



Advisory Announcement
For Immediate Release: March 22, 2024

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SITKA SOUND HERRING FISHERY UPDATE # 5

Today's aerial survey covered Sitka Sound from Cape Burunof to Salisbury Sound and Cape Edgecumbe. No herring schools or spawn were observed today. Herring predators were seen throughout the surveyed area; however, predator activity was focused along the Kruzof Island shoreline from Inner Point to Hayward Strait. The largest concentrations of humpback whales were located in Hayward Strait. Sea lions were concentrated on points and rock piles between Sitka Point and the Magoun Islands. In general, predator locations were similar to the previous aerial survey.

Department and industry vessels surveyed Sitka Sound from Harbor Point to Hayward Strait and along the Kruzof Island shoreline from Sitka Point to Krestof Sound. Scattered smaller schools of herring were observed between Harbor Point and Old Sitka Rocks and very large schools of herring were seen from Inner Point and Hayward Strait.

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

| Time | Area | Tons | % Mature Roe | % Immature Roe | Avg weight | % Female |
|-------|----------------|------|--------------|----------------|------------|----------|
| 10:03 | Hayward Strait | 150 | 10.7 % | 3.0 % | 137 g | 53 % |
| 10:57 | Inner Point | 150 | 6.9 % | 2.9 % | 133 g | 39 % |
| 12:44 | Hayward Strait | 200 | 11.3 % | 1.8 % | 149 g | - |

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 near Inner Point and Hayward Strait 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 these areas.

An opening of the Sitka Sound herring sac roe fishery occurred today from 4:00 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 Hayward south of 57°09.39' N lat, north of 57°08.00' N lat, and west of 135°30.76' W long (Figure 1). The emergency order corresponding with today's opening is EO 1H0224. No harvest estimates from today's fishery are available at this time but 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 20 indicated that there is a very large biomass of herring distributed within Sitka Sound along the Kruzof Island shoreline; 2) scattered schools of herring were observed within regulatory closed waters on today's vessel survey from Harbor Point to Old Sitka Rocks; 3) while subsistence branch sets were observed within the open area, no herring spawn was observed.

The next aerial survey and fishery update are scheduled for Saturday, March 23.

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> | 225-5195 | 772-3801 | | 747-6688 | 465-4250 | 766-2830 | 784-3255 |
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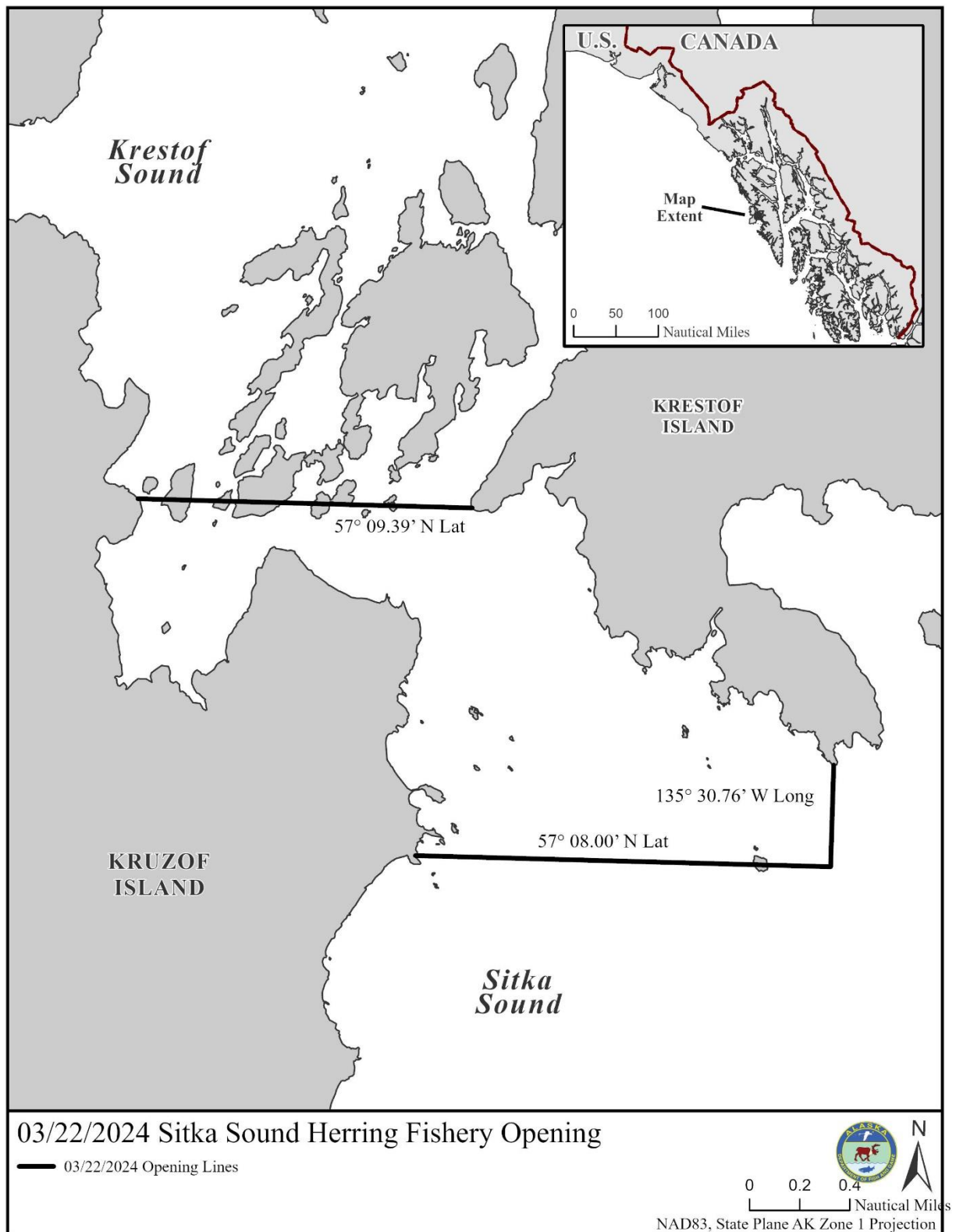


Figure 1.— Map of the initial area open for the March 22, 2024, Sitka Sound sac roe herring fishery.