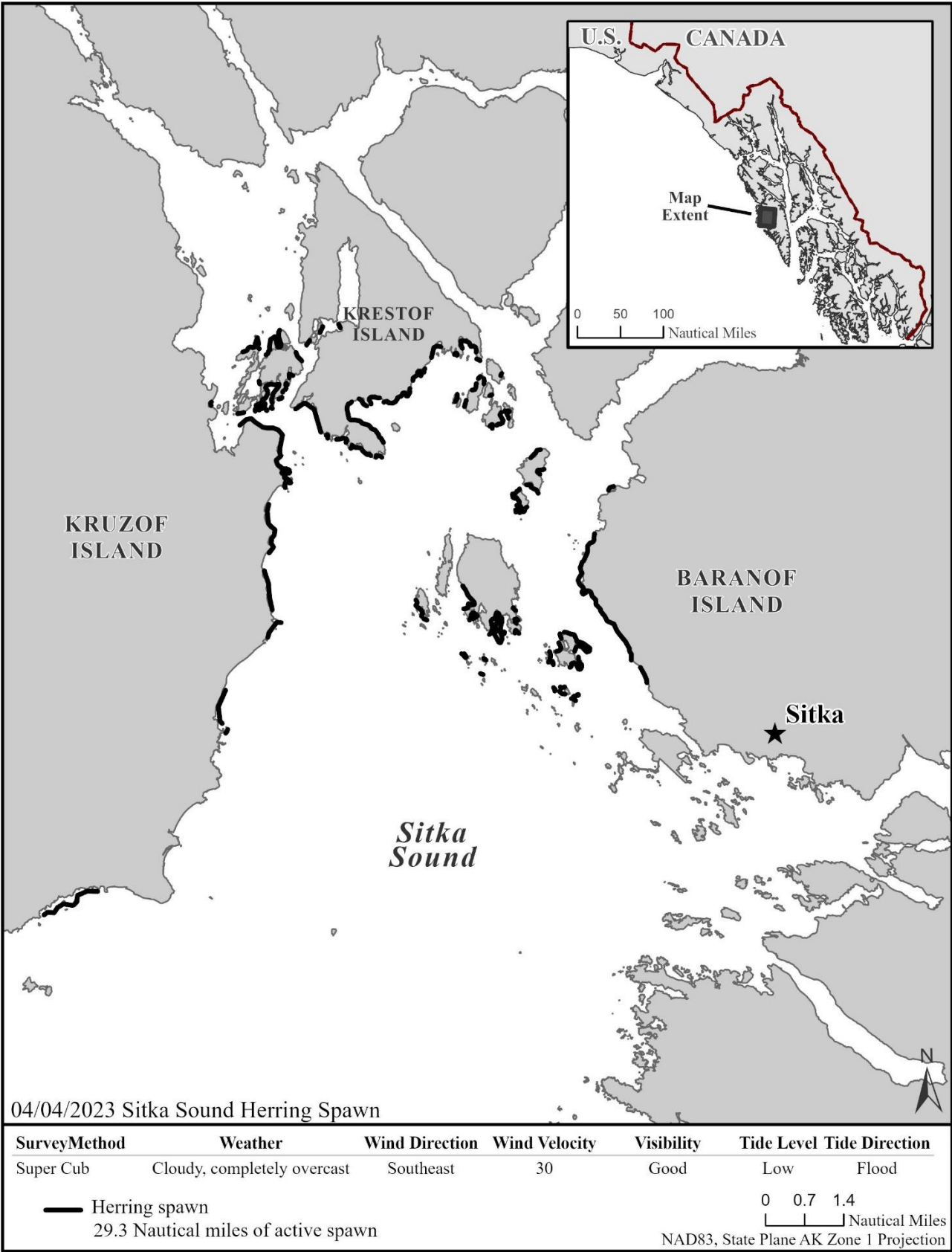


Figure 1.— Map of the active spawning areas in Sitka Sound during the aerial survey on April 4, 2023.

