



**Advisory Announcement**  
***For Immediate Release: March 26, 2024***

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**SITKA SOUND HERRING FISHERY UPDATE # 9**

Today's aerial survey covered Sitka Sound from Dorothy Narrows to Krestof Sound and St. Lazaria Island. Herring schools were visible from the air in the vicinity of the Magoun Islands, Crescent Bay, and Leesoffskaia Bay. Approximately 8.6 nautical miles (nmi) of herring spawn was observed on Kasiana Island, Halibut Point, Apple Island, Crow Island, Gagarin Island, and Fred's Creek (Figure 1). Herring predators were widely distributed throughout the surveyed area; however, predator activity was focused along the Kruzof Island shoreline from St. Lazaria to Hayward Strait. The largest concentrations of humpback whales were located near St. Lazaria Island and near Inner Point. Sea lions were concentrated on points and rock piles between Fred's Creek and the Magoun Islands.

Department and industry vessels surveyed Sitka Sound from Harbor Point to Krestof Sound, in Promisla Bay, and from Crescent Bay to Samsing Cove. Numerous large schools of herring were observed along the Sitka road system from Harbor Point to Magic Island, in Deep Inlet, and in northern Hayward Strait, and southern Krestof Sound.

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

| Time | Area       | Tons | % Mature Roe | % Immature Roe | Avg weight | % Female |
|------|------------|------|--------------|----------------|------------|----------|
| 9:22 | Deep Inlet | 300  | 11.7 %       | 0.3 %          | 144 g      | 50.5 %   |

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 area near Deep Inlet is outside the commercial closed waters and core subsistence areas; 2) the fish encountered during test fishing represented a small fraction of the overall biomass in this area; 3) herring spawn was observed within commercial closed waters and core subsistence areas today.

An opening of the Sitka Sound herring sac roe fishery occurred today from 1:00 p.m. until 6:00 p.m., as stated in field announcement on VHF channel 10. The two open areas for this fishery included areas north and south of Sitka. South of Sitka included the area of Deep Inlet, Samsing Cove, Aleutkina Bay and contiguous waters south of 57°00.81' N lat and east of 135°21.93' N lat (Figure 2). The area north of Sitka included the waters of Hayward Strait and Krestof Sound south of 57°11.24' N lat and north of 57°08.94' N lat (Figure 3). The emergency order corresponding with today's opening is EO 1H0524. No harvest estimates from today's fishery are available at this time but will be included in the next fishery update. Approximately 1,780 tons of herring were harvested in the fishery that occurred on March 25. Since March 22, an estimated 4,030 tons of herring have been harvested.

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 throughout Sitka Sound; 2) schools of herring were observed within regulatory closed waters on the vessel survey that occurred on March 26 from Harbor Point to Starrigavan Bay; 3) herring spawn was observed within commercial closed waters and core subsistence areas today; 3) while subsistence branch sets were observed within the open northern area, no herring spawn was observed.

The next aerial survey and fishery update are scheduled for Wednesday, March 27.

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&amp;G</i> | 225-5195         | 772-3801          |                 | 747-6688     | 465-4250      | 766-2830      | 784-3255       |
| <i>AWT</i>       | 225-5111         | 772-3983          | 874-3215        | 747-3254     | 465-4000      | 766-2533      | 784-3220       |

