



Advisory Announcement
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CONTACT: Aaron Dupuis
Sitka Area Management Biologist
aaron.dupuis@alaska.gov
(907) 747-6688

SITKA SOUND HERRING FISHERY UPDATE # 7

Today's aerial survey covered Sitka Sound from Redoubt Bay out to Cape Edgecumbe and north to Krestof Sound. Weather during the flight was good with low overcast, 15-knot winds, and occasionally snow flurries. No herring or herring spawn were observed. The highest concentrations of herring predators were observed from the Vitskari Rocks to Cape Edgecumbe. 20+ whales were seen working the deeper waters along the southern Kruzof Island shoreline. A few whales were also observed west of Crow Island and a large group of sea lions was observed off Inner Point.

A boat survey conducted by department vessels located numerous herring schools southeast of Kresta Point, near Lisianski Point, east of Middle Island, and near Inner Point. Additionally, industry vessels noted numerous schools of herring near Eastern Channel.

Three successful test sets were conducted today, the results are as follows:

- 9:45 a.m., south of Kresta Point, 210-ton set, mature roe – 7%, immature roe – 1.6%, average weight – 111 g, and 37% female.
- 1:30 p.m., Inner Point, 80-ton set, mature roe – 7.9 %, immature roe – 1.43%, average weight – 107 g, and 37% female.
- 2:00 p.m., Inner Point, 75-ton set, mature roe – 9.4%, immature roe – 2%, average weight – 110 g, and 48% female.

Herring mortality associated with test sets is likely minimal and there is no evidence that the small number of fish taken has any measurable impact on the subsistence fishery. Nevertheless, to ensure reasonable opportunity for subsistence harvest of herring roe would not be negatively impacted by test setting, prior to authorizing test fishing in these areas the department considered the following: 1) all test setting occurred outside the commercial closed waters and core subsistence areas; 2) numerous schools of herring were observed within closed commercial waters; 3) the fish encountered during test fishing in these areas represented a small fraction of the overall biomass within the areas; and 4) the number of test sets was kept to the minimum amount necessary to determine roe quality for a potential commercial opening.

The next aerial survey is scheduled for Tuesday, March 23 and the next fishery update can be expected to be released after aerial and vessel surveys are completed.

Under Alaska's Health Advisories 1, 2, 3, and 4, commercial fishing is an Essential Business and is part of Alaska's Essential Services and Critical Infrastructure. Commercial fishermen should ensure that all travel and other activities in support of commercial fishing operations follow protocols in Alaska COVID-19 Health Advisories. COVID-19 Health Advisories may be found here: <https://covid19.alaska.gov/health-advisories/>.

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

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