



Advisory Announcement
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SITKA SOUND HERRING FISHERY UPDATE # 12

Today's aerial survey covered Sitka Sound from Redoubt Bay to Shoals Point and Krestof Sound. Herring schools were visible from the air in Redoubt Bay and near Samsing Cove. Approximately 18.3 nautical miles (nmi) of herring spawn was observed along the Sitka Road System from Watson Point to Halibut Point, Battery Island, Middle Island, Crow Island, the Chaichei Islands, Whiting Harbor, Kasiana Island, Apple Island, near the Parker Group, along the causeway, near the entrance of Sealing Cove Harbor, from Crescent Harbor to Jamestown Bay, Whale Island, Galankin Island, Hayward Strait, Promisla Bay, and Eastern Bay, (Figure 1). Since March 22, a cumulative total of 22.3 nmi of herring spawn has been recorded in Sitka Sound. Humpback whales were observed throughout the surveyed area. Sea lions were observed between Fred's Creek and Hayward Strait, and among the islands south of the causeway in Sitka. Predator numbers and locations are typical for this time of year.

Department and industry vessels surveyed northern Sitka Sound from Krestof Sound, Promisla, Eastern, and Katlian Bays and along the road system. Southern Sitka Sound was also surveyed from Cape Burunof to Crescent Harbor. Herring schools were seen throughout the survey areas.

An opening of the Sitka Sound herring sac roe fishery occurred today from 9:00 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). In order to separate commercial activity from subsistence branch sets associated with active herring spawn the waters of Hayward Strait from a point at 57°09.45' N lat, 135°33.00' W long to the longitude of Kresta Point at 135°30.75' W long, was closed within 200 yards from shore. The emergency order corresponding with today's opening is EO 1H0725.

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) since March 22, a cumulative total of 17.6 nmi of herring spawn has been recorded within regulatory closed waters; 3) waters within the open area that had known subsistence branch sets and active herring spawn were closed to within 200 yards from shore.

Approximately 1,010 tons of herring were harvested in the fishery that occurred on March 26; a total of approximately 3,750 tons of herring have been harvested through March 26. Harvest estimates for the fishery that occurred on March 27 will be included in the next advisory announcement.

One successful test set was conducted this afternoon in southern Sitka Sound; the results are as follows:

Time	Area	Tons	% Mature Roe	% Immature Roe	Avg weight	% Female
2:30	Samsing Cove	150	9.9%	0.5%	164g	40%

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) Samsing Cove area 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 Friday, March 28.

