



Advisory Announcement

For Immediate Release: April 5, 2023

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SITKA SOUND HERRING FISHERY UPDATE # 21

Today's aerial survey covered Sitka Sound from as far south as Frosty Reef, to as far north as St. John Baptist Bay, and west to St. Lazaria Island. Survey conditions today were fair with variable visibility, cloudy skies with rain/snow mix, and 30-knot winds. Approximately 17 nautical miles (nmi) of active spawn was observed today, mostly concentrated in the Magoun Islands, Promisla and Eastern Bays, Olga Strait, Siganaka Islands, Big and Little Gavanski Islands, south Middle Island, and Kasiana Islands. The cumulative spawn estimate through today is approximately 55.5 nmi.

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

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

Time	Area	Tons	% Mature Roe	% Immature Roe	Avg weight	% Female
11:24	N. Calligan Island	100	11.2%	0.2 %	125 g	45.2 %
13:01	S. Calligan Island	100	10.6%	0.4 %	129 g	44.6 %
12:06	S. Calligan Island	10	8.3 %	0.8 %	99 g	41.8 %

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 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 4:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. as stated in field announcement on VHF channel 10. The open area for this fishery included the waters of Sitka Sound north of 56°50.20' N lat, south of 56°52.21' N lat, and east of 135°25.09' W long. The emergency order corresponding with today's opening is EO 1H0723. Approximately, 800-tons of herring were harvested during the fishery that occurred on April 4. Approximately 5,000-tons of herring have been harvested this season. 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 5, and the cumulative spawn estimate is 55.5 nmi; and 4) a cumulative estimate of approximately 16.2 nmi of herring spawn has been observed within regulatory closed waters this season.

The next aerial survey and fishery update are scheduled for Thursday, April 6.

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>AWT</i>	225-5111	772-3983	874-3215	747-3254	465-4000	766-2533	784-3220

