
ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

FISHERY UPDATE



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2019 SOUTHEAST ALASKA HERRING SUMMARY

Petersburg...The Alaska Department of Fish and Game announced today the following information regarding herring returns throughout Southeast Alaska during 2019.

Section 1-F (Revilla Channel) – Aerial surveys were conducted from March 18 through April 9 with herring spawn first observed on Village Island on March 22. Spawn continued in Revilla Channel through March 27, with additional spawn observed from April 1 through April 3. Spawn was observed on Village, Cat, and Mary islands as well as along the mainland shoreline just north of Kirk Point. The most intense spawn occurred on the western shore of Cat Island. A total of 5.5 nautical miles (nmi) of spawn were observed in State waters, above the recent 10-year average of 3.7 nmi. Herring samples were obtained for Age, Weight, and Length (AWL) analysis and a spawn deposition survey was completed. A commercial fishery last took place in 1998.

Section 1-E and 1-F (West Behm) – Aerial surveys were conducted from March 29 through April 9, with light spot spawns first observed on March 31 and light spawning continued through April 2. This is the earliest documented spawn in West Behm Canal. Spawn occurred in Tongass Narrows, near Indian Point, Helm Point, and Point Francis. Total spawn was 4.2 nmi, below the recent 10-year average of 7.7 nmi. No herring samples were obtained, and a spawn deposition survey was not done. A commercial fishery last took place in 2011.

District 3 (Craig) – Aerial surveys were conducted from March 18 through April 6, with a small spot spawn first observed on Wadleigh Island on March 23. Continuous spawn began on March 27 and continued through April 6. Peak spawning occurred on April 2 with 14.8 nmi of spawn observed. Spawn occurred around Ballenas, Fish Egg, Wadleigh, the Albertos, and Abess islands. Total spawn was 28.9 nmi, the third highest spawn mileage documented behind 1989 and 1990, and well above the recent 10-year average of 15.8 nmi. Samples were obtained and a spawn deposition survey was completed. The resultant biomass forecast and quota will be available in early fall.

For the 2019 Craig/Klawock spawn-on-kelp pound fishery, 140 permits landed approximately 404,000 pounds of spawn-on-kelp product. There were 73 pound structures actively fished. Final exvessel value will not be available until the fall.

District 7 (Ernest Sound) – Aerial surveys were conducted from April 5 through May 2. Spawn was first observed on April 14 on Brownson Island and a follow-up skiff survey documented approximately 2.5 nmi of light herring egg deposition. Spawn was next observed on April 19 in Union Bay where approximately 0.8 nmi of shoreline received spawn. Finally, spawn was observed on April 29 and 30

where 4.8 nmi of shoreline in Vixen Inlet received spawn. This was the latest in the season that herring spawning was documented in Ernest Sound for the past forty years. Total spawn was 8.1 nmi, above the recent 10-year average of 6.4 nmi. Minimum samples were obtained but a spawn deposition survey was not conducted due to the timing of the spawn events and the general light density of spawn observed. A commercial fishery last took place in 2014.

District 10 (Hobart Bay/Port Houghton) – Aerial surveys were conducted from April 16 through May 11. The only observation of herring spawning occurred on May 10 in Hobart Bay with approximately 0.8 nmi observed. This is a decrease from the 2018 total spawn of approximately 4 nmi and below the recent 10-year average of 3.1 nmi. A commercial fishery last took place in 2010.

Section 11-D (Seymour Canal) – Aerial surveys were conducted from April 16 through May 23 with herring spot spawns on the Stephens Passage shoreline first observed on May 10. The main spawn event took place from May 19-23, the latest spawn has been documented since the mid-1970s. A total of 3.0 nmi of spawn was observed primarily in the Rock Garden area in Seymour Canal and on the Stephens Passage shoreline north of Point Hugh Light. This is an increase from the 1.4 nmi of spawn observed in 2018, but below the recent 10-year average of 7.9 nmi. Samples of prespawning and spawning herring were obtained. A commercial fishery last occurred in 2014.

Section 12-A (Tenakee Inlet) – Aerial surveys were conducted from April 16 through May 15 with weak herring spawn observed from May 12-14. A total of 0.6 nmi of spawn was observed east of Crab Bay. This is a decline from the 1.4 nmi of spawn observed in 2018 and below the recent 10-year average of 2.8 nmi. A commercial fishery last occurred in 2014.

Section 13-A/B (Sitka Sound) – For details on 2019 Sitka Sound herring stock and fishery, see the *Sitka Sound Sac Roe Herring Fishery Announcement* from May 17, 2019.

Section 13-C (Hoonah Sound) – Aerial surveys were conducted from April 18 through April 29 and no herring or herring spawn were observed. No spawn has been documented since 2015 and the recent 10-year average is 5.0 nmi. A commercial fishery last took place in 2011.

Sections 15-B and 15-C (Lynn Canal) – Aerial surveys were conducted from April 16 through May 20 with the first herring spot spawn observed at Point St. Mary on May 7. The main spawn event took place from May 9-14. A total of 3.9 nmi of spawn was observed primarily on the Lynn Canal shoreline north of Point St. Mary and south of Point Bridget. This is an increase from the 1.9 nmi of spawn observed in 2018, but below the 10-year average of 6.2 nmi. Commercial fisheries last occurred in Lynn Canal in 1982 and the commercial sac roe herring fishery was repealed in Sections 15-B and 15-C (and 11-A) by the Board of Fisheries in 2018.

Additional spawn was observed by the ADF&G or reported by commercial pilots near Dall Bay on the south end of Gravina Island, Pat's Creek (Zimovia Strait), Bear Creek (Frederick Sound), Farragut Bay, Port Camden, Pybus Bay, and Stink Creek (upper Stephen's Passage). Typically, these additional spawning events are minor, but there were some relatively larger than normal spawn events observed at Stink Creek and Farragut Bay. Stink Creek had four days of spawning and 4.1 nmi of spawn observed and Farragut Bay had two days of spawning and 6.9 nmi of spawn observed.

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

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