
ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



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Date: January 12, 2017

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Time: 11:15 a.m.

2017 SOUTHEAST ALASKA HERRING SPAWN-ON-KELP POUND FISHERIES

Sitka.... The Alaska Department of Fish and Game today announced the following information concerning the Southeast Alaska herring spawn-on-kelp pound fisheries.

Section 3-B and District 4 (Craig/Klawock): The 2016/2017 guideline harvest level (GHL) has been set at 872 tons. This GHL is based on a forecasted mature spawning biomass of 7,833 tons and a harvest rate of 11.1%. Regulations determine that the winter food and bait fishery is allocated 60% of the GHL and the remaining 40% goes to the herring spawn-on-kelp fishery. The Craig winter food and bait fishery is not yet closed but it is estimated that there will be no unharvested winter food and bait quota allocated to the spawn-on-kelp fishery.

This sets the GHL for the Craig /Klawock spawn-on-kelp fishery at 40% of the total GHL which is 349 tons. The department estimates that up to 20 tons of herring are utilized for each closed pound structure. Therefore, a GHL of 349 tons will allow for a fishery that utilizes no more than 20 closed pound structures. In 2015, there were 76 pound structures on the grounds in Craig. In 2016, the number of structures decreased to 46 due to recent Board of Fisheries changes in kelp allocations. Based on these numbers and the current kelp allocation, the department has determined that a further reduction in the number of pound structures is needed to prosecute a fishery for 2017. Prosecuting a fishery in 2017 will require that not more than 20 closed pound structures are fished.

Fishermen are advised that regulations allow for open pounding. Open pounds as defined in 5 AAC 27.130(e)(2) will not count toward the 20 allowable pound structures on the grounds.

For 2017, the following regulations will be in place:

- **Pursuant to the department's authority to restrict the placement of herring into pounds as necessary for the conservation of herring stocks in the Craig herring pound fishery, herring may only be placed in a closed pound that is operated by 6 or more permit holders.** The department's intent is to allow all interested permit holders to participate in the fishery, have an orderly fishery, and keep the harvest within the GHL. Herring may not be placed in a closed pound operated by fewer than 6 permit holders. Product from an unauthorized closed pound will become property of the State of Alaska.
- **Daily fishing hours will be from 6:00 a.m. through 6:00 p.m.** Fishing will be closed at night so that seining can be easily observed by both the department and enforcement personnel.

- If the department observes more than 20 closed pound structures on the grounds that are being prepared to introduce fish or have fish, the department may close the fishery to any further harvest and placement of herring into closed pounds in order to keep the harvest within the GHL.

Fishermen need to be aware that all other regulations apply including the following:

- Each permit holder must be present during capture and introduction of fish, when kelp product is being collected, and during time of harvest (5 AAC 27.185(o)).
- The Craig/Klawock pound fishery will be open for purse seining after 12:00 noon, Friday, March 17, 2017, until 12:00 noon, Wednesday, May 10, 2017, unless closed earlier by emergency order (5 AAC 27.185(g)(1)).
- Pounds and associated equipment may be placed in the waters of Section 3-B from Thursday, March 2, 2017, until 12:00 noon, Wednesday, May 31, 2017 (5 AAC 27.185(w)(1)).

The kelp allocation per permit holder in place for the 2017 season is as follows (5 AAC 27.185(c)):

Closed Pounds: 500 blades per permit.

Single Permit Open Pounds: 1,000 blades per permit.

Multiple Permit Open Pounds: 3,000 blades per permit.

District 7 (Ernest Sound): **will be closed**. The 2016/2017 forecast for Ernest Sound is below the 2,500 ton threshold necessary to conduct a commercial fishery.

Section 12-A (Tenakee Inlet): **will be closed**. The 2016/2017 forecast for Tenakee Inlet is below the 3,000 ton threshold necessary to conduct a commercial fishery.

Section 13-C (Hoonah Sound): **will be closed**. The 2016/2017 forecast for Hoonah Sound is below the 2,000 ton threshold necessary to conduct a commercial fishery.

All pound operators are reminded that they must have a current Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission limited entry permit prior to introducing kelp or herring into their pounds. All *Macrocystis* kelp harvesters must have a kelp harvest permit prior to harvesting kelp for a closed or open pound. These permits must be in the possession of the pound operator and kelp harvester at all times during the fishing operations. *Macrocystis* kelp permits are currently available in all Southeast Alaska Department of Fish & Game offices.

Spawn-on-kelp fishers and processors should read the 2017 SOUTHEAST ALASKA HERRING SPAWN-ON-KELP POUND FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN for an overview of the management approach and regulations for the 2017 season. The plan is expected to be available by March 16. The 2016-2018 Statewide Commercial Herring Fishing Regulations booklet contains detailed regulations for this fishery.

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

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