



Advisory Announcement

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CONTACT:

Jeremy Botz
Finfish Area Management Biologist
(907) 424-3212

Prince William Sound Herring Announcement #4

An aerial survey on Thursday, March 27, under fair conditions, observed 0 miles of spawn and approximately 60 tons of herring. To date a total of 0 miles of spawn has been recorded. Yesterday's survey covered the northeast shoreline of Prince William Sound (PWS) from Point Gravina to Virgin Bay and included eastern Bligh Island and the north shore of Hinchinbrook and Hawkins Islands.

Ongoing and historical survey results are available through our online Prince William Sound Herring Interactive Map: <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/53d54699cbf54e72aa1a4daf405076b7?org=adfg>.

The R/V Solstice departed Cordova on Thursday, March 27, and will be collecting herring ASL samples in Northeast PWS. Roe maturity data from these sampling efforts will be shared in future announcements.

The PWS District 2024 spawning biomass estimate of 35,485 short tons was above the minimum spawning biomass threshold of 22,000 tons in the herring management plan. Based on this estimate, an overall GHL of 3,549 tons has been set for the PWS District using a conservative 10% exploitation rate. The seine sac roe fishery will be managed for a harvest of 2,062 tons. The gill net sac roe harvest quota is 121 tons, the natural spawn-on-kelp quota is 71,000 pounds of product, and the spawn-on-kelp in pounds harvest quota is 80,640 pounds of product.

Kayak Island District herring are not included in the PWS GHLs, and fisheries in this district will be managed on an exploratory basis in consultation with permit holders and processors. Area E-commercial herring permit holders may only participate in the Kayak Island District fisheries with the gear standard associated with their permit. Kayak Island District herring fisheries will be put on advance notice once market availability and permit holder capacity to participate in fisheries is confirmed.

As previously announced, the closed pound fishery will not open in 2025. Of the 128 total herring pound permit holders, 14 have declared their intent to participate in the open pound fishery. These permit holders have been allocated a 3,694-kelp-blade quota for the PWS District fishery. Permits to harvest *Macrosystis* kelp in Southeast Alaska for use in the PWS District or Kayak Island District open pound fisheries are being issued out of the Cordova ADFG office. **Beginning 12:00 p.m. on Sunday, March 30, open pounds may be operated in waters of the Eastern District (5 AAC 24.200(c)) until further notice.**

The sac roe gillnet and seine fishery will be placed on 12-hour advanced notice effective 12:00 p.m. Sunday, March 30. A sac roe fishery may open once market availability and permit holder capacity to participate is confirmed, a biomass of fish has been identified for harvest, and testing has begun to evaluate harvest suitability.

Before making test sets, test boats will contact the department biologist at the Cordova office (907-424-4012), who will monitor set locations, roe maturity, and age/size of herring samples processed by industry technicians.

Wild spawn on kelp harvest will be placed on 48-hour advanced notice once permit holders notify the department that they have secured a market for this product. As a reminder to harvesters and processors, spawn on kelp that is harvested but not sold, including discarded kelp, must be reported on a fish ticket at time of landing.

All herring processors and buyers are required to register with the Cordova office prior to buying herring or herring products in Prince William Sound. Processors must provide a list of tenders and processing vessels. Some permit holders may elect to have their harvest custom processed. The department reminds all permit holders that fish may not be delivered to an unregistered buyer or tender. A fish ticket must be generated at the time of delivery. The fish ticket must be imprinted with the processor's code. Buyers are reminded that if any herring are to be processed in another management area, the Cordova Fish and Game Office must be contacted in person or by radio and advised of the amount of herring on board the vessels before leaving the area.

This announcement will be updated as new information becomes available.