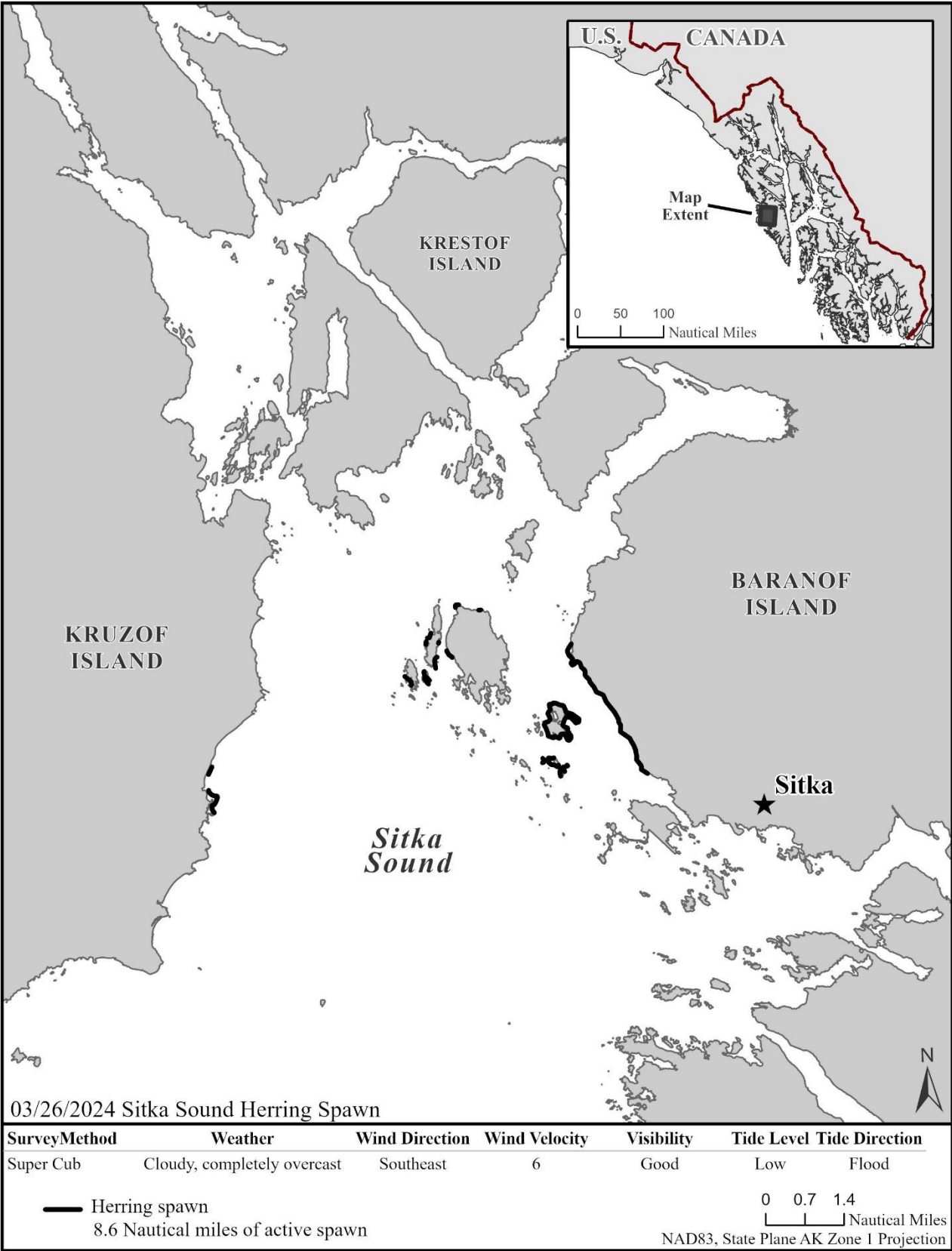


Figure 1.– Map of the active spawning areas in Sitka Sound during the aerial survey on March 26, 2024.

