

**ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME  
DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES  
NEWS RELEASE**



*Cora Campbell, Commissioner  
Jeff Regnart, Director*



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Time: 2:30 p.m.

**NORTON SOUND COMMERCIAL HERRING BAIT FISHERY OPENS**

At the request of the buyer, the department will open the commercial herring bait fishery to set gillnets effective 12:00 noon, Monday, May 19 until further notice. NSEDC has established a market quota of 200–550 tons of bait herring this season. Processing and tender vessels are not scheduled to arrive in Norton Sound until May 24. Until then, buying operations will be limited to Norton Sound Seafood Products processing plant in Unalakleet.

The run of herring in Norton Sound is occurring about a week earlier than expected this season. On May 15, ADF&G biologists observed approximately 2,000 tons of herring from Klikitarik Point to Tolstoi Point. This morning, pilots also observed herring spawn near Klikitarik Point. Leaving the fishery open continuously allows the buyer to direct the bulk of the fishing fleet to areas where harvest efficiency can be maximized. To commercial fish for bait herring, permit holders must have a valid 2014 bait or sac roe herring permit. Crew members must have a 2014 crew member license or current year state of Alaska commercial fishery permit. For example, a 2014 Norton Sound king crab or salmon permit can substitute as a crewmember license if one intends to crew on a herring vessel. Permit holders should be in contact with Norton Sound Seafood Products once the fishery is underway to ensure there is a market for their catch.

The ADF&G Unalakleet field office is open with a test fishery crew to conduct test fishery operations and assist the public with information needs. Initial commercial fishing effort in southeastern Norton Sound is expected to be hampered by floating ice hazards and a lack of tenders at onset of the fishery.

If you have any questions regarding the commercial bait herring fishery, please call the ADF&G Nome Area office at 1-800-560-2271, or the Unalakleet field office at 1-907-624-3921.

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