
ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

FISHERY UPDATE



Sam Cotten, Commissioner
Jeff Regnart, Director



Contact:
Dave Gordon

Sitka Area Office
304 Lake Street, Room 103
Sitka, Alaska 99835

Phone: (907) 747-6688

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Fax: (907) 747-6693

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SITKA SOUND HERRING FISHERY UPDATE #2

Yesterday, March 18, the Sitka Sound herring sac roe fishery was opened from 3:30 p.m. until 6:30 p.m. in an area west and north of Crow Island, Middle Island, and Gagarin Island. Fishing activity was concentrated in the deeper waters west Gagarin Island. Approximately 630 tons were harvested. On grounds sampling indicating good mature roe content and the number of sets released due to lower quality herring was minimal. The small harvest was due to herring sounding into deeper waters by the time the fishery opened. Approximately 15 seiners and 20 tenders participated in the fishery. The opening was called based on two of three test samples indicating good quality herring were available. The results of the samples were as follows:

North Gagarin Island – 7.1% mature, 2.2% immature, 131 gram average weight,

NW Crow Island – 11.5% mature, 0.5% immature, 161 gram average weight,

North Gagarin Island – 13.1% mature, 1.7% immature, 166 gram average weight

An aerial survey was conducted March 18 covering Sitka Sound and south to Redoubt Bay. No herring spawn was seen. Herring predators continued to be concentrated in the areas west and south of the Middle, Crow, and Gagarin Islands. Several whales and scattered sea lions were seen in the Long Island area south of Sitka.

This season, the fishery is being conducted as a “controlled” fishery, whereby industry is determining the level of harvest each day depending on available processing and tendering capacities. This allows the department to set more flexible fishing times and area. The guideline harvest level is 8,712 tons.

With good quality herring harvested yesterday, plans are to reopen the fishery at approximately 9:00 a.m. in the same general area opened yesterday but expanded to include the waters to the Kruzof Island shoreline and north to include the waters of Hayward Strait, Promisla Bay, and Eastern Bay.

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

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