



Advisory Announcement
For Immediate Release: March 24, 2025

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SITKA SOUND HERRING FISHERY UPDATE # 9

Today's aerial survey covered Sitka Sound from West Crawfish Inlet to Sitka Point and Salisbury Sound. No herring schools were visible from the air today. Approximately 1.5 nautical miles (nmi) of herring spawn was observed along the Sitka Road System from Watson Point to Harbor Point, Kasiana Island, and southern Middle Island (Figure 1). Humpback whales were observed throughout the surveyed area and were concentrated near First Narrows in West Crawfish Inlet and in Hayward Strait. Sea lions were observed between Shoals Point and Fred's Creek. Predator numbers and locations are typical for this time of year.

Department and industry vessels surveyed Sitka Sound from Shoals Point to Eastern Bay and from Middle Island to Watson Point. Scattered schools of herring were seen throughout the survey area. The herring schools along the Kruzof shoreline moved north and were observed from Kamenoi Point to Krestof Sound. Large concentrations of herring were observed in Hayward Strait and Eastern Bay. Schools of herring were also observed within regulatory closed waters by Chaichei Islands, Middle Island, and Watson Point.

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

Time	Area	Tons	% Mature Roe	% Immature Roe	Avg weight	% Female
8:40	Rob Point	-	13.7%	0%	180g	54%

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 Rob 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.

An opening of the Sitka Sound herring sac roe fishery occurred today from 10:15 a.m. until 7:00 p.m., as stated in field announcement on VHF channel 10. The open area for this fishery included the waters of Hayward Strait and Krestof Sound south of 57°11.47' N lat, north of 57°07.97' N lat, and west of 135°30.75' W long (Figure 2). The emergency order corresponding with today's opening is EO 1H0425. Harvest estimates from today's fishery are confidential.

The department has determined that the opening described above would not harm a reasonable opportunity for participants in the subsistence fishery to harvest the amount of roe necessary for subsistence uses. When making this determination, the department considered: 1) vessel surveys conducted by the department beginning on March 18 indicated that there is a very large biomass of herring distributed throughout Sitka Sound; 2) schools of herring were observed within regulatory closed waters on the vessel survey that occurred on March 24; 3) approximately 1.5 nmi of herring spawn was observed within commercial closed waters and core subsistence areas today; 3) no subsistence branch sets were observed within the open area.

The next aerial survey and fishery update are scheduled for Tuesday, March 25.

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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<i>AWT</i>	225-5111	772-3983	874-3215	747-3254	465-4000	766-2533	784-3220

