



Advisory Announcement
For Immediate Release: March 23, 2026

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SITKA SOUND HERRING FISHERY UPDATE # 5

Today's aerial survey covered Sitka Sound from Eastern Channel to Povorotni Point and ended early due to poor weather conditions. No herring schools or spawn were observed. Herring predators were observed throughout the surveyed area. The largest concentrations of humpback whales were observed near the Chaichei Islands. Predator numbers and locations observed during today's flight are typical for surveys conducted during this time of year.

Department and industry vessels surveyed Sitka Sound today from Watson Point to Hayward Strait. Very large schools of herring were observed west of the Chaichei Islands, northwest of Bieli Rock, from Watson Point to Old Sitka Rocks, and in Hayward Strait.

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

Time	Area	Tons	% Mature Roe	% Immature Roe	Avg weight	% Female
12:30	Hayward Strait	150	7.6%	3.4%	170g	44%

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 near Hayward Strait 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 Tuesday, March 24.

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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