



**Advisory Announcement**  
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**SITKA SOUND HERRING FISHERY UPDATE # 9**

Today's aerial survey covered Sitka Sound from Redoubt Bay to Shoals Point and north to Krestof Sound. Weather during the flight was poor with 20-knot winds, low overcast, and occasional snow flurries. No herring or herring spawn were observed. The highest concentrations of herring predators were observed near Vitskari Rocks, Bieli Rock, and east of Middle Island. Numerous whales were seen working the deeper waters east of Vitskari Rocks and near Bieli Rock. Two whales were also observed east of Middle Island. Groups of sea lions were observed off Shoals Point and near Bieli Rock.

A boat survey conducted by department vessels located large schools of herring east of Middle Island and west of Bieli Rock. Industry vessels noted several scattered schools south of Sitka in Eastern Channel and Deep Inlet.

One successful test set was conducted today, the results are as follows:

- 8:15 a.m., Bieli Rock, 100-ton set, mature roe – 6.8%, immature roe – 1.1%, average weight – 101 g, and 33% 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 this area the department considered the following: 1) today's test set occurred outside the commercial closed waters and core subsistence areas; 2) a large biomass of herring was observed within closed commercial waters; 3) the fish encountered during test fishing in this area 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 Thursday, March 25 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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