
ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



Cora Campbell, Commissioner
Jeff Regnart, Director



Contact:
Dave Gordon

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

Phone: (907) 747-6688

Date: December 12, 2012

Fax: (907) 747-6693

Time: 3:30 p.m.

SITKA SOUND HERRING FISHERY ANNOUNCEMENT

Sitka. . . The Alaska Department of Fish and Game announced today the preliminary guideline harvest level (GHL) for the 2013 Sitka Sound sac roe herring fishery is 11,055 tons. The age structured analysis (ASA) model forecast of 74,694 tons accounts for changes in the Sitka herring biomass through 2012. Due to substantial decreases in herring biomass observed in Sitka and at several other spawning locations in Southeast Alaska between 2011 and 2012, and because there may be factors affecting the herring population that cannot be incorporated into the model yet, the department has chosen to set a precautionary guideline harvest level for 2013. The 2013 GHL was calculated by reducing the ASA derived GHL by 25%, which approximates the harvest level that would be available if the survival between 2012 and 2013 is similar to a survival rate estimated by the ASA model for the period 1980-1998. This accounts for the possibility that survival rates have declined from higher survival rates estimated for the period 1999-2012.

The ASA model uses a long time series of abundance and age composition data from department surveys conducted during and following the spring fishery. Herring abundance is estimated using aerial surveys designed to map the length of shoreline receiving spawn, and dive surveys which estimate the density of eggs and the average width of the spawn. The department documented 55.9 nautical miles of herring spawn in the Sitka Sound area in the spring of 2012, slightly below the recent 10-year average of 60.4 nautical miles. Spawning herring sampled in the spring of 2012 showed an age composition of 12% age-3, 21% age-4, 23% age-5, 18% age-6, 13% age-7, and 13% age-8+. The ASA model estimates that 68,440 tons of herring spawned in the Sitka Sound area in the spring of 2012 and the commercial sac roe herring harvest was 13,231 tons, 16% of a total return of 81,671 tons. The forecast indicates that the spawning stock in 2013 will consist of 16% age-3, 18% age-4, 13% age-5, 17% age-6, 12% age-7, and 24% age-8 and older herring.

The forecast and GHL for the 2013 fishery will be finalized using average weight-at-age from sampling of the winter test fishery, to be conducted during late-January or early-February, 2013. The final forecast will be announced in late-February.

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

<i>Office</i>	<i>Ketchikan</i>	<i>Petersburg</i>	<i>Wrangell</i>	<i>Sitka</i>	<i>Juneau</i>	<i>Haines</i>	<i>Yakutat</i>
<i>ADF&G</i>	225-5195	772-3801	874-3822	747-6688	465-4250	766-2830	784-3255
<i>AWT</i>	225-5111	772-3983	874-3215	747-3254	465-4000	766-2533	784-3220
