



Advisory Announcement
For Immediate Release: March 27, 2021

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SITKA SOUND HERRING FISHERY UPDATE # 12

Today's aerial survey was cancelled due to poor weather. Boat surveys conducted by department vessels located a large biomass of herring in the regulatory closed waters extending from Watson Point to Halibut Point and numerous large schools from Lisianski Point to Hayward Strait.

Four successful test sets were conducted today, the results are as follows:

- 7:30 a.m., Magoun Islands, 75-ton set, mature roe –11.7%, average weight – 117 g, and 49% female.
- 7:30 a.m., Lisianski Point, 75-ton set, mature roe – 11.3%, average weight–123 g, and 43% female.
- 8:45 a.m., Hayward Strait, no set size estimate, mature roe – 8.2%, average weight – 111 g, immature roe – 1.4%, and 37% female.
- 9:05 p.m., Eastern Bay, 250-ton set, mature roe – 7.8%, immature roe – 0.9%, average weight – 103 g, and 39% female.

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) today's test sets occurred outside the commercial closed waters and core subsistence areas; 2) a large biomass of herring was observed within closed commercial waters; 3) the fish encountered during test fishing in these areas represented a small fraction of the overall biomass within the areas; and 4) the number of test sets was kept to the minimum amount necessary to determine roe quality for a potential commercial opening.

An opening of the Sitka Sound herring sac roe fishery occurred today from 10:30 a.m. until 6:30 p.m. Open waters for this fishery included the area south of 57°10.78' N lat, north of 57°08.47' N lat, and west of 135°23.65' W long. Harvest estimates from today's fishery will be included on the next fishery update.

The next aerial survey is scheduled for Sunday, March 28, and the next fishery update can be expected to be released after aerial and vessel surveys are completed.

Under Alaska's Health Advisories 1, 2, 3, and 4, commercial fishing is an Essential Business and is part of Alaska's Essential Services and Critical Infrastructure. Commercial fishermen should ensure that all travel and other activities in support of commercial fishing operations follow protocols in Alaska COVID-19 Health Advisories. COVID-19 Health Advisories may be found here: <https://covid19.alaska.gov/health-advisories/>.

Advisory Announcement web site: <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=cfnews.main>.

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