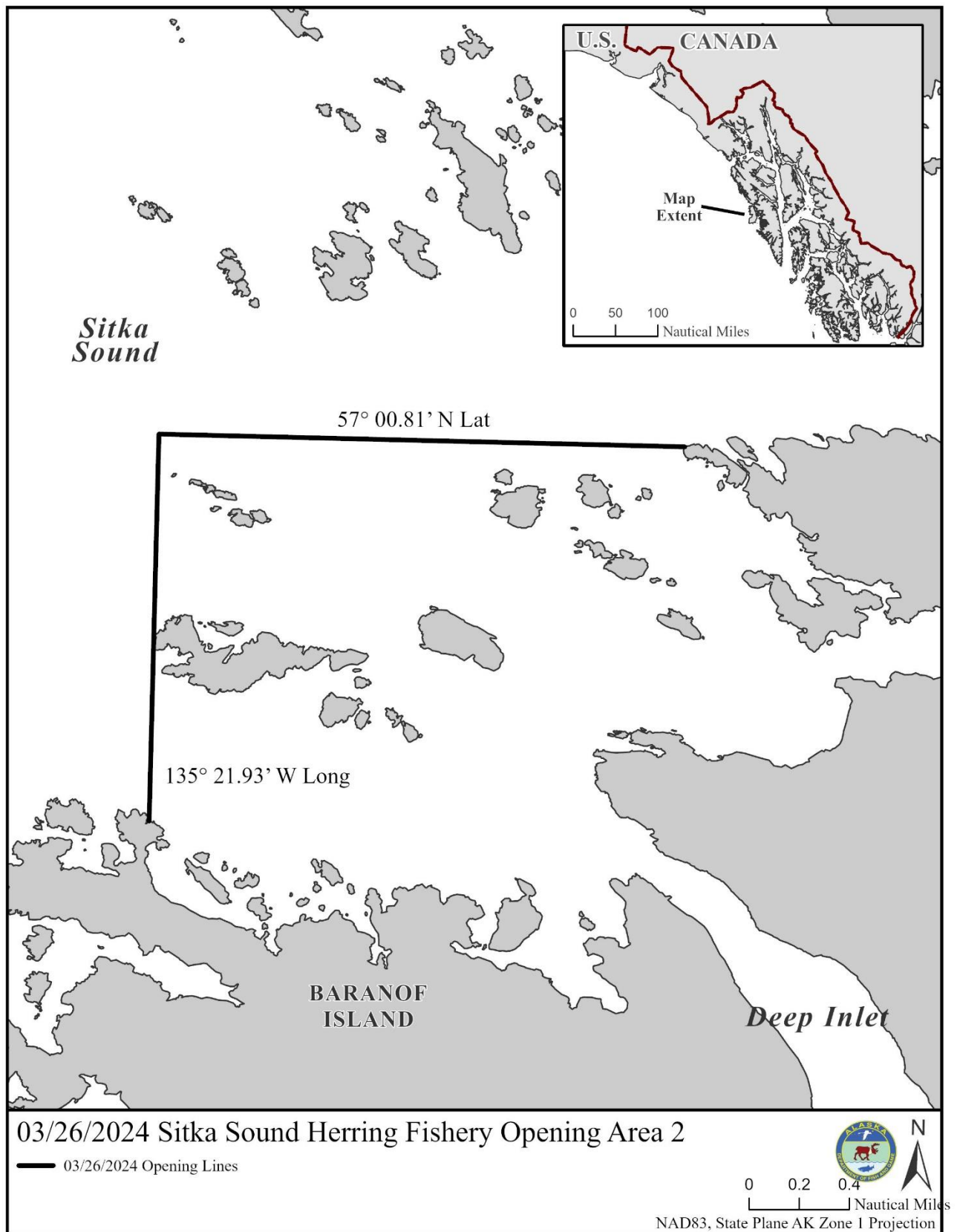


Figure 2.— Map of the southern area open for the March 26, 2024, Sitka Sound sac roe herring fishery.

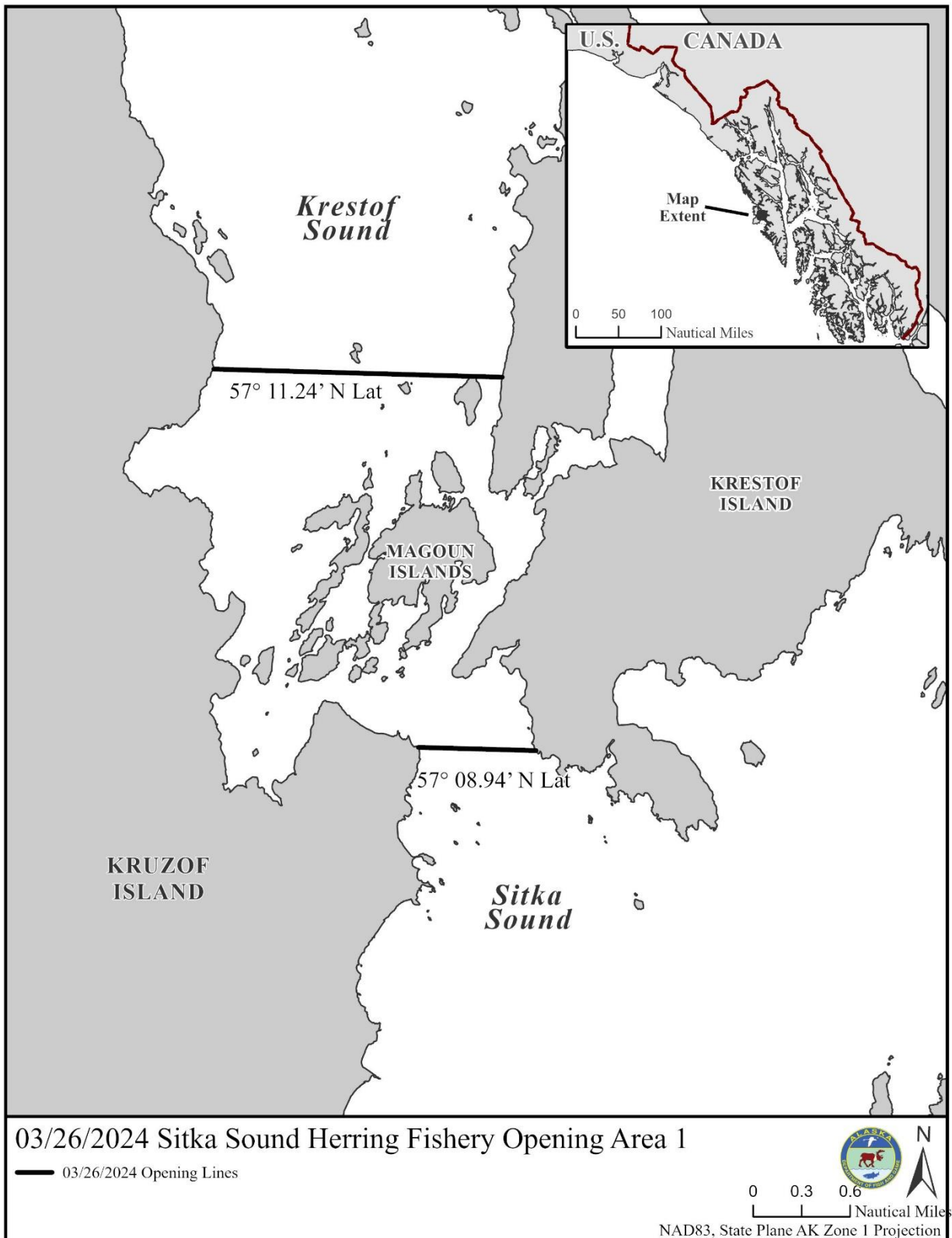


Figure 3.— Map of the northern area open for the March 26, 2024, Sitka Sound sac roe herring fishery.