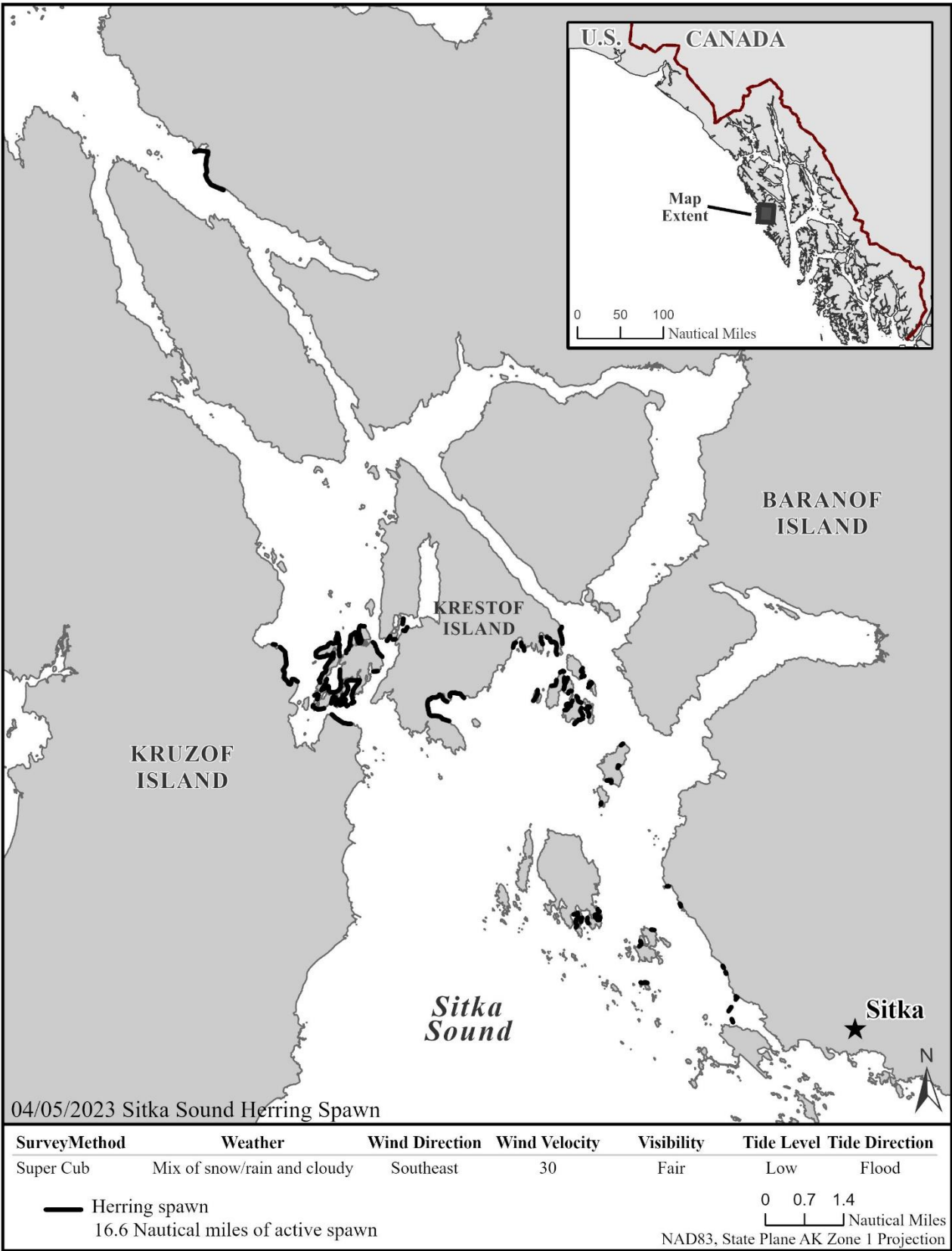


Figure 1.– Map of the active spawning areas in Sitka Sound during the aerial survey on April 5, 2023

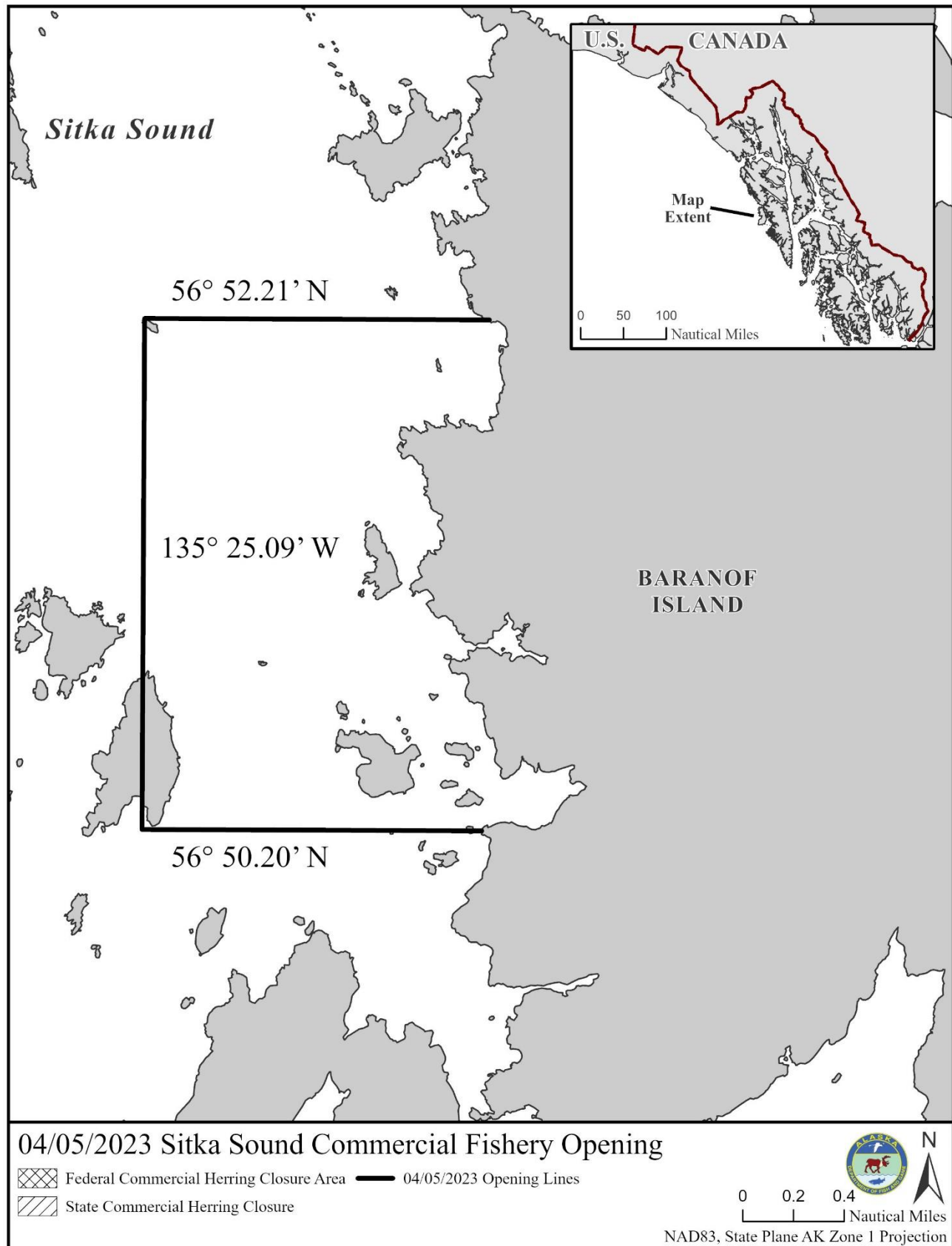


Figure 2.— Map of the Sitka Sound sac roe herring fishery southern opening on April 5, 2023.