



Advisory Announcement
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SITKA SOUND HERRING FISHERY UPDATE # 4

Today's aerial survey covered Sitka Sound from Cape Burunof to Krestof Sound and Shoals Point. Visibility during today's flight was poor due to high winds and low visibility. No herring schools or spawn were observed today. Humpback whales were observed north of Middle Island, with the largest concentrations located near Crow Pass. Sea lions were concentrated near Inner Point. Predator numbers and locations are typical for this time of year.

Department and industry vessels surveyed the northern portion of Sitka Sound from Mountain Point to southern Krestof Sound, from Hayward Strait to Eastern Bay, and from Dog Point to Watson Point. Smaller schools of herring were observed throughout the surveyed area, large schools were observed along north Middle Island, the road system from Sandy Beach to Old Sitka Rocks, and a very large school of herring was found in the vicinity of Mountain Point.

One successful test set was conducted this afternoon; the results are as follows:

Time	Area	Tons	% Mature Roe	% Immature Roe	Avg weight	% Female
14:30	Mountain Point	100	9.7%	2.3%	161g	46%

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) the area near Mountain Point is outside the commercial closed waters and core subsistence areas; and 2) the fish encountered during test fishing represented a small fraction of the overall biomass in this area.

The next aerial survey and fishery update are scheduled for Thursday, March 20.

All aerial herring survey data can be reviewed online, including spawn lines and photos, in an interactive map application found at: <https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareasoutheast.herring#maps> or scan:



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

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