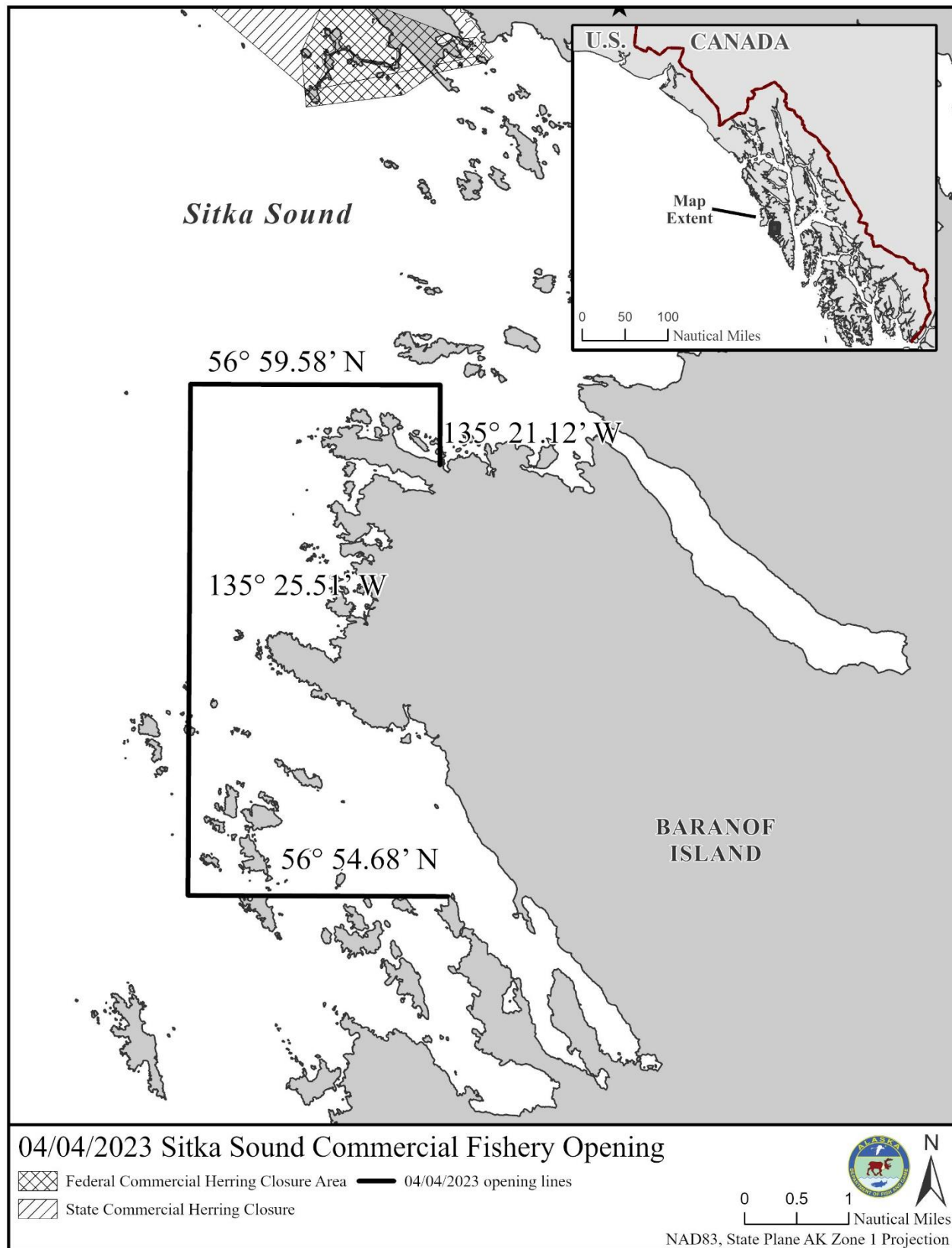


Figure 2.— Map of the Sitka Sound sac roe herring fishery southern opening on April 4, 2023.