



## **Advisory Announcement**

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**CONTACT: Aaron Dupuis**  
**Sitka Area Management Biologist**  
**[aaron.dupuis@alaska.gov](mailto:aaron.dupuis@alaska.gov)**  
**(907) 747-6688**

### **SITKA SOUND HERRING FISHERY SUMMARY**

This announcement is a summary of observations and activities of the 2025 Sitka Sound herring sac roe fishery. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) conducts aerial, vessel, and spawn deposition surveys to track herring activity and determine the extent and density of herring spawn for the Sitka Sound area. Numerous samples of herring were collected from active spawning areas and from commercial harvests for age, sex, and size composition analysis.

Aerial surveys were conducted by ADF&G from March 12 until April 6. Herring spawn was first observed in Sitka Sound on March 22. The primary herring spawning event for 2025 began on March 27 when 18.3 nautical miles (nmi) of active herring spawn was observed from Watson Point to Halibut Point, from the Causeway to Middle Island, and from Hayward Strait to Eastern Bay. Spawning peaked on March 30 when 31.9 nmi of active herring spawn was documented. The last day of the primary spawn event was April 1; however, smaller areas of herring spawn were observed through April 3. Surveys from skiffs were conducted April 3 and 4 to identify additional areas of herring spawn not observed during the aerial surveys. In total, ADF&G mapped 89.5 nmi of shoreline with herring spawn in 2025 (Figure 1) which is higher than both the 10-year (2015–2024) average of 72.4 nmi and the 40-year (1984–2024) average of 62.4 nmi. In contrast to recent years, there was little spawning observed on Kruzof Island this season.

Herring spawn was observed daily from March 22 to March 31 within the area closed to commercial fishing by regulation (commonly referred to as the “core subsistence area”). Of the 89.5 nmi of mapped herring spawn in Sitka Sound, approximately 29.4 nmi of herring spawn was mapped within this area. Herring spawn also occurred in several other areas known to be commonly used for subsistence fishing, including Hayward Strait, Magoun Islands, Promisla Bay, Eastern Bay, and Siginaka Islands. Harvest estimates from the 2025 subsistence fishery should be available near the end of 2025.

From April 5 to April 9 a spawn deposition survey was conducted to estimate the total number of eggs deposited in the Sitka Sound spawning area. ADF&G scientific divers surveyed 65 transects placed throughout the extent of the spawn observed during aerial and vessel surveys. Preliminary results indicate that overall herring egg deposition was relatively high, particularly along the shorelines of Halibut Point Road, Middle Island, Kasiana Island, and other nearby islands, Hayward Strait, Promisla Bay and south of Sitka around Gornoi and Golf Islands.

The 2025 commercial herring sac roe fishery harvest was approximately 6,200-tons of herring with an average mature roe percentage of 12.3%. This year’s harvest accounted for 17% of the 2025 guideline harvest level of 36,720 tons. The fishery was opened for 13 days between March 23 and April 4. The average daily harvest was approximately 630 tons of herring and the fishery was closed for the season at 8:00 p.m. on April 4. Test sets (10 total) were conducted between March 18 and March 27.

To estimate age composition for the Sitka Sound herring population, both spawning herring and commercially harvested fish were sampled. Spawning herring were sampled using cast nets throughout the spawning area and period, with a total of 43 samples collected. Herring sampled from commercial vessel sets were collected during fishery openings, with 17 samples collected. The herring samples will be analyzed in the coming months at the ADF&G Mark, Tag, and Age Laboratory and the final stock assessment results will be available with the 2026 forecast, later this year.

