
ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



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Sitka Area Office
304 Lake Street, Room 103
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Date: March 18, 2013
Time: 4:45 p.m.

SITKA SOUND HERRING FISHERY ANNOUNCEMENT

Sitka....The Alaska Department of Fish and Game announced today the final guideline harvest level (GHL) for the 2013 Sitka Sound herring sac roe fishery is 11,549 tons. This is approximately 500 tons greater than the preliminary GHL announced in December 2012. This adjustment is based on the winter test fishery sample results showing generally larger average weights-at-age this winter compared to 2012.

The second aerial survey of the 2013 season was conducted today covering areas of Sitka Sound north of Cape Burunof and Salisbury Sound. Visibility was generally good throughout the survey. No herring were visible from the air. In Sitka Sound, a total of 19 whales were observed. Similar to the previous survey, whales continued to be concentrated in waters offshore between Kruzof Island and Crow Island. Four whales were seen scattered offshore of Black Rock and two whales were seen east of Border Rocks. The largest sea lion concentration was off Kresta Point where there were approximately 200 sea lions. Other sightings of sea lions include: 85 sea lions along the west shore of Gagarin and Crow Islands, 25 off Guide Island, 25 off the southern end of the Siginaka Islands, 37 on the east side of the Gavanski Islands, and 16 on the west side of the Gavanski Islands. South of Sitka in Eastern Channel there were a few sea lions near the entrance of Silver Bay and one whale near The Echolms. In Salisbury Sound, there were nine whales between Scraggy Island and Kane Island, with approximately 60 sea lions also seen in this vicinity.

A seine vessel attempted to obtain a test sample today but no sample was taken. The herring were concentrated in deeper waters and not available to the gear. The vessel captain reported seeing a large biomass of herring in the deeper waters west of Gagarin and Crow Islands and near Guide Island. Herring were also seen in the deeper waters near Old Sitka Rocks.

The department plans to have a test sample taken in order to monitor the progress of herring roe maturation. The next aerial survey is scheduled for Wednesday, March 20.

The department plans to dispatch the *R/V Kestrel* from Petersburg to Sitka when roe samples indicate the need to put the fishery on 2-hour notice. A pre-fishery organizational meeting will be scheduled around the time the fishery is placed on 2-hour notice. The next announcement will occur no later than Wednesday, March 20.

Permit holders wanting to make practice sets may do so in the deeper waters of Eastern Channel south of Jamestown Bay.

Updates will be posted on the ADF&G web site listed below and on a recorded message phone at (907) 747-1009.

News releases web site: <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=cfnews.main>.

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