

**Division of Commercial Fisheries**  
**Sam Rabung, Director**

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**Alaska Department of Fish and Game**  
**Doug Vincent-Lang, Commissioner**

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**Advisory Announcement**  
***For Immediate Release: March 18, 2024***

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**SITKA SOUND HERRING FISHERY ANNOUNCEMENT**

The Sitka Sound herring sac roe fishery will be placed on 2-hour notice effective 8:00 a.m., Wednesday, March 20, 2024. This means that a fishery could be expected with 2 hours notice after the effective time. A 2-hour notice fishery meeting will be conducted via Zoom™ and is scheduled for Tuesday, March 19, from 5:30 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. A Zoom™ account or app is not needed to attend these meetings. Zoom™ meeting information:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84008996926?pwd=QZjb0jTaxT08ru5fxs7CgdztdfyPcp.1>

Meeting ID: 840 0899 6926  
Passcode: 2024Sitka

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Meeting ID: 840 0899 6926  
Passcode: 057944816

The *R/V Kestrel* is scheduled to arrive in Sitka the morning of March 20 and will immediately conduct a vessel survey.

Aerial surveys were conducted daily from March 16 to 18. These survey flights covered Sitka Sound from Crawfish Inlet to Hayward Strait and Cape Edgecumbe. Herring were observed only on March 16 near Low Island; no herring spawn has been observed to date. Herring predators were observed throughout the surveyed area. Humpback whales were observed between St. Lazaria Island and Hayward Strait, with the largest concentrations located near Inner Point. Sea lion numbers increased during this time period and were concentrated on points and rock piles between Fred's Creek and Brent's Beach. Predator numbers and locations are typical for this time of year.

Department and industry vessels surveyed along the Kruzof Island shoreline from Fred's Creek to Mountain Point today and observed several very large schools of herring in shallower waters.

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

Time	Area	Tons	% Mature Roe	% Immature Roe	Avg weight	% Female
11:21	Mountain Point	25	9.2 %	2.9 %	149 g	48.5 %

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 this area the department considered the following: 1) the area of Mountain Point 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 19.

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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