



Advisory Announcement

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Prince William Sound Herring Announcement #2

The PWS 2026 spring pre-fishery mature biomass estimate of 28,287 short tons is above the minimum spawning biomass threshold of 22,000 tons in the PWS herring management plan. Based on this estimate, an overall GHL of 2,829 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 1,644 tons. The gillnet sac roe harvest quota is 96 tons, the natural spawn-on-kelp quota is 56,500 pounds of product, and the spawn-on-kelp in pounds harvest quota is 64,320 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 2026. Of the 128 total herring pound permit holders, 13 have declared their intent to participate in the open pound fishery. These permit holders have been allocated a 3,173-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 Monday, March 30, open pounds may be operated in waters of the Eastern District (5 AAC 24.200(c)) until further notice.**

Leads are allowed to be used with open pounds in the Prince William Sound Management Area as follows:

- **An open pound is a structure or a means of suspending kelp in the water to provide spawning substrate for herring to be harvested as spawn-on-kelp. The structure may not have an enclosure, but may have two leads. A lead may not be more than 300 feet in length measured from shore to a point on the structure. The lead shall consist of a seine weight net with meshes of not more than two inches stretched measure, a cork line, a lead line, and anchors at either end.**
- **After a person removes the spawn-on-kelp from the herring pound, the person shall maintain the pound structure (including any leads) at its present fishing location for not less than four weeks in its original configuration with adequate water circulation on all sides to optimize egg hatching. Not later than six weeks after a person removes the spawn on kelp from a structure, the person shall remove the structure and leads from the water.**

The sac roe gillnet and seine fishery will be placed on 12-hour advanced notice effective 12:00 p.m. Monday, 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.

As new information becomes available, updates will be issued by advisory announcement.