



Advisory Announcement

For Immediate Release: February 5, 2025

CONTACT:

Jeremy Botz and Heather Scannell
Finfish Area Management Biologists
(907) 424-3212

Prince William Sound Herring Announcement #2

The intent of this announcement is to characterize current management capacity and provide information on the recent Alaska Board of Fisheries actions and spring 2025 fisheries. For the first time in decades, Prince William Sound (PWS) commercial herring fisheries are reopening, requiring significant preparation to ensure successful operations. Due to funding and staffing reductions during the long period of fishery inactivity, the PWS herring management program is rebuilding capacity. We appreciate your patience as we work to meet the management and assessment needs of these diverse fisheries.

Key Regulatory Changes from the December 2024 Alaska Board of Fisheries Meeting:

1. The management area description now aligns with salmon regulations.
2. The herring management area has been divided into two districts to manage the Kayak Island and PWS herring populations separately.
3. The management year now runs from January 1 to December 31 to better align with spawning biomass estimates and GHL determinations.
4. An allocation rollover provision allows unharvested spring sac roe quota to be transferred to the fall food and bait fishery.
5. A new exploratory fishery has been established in the Kayak Island District.
6. CFEC interim-use or limited-entry permit holders may harvest up to 1 ton of herring annually for bait in commercial fisheries for which the permit is held.

PWS Spring 2025 Herring Fisheries:

The spring herring season is set to open on March 1, 2025. To facilitate orderly fisheries management, the department will host a stakeholder meeting before the registration deadline, with details to follow in a separate announcement.

The PWS 2024 spawning biomass estimate of 35,485 short tons was above the minimum spawning biomass threshold of 22,000 tons in the PWS herring management plan. Based on this estimate, an overall GHL of 3,549 tons has been set using a conservative 10% exploitation rate.

PWS District Guideline Harvest Levels for Spring 2025:

| Fishery | Tons of Herring |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| Purse seine sac roe fishery | 2,062 |
| Gillnet sac roe fishery | 121 |
| Spawn-on-kelp (not in pounds) | 284 |
| Spawn-on-kelp (in pounds) | 504 |

Kayak Island District Fisheries:

Kayak Island District herring are not included in the PWS GHs, and fisheries in this district will be managed on an exploratory basis in consultation with permit holders and processors. Area E-commercial herring permits are required for participation in the Kayak Island District fisheries.

Registration Requirements:

To determine effort and assess management options for the spring herring fisheries, permit holders and processors intending to participate in sac roe herring or spawn-on-kelp fisheries must register with the Cordova ADF&G office by 5:00 p.m. by Thursday, February 27.

Fishery Timing & Market Conditions:

The seine and gillnet sac roe fisheries in both the PWS and Kayak Island District may be opened by emergency order between March 1 and June 30. Given current market conditions, harvest potential is expected to be minimal. Participation will dictate the management structure of the sac roe fisheries. The level of herring available for harvest and limited management resources may make it difficult to prosecute an orderly fishery. Upon completion of the registration process, when potential participation is realized, management will work with interested parties to work out fishery feasibility and logistics.

The spawn-on-kelp fisheries (both not in pounds and in pounds) may be opened by emergency order between March 1 and June 30 in the PWS and Kayak Island Districts. The spawn-on-kelp in closed pound fishery will be closed for spring 2025 due to concerns over potential disease transmission to the general herring population.