

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



*Sam Cotten, Commissioner
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Date Issued: May 12, 2016
Time: 12:00 p.m.

2016 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 p.m., Friday, May 13 until further notice. NSEDC has established a bait herring quota of approximately 60 tons of bait herring this season. Processing and buying operations will be limited to Norton Sound Seafood Products processing plant in Unalakleet.

The run of herring in Norton Sound is occurring a week earlier than last season's very early run of herring. Significant spawning activity was recently observed at Klikitarik Point by NSEDC biologists conducting an aerial survey May 11. Additionally, ripe and spawned out herring were harvested in subsistence nets earlier this past week near Unalakleet.

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 2016 bait or sac roe herring permit. Crew members must have a 2016 crew member license or current year state of Alaska commercial fishery permit. For example, a 2016 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 not yet open and a test fishery crew will not be conducting operations this season. Permit holders should contact the Nome ADF&G office for information needs.

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 443-5167. Good Luck and Good Fishing.

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