The daily herring spawn locations and photographs from 2025 will continue to be made available through the interactive herring survey map on the ADF&G website. The "Southeast Alaska Herring Surveys" map allows users to view all the data collected for each herring aerial survey throughout the 2025 season. The interactive maps are located on the department website at: <https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareasoutheast.herring#maps> or scan:



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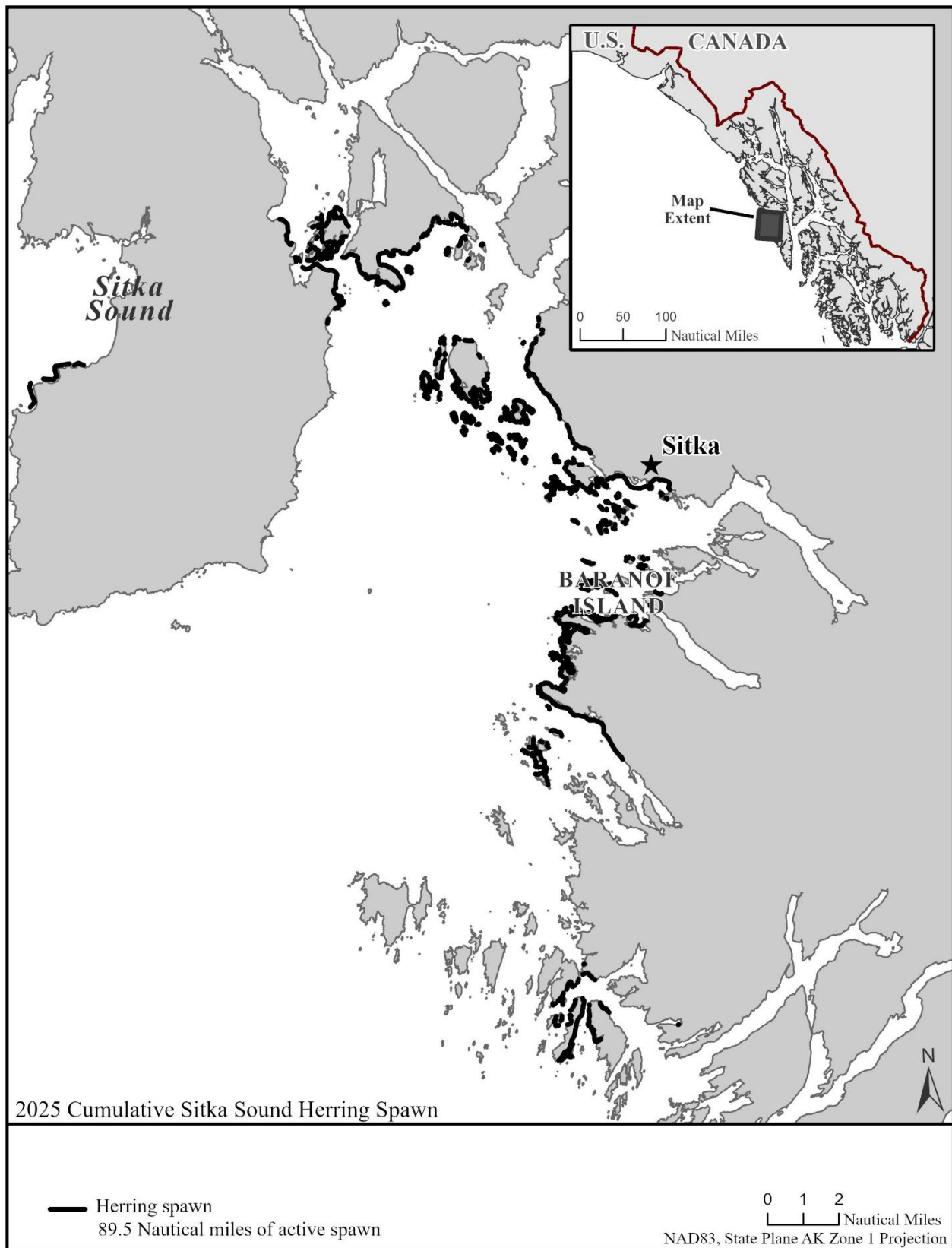


Figure 1. –Cumulative Sitka Sound shoreline with observed herring spawn in 2025.