

AAC: 5 AAC 27.190. Herring Management Plan for Southeastern Alaska Area

Issue:

I would like to briefly address the dwindling population of herring in southeast Alaska. Subsistence fishermen and communities rely on this resource as a food source and a traditional cultural practice. The ecosystem including many species of fish, bird, and mammal relies on the resource of herring on many levels. Many other commercial fisheries are also dependent upon herring to sustain populations of other fish. It is important to conserve the herring populations and put priority on our subsistence communities and the ecosystem before commercial and special interests.

The decline in herring populations is due to a myriad of causes including climate change, ocean acidification, predation by whales and squid, and more. Our level of control over these factors is very low. However, the harvest of commercial boats and the management plans governing it is within our control. To conserve herring for future generations, the ecosystem, and to sustain species of other commercial fisheries the Board of Fisheries should move to reduce the annual commercial quota of the Sac Row herring fishery.

I am a commercial fisherman and participate in the commercial harvest of halibut and black cod annually. Even though I depend on fishing for my livelihood, I believe management should always take into account the impact on the environment and on subsistence harvests and keep those factors higher priority than commercial interests.

Solution:

We would like the Board to consider the rapidly changing ecosystem of the Eastern Gulf of Alaska and Sitka Sound and take management actions to help provide for a robust herring population and sustainable commercial fishery by lowering the harvest rate of the sac roe fishery in Sitka Sound either through a reduced sliding scale (0-10%) and/or through an ecosystem set aside taken off the commercial fishery quota.

Sincerely,

Zak Wass

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