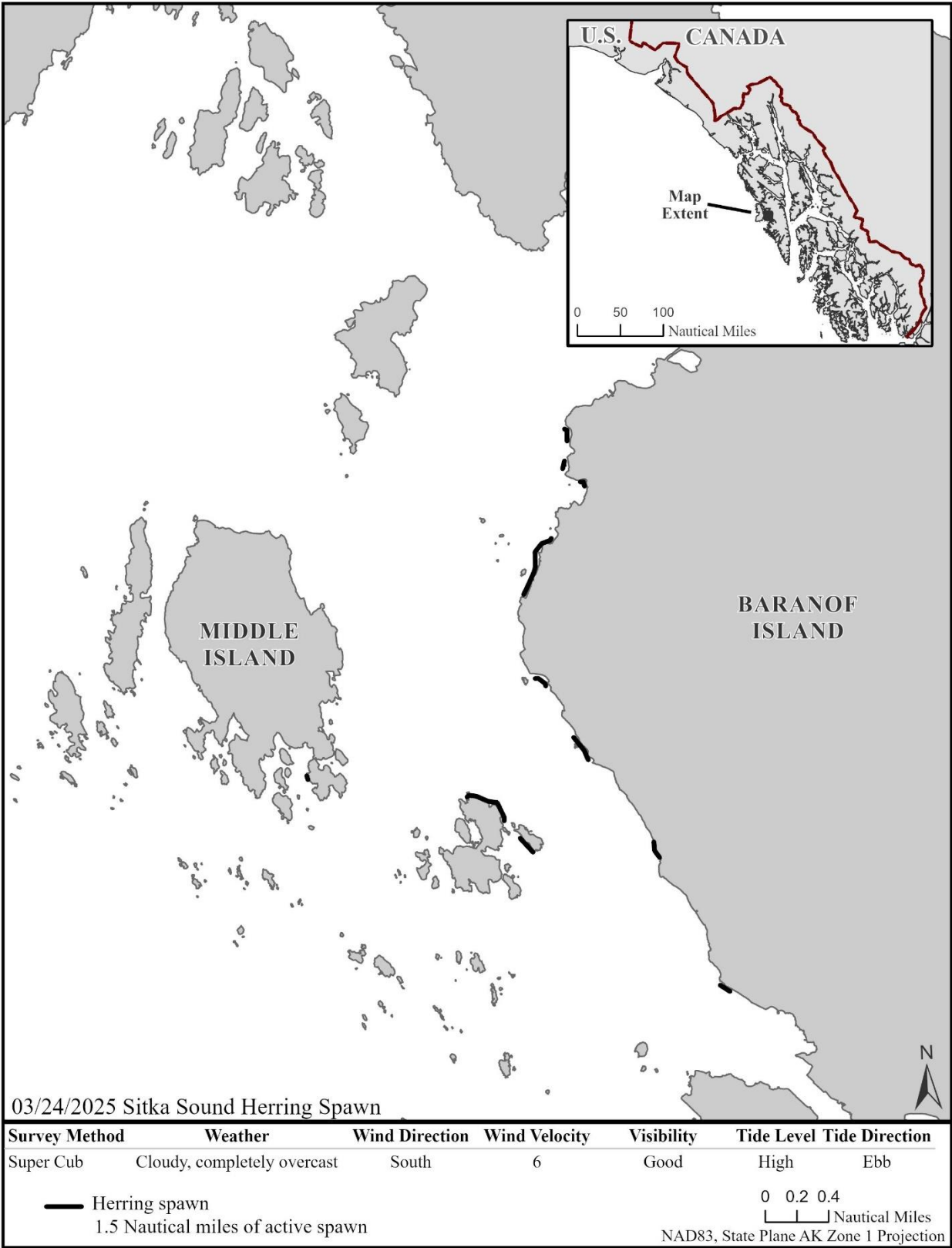


Figure 1.— Map of the active spawning areas in Sitka Sound during the aerial survey on March 24, 2025.

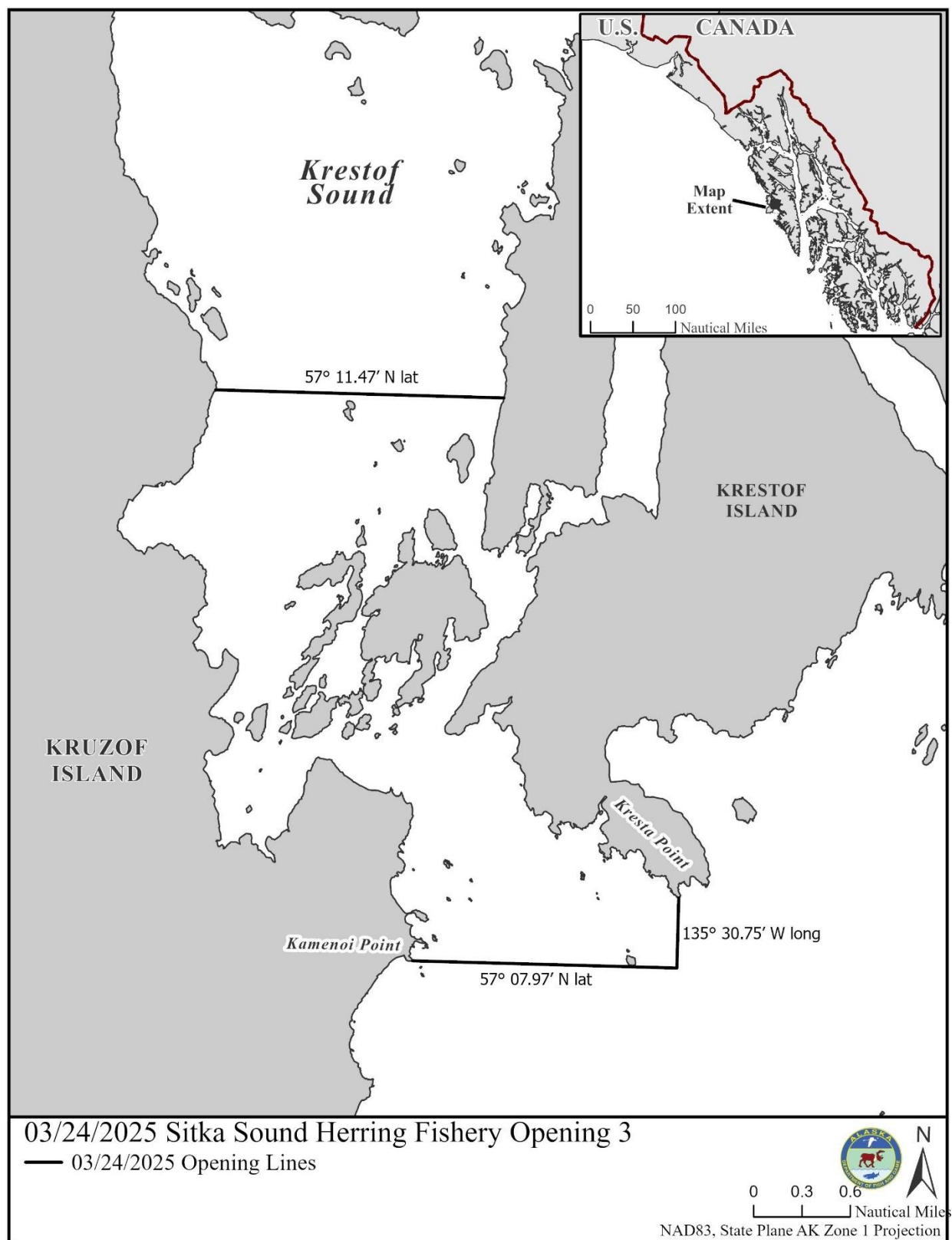


Figure 2.— Map of the area open for the March 24, 2025, Sitka Sound sac roe herring fishery.