



Advisory Announcement

For Immediate Release: May 21, 2020

CONTACT: Troy Thynes
Region I Management Coordinator
troy.thynes@alaska.gov
(907) 772-3801

2020 SOUTHEAST ALASKA HERRING SUMMARY

Petersburg...The Alaska Department of Fish and Game announced today the following information regarding herring returns throughout Southeast Alaska during 2020.

Section 1-F (Revilla Channel) – Aerial surveys were conducted from March 18 through April 3 with herring spawn first observed on Cat Island on March 28. Herring spawn continued in Revilla Channel through April 2, with herring spawn observed on Cat, Dog, Duck, Duke and Village islands, as well as the mainland shoreline near Kah Shakes Cove. The most intense spawn occurred on the western shore of Cat Island and the eastern shore of Duck Island. A total of 11.2 nautical miles (nmi) of herring spawn was observed in State waters, above the 2010-2019 average of 4.2 nmi. Herring samples were obtained for age, weight, and length (AWL) analysis and a spawn deposition survey was completed. A commercial fishery last took place in 1998.

Section 1-E and 1-F (West Behm) – Aerial surveys were conducted from April 2 through April 9, with light herring spot-spawns first observed on April 3 and light herring spawning continuing sporadically through April 7. Herring spawn occurred in Tongass Narrows, near Indian Point, Helm Point, and Point Francis. Total spawn was 4.2 nmi, below the 2010-2019 average of 7.7 nmi. No herring samples were obtained, and a spawn deposition survey was not conducted. A commercial fishery last took place in 2011.

District 3 (Craig) – Aerial and skiff surveys were conducted daily from March 19 through April 13, with a small herring spot-spawn first observed on Wadleigh Island on March 25. Continuous herring spawn began April 3 and continued through April 13. Peak spawning occurred on April 10, with 29.7 nmi of herring spawn observed; the largest single-day herring spawn event documented in the Craig area. Herring spawn occurred from the northern tip of Blanquial Island, to the northern entrance of Trocadero Bay, and on most of major islands and reefs between. Total herring spawn was 56.1 nmi; almost double the next highest total herring spawn documented in the Craig area of 31.7 nmi in 1989 and was well above the recent 2010-2019 average of 17.0 nmi. AWL samples were obtained throughout the spawning event and a spawn deposition survey was completed on April 14. The resultant biomass forecast and quota will be available in early fall.

For the 2020 Craig/Klawock spawn-on-kelp pound fishery, 147 permits landed approximately 568,000 pounds of spawn-on-kelp product. This is both the highest level of participation and amount of spawn-on-kelp product landed in the Craig/Klawock spawn-on-kelp pound fishery. There were 75 pound structures actively fished. Final exvessel value will not be available until the fall.

District 7 (Ernest Sound) – Aerial surveys were conducted between April 5 and April 22, and lower Ernest Sound was surveyed by skiff on April 24. There was a gap in survey coverage from April 5 through April 14, and it appears that a limited herring spawn event occurred in Vixen Inlet during that window based on concentrations of scoters and a limited skiff survey. Subsequent aerial surveys, predator distribution, and the skiff survey, indicate that the event was confined to Vixen Inlet and small in scope. A small herring spot-spawn was observed near Onslow Island during an aerial survey on April 19. No AWL samples were obtained from Ernest Sound and a herring spawn deposition survey was not conducted. A commercial fishery last took place in 2014.

District 10 (Hobart Bay/Port Houghton) – A total of eight aerial surveys were conducted from April 21 through May 13. Herring spawn was observed from May 7–9 in Port Houghton and Hobart Bay, with light spot-spawns in Windham Bay. A total of 3.5 nmi of herring spawn was observed with peak spawning observed on May 7 and May 8. The most recent 10-year average (2010-2019) for Port Houghton is 2.8 nmi. No AWL samples were obtained from the Hobart Bay area and herring spawn deposition survey was not conducted. A commercial fishery last took place in 2010.