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

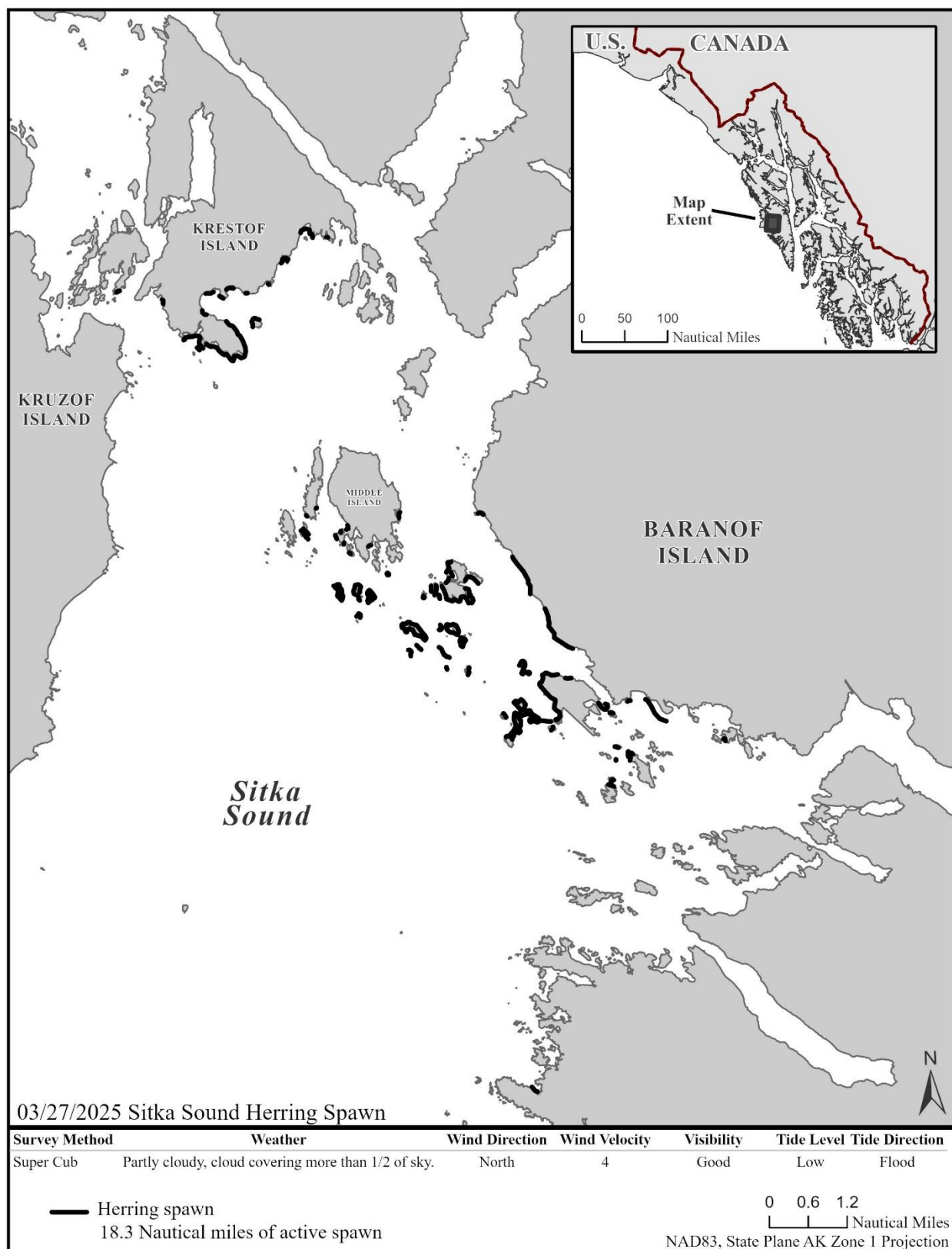


Figure 1.— Map of the active spawning areas in Sitka Sound during the aerial survey on March 27, 2025.

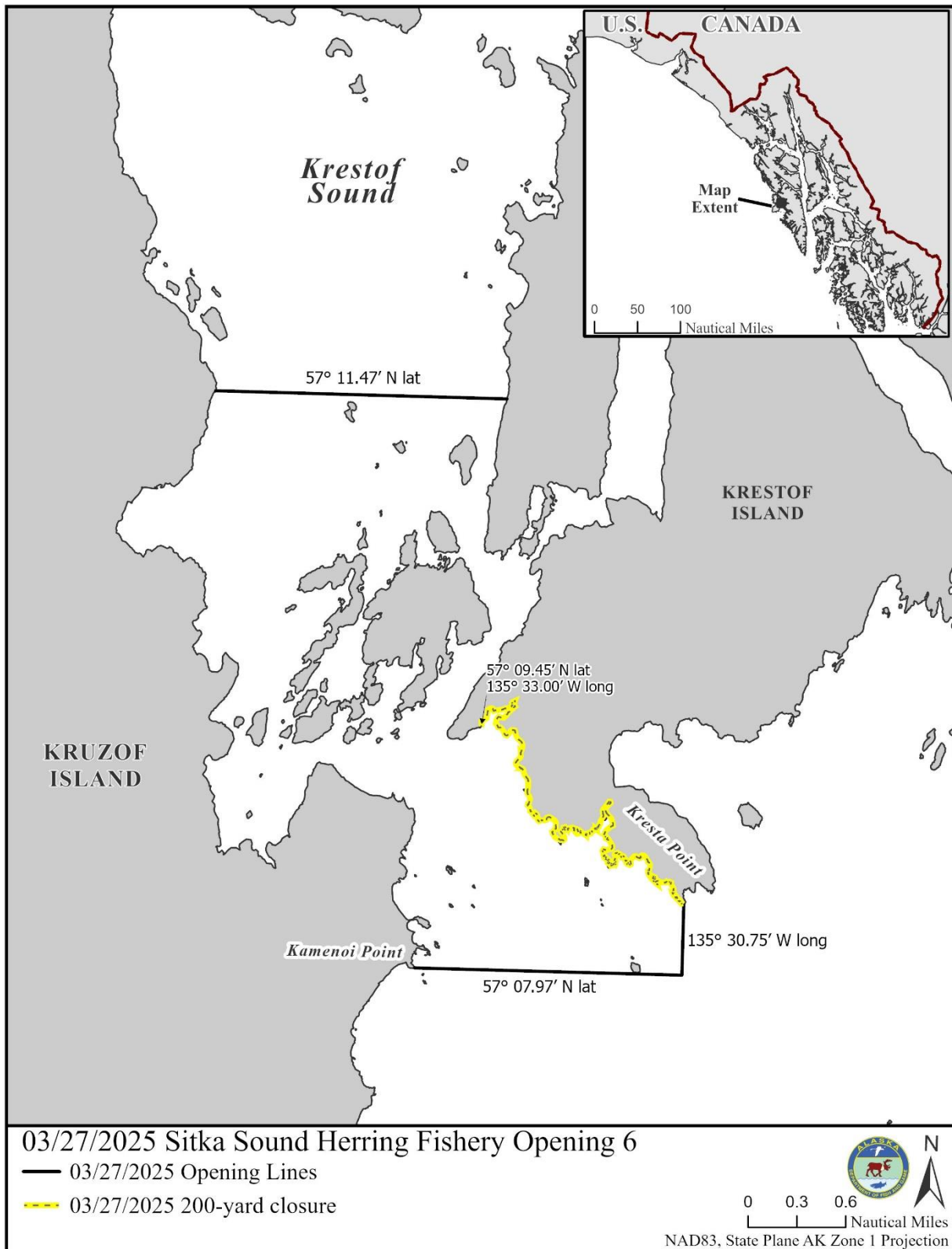


Figure 2.— Map of the area open for the March 27, 2025, Sitka Sound sac roe herring fishery.