Section 11-D (Seymour Canal) – Aerial surveys were conducted from April 15 through May 15, with herring spot-spawns on the Stephens Passage shoreline first observed on May 7. Scattered herring spawn events took place from May 7 through May 12 primarily on the Stephens Passage shore from Point Hugh north. A total of 3.0 nmi of spawn was observed; the same mileage of spawn observed in 2019 and below the 2010-2019 average of 6.0 nmi. AWL samples of prespawning and spawning herring were obtained but a herring spawn deposition survey was not conducted. A commercial fishery last occurred in 2014.

Section 12-A (Tenakee Inlet) – Aerial surveys were conducted from April 17 through May 13. A small amount of weak herring spawn was observed May 5 and 6 east of Crab Bay for a total of 0.15 nmi. This was a decline from the 0.6 nmi of spawn observed in 2019 and below the recent 10-year average of 2.2 nmi. A commercial fishery last occurred in 2014.

Section 13-A/B (Sitka Sound) – Aerial surveys were conducted from March 14 through April 20. The herring spawn event took place from March 25 through April 18. A total of 58.5 nmi of herring spawn was observed; slightly below the 20-year average (2000-2019) of 59.5 nmi. No commercial fishery occurred in Sitka Sound this year. AWL samples were obtained throughout the herring spawning event and a herring spawn deposition survey was conducted from April 4 through April 9. Observed herring egg deposition was very high throughout most of Sitka Sound; deposition along Kruzof Island shoreline was exceptional due to high egg density coupled with a wide spawning area. For more details on the 2020 Sitka Sound herring stock, see the *Sitka Sound Herring Fishery Announcement* from April 30, 2020.

Section 13-C (Hoonah Sound) – Aerial surveys were conducted on April 10, April 30, and May 3, 2020. No herring or herring spawn were observed. No herring spawn has been documented in Hoonah Sound since 2015. From 2006–2015, the average observed herring spawn was 9.0 nmi. A commercial fishery last took place in 2011.

Sections 11-A, 15-B, and 15-C (Lynn Canal) – Aerial surveys were conducted from April 17 through May 13 with the first herring spot-spawn observed north of Point St. Mary on May 5. The main spawn event took place from May 7 through May 8. A total of 5.4 nmi of spawn was observed primarily on the Lynn Canal shoreline north of Point St. Mary. This is an increase from the 3.9 nmi of spawn observed in 2019, and close to the 10-year average of 5.6 nmi. Commercial fisheries last occurred in Lynn Canal in 1982 and the commercial sac roe herring fishery was repealed by the Board of Fisheries in 2018.

Additional spawn was observed by ADF&G or reported by commercial pilots in Halibut Harbor outside of Sea Otter Sound, the south side of Goat Island and Soda Bay (near Hydaburg), Kasaan Bay, Zimovia Strait, Farragut Bay, along the eastern Chichagof Island shoreline between Point Hayes and Little Basket Bay, and the Stink Creek shoreline on Admiralty Island in upper Stephens Passage. Typically, these additional spawn events are minor, but there were some relatively larger than normal spawn events observed. Kasaan Bay had three days of spawn observed with 2.3 nmi of spawn documented and the Stink Creek shoreline had ten days of spawn observed with 4.1 nmi of spawn documented.

Under Alaska’s Health Mandates 10, 17, and 18, 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 Mandates. COVID-19 Health Mandates may be found here: <https://gov.alaska.gov/home/covid19-healthmandates/>.

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

| <i>Office</i> | <i>Ketchikan</i> | <i>Petersburg</i> | <i>Wrangell</i> | <i>Sitka</i> | <i>Juneau</i> | <i>Haines</i> | <i>Yakutat</i> |
|------------------|------------------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| <i>ADF&G</i> | 225-5195 | 772-3801 | 874-3822 | 747-6688 | 465-4250 | 766-2830 | 784-3255 |
| <i>AWT</i> | 225-5111 | 772-3983 | 874-3215 | 747-3254 | 465-4000 | 766-2533 | 784-3220 |