



Advisory Announcement
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SITKA SOUND HERRING FISHERY ANNOUNCEMENT

The guideline harvest level (GHL) for the 2025 Sitka Sound sac roe herring fishery is **36,720 tons** with a forecasted average weight of **122 grams** across all age classes. The GHL is based on a 20% harvest rate of an age-structured assessment (ASA) model forecast of 183,599 tons of mature herring biomass. This forecast is a 9% decrease from the model estimate of the 2024 mature pre-fishery herring biomass of 202,134 tons. There was a notable decrease between the forecast of mature biomass in 2024 (406,228 tons) from the 2024 forecast model and the model-estimated mature pre-fishery herring biomass in 2024 (202,134 tons) from the 2025 forecast model. This was due largely to a revised estimate of age-3 recruitment in 2023 compared to what was presented in the 2024 forecast and an estimated decrease in survival for 2022–2024. The estimated 2023 age-3 recruitment decreased by 51% in the 2025 forecast model compared to the 2024 forecast model.

To forecast biomass, the department uses an ASA model with a long time series of egg abundance and age composition data from department surveys and herring samples obtained from active spawning and the commercial sac roe fishery. Herring egg abundance is estimated using aerial, vessel, and SCUBA diving surveys. Shorelines with herring spawn are mapped and followed by dive surveys to estimate egg density and width of egg deposition. The department mapped 85.2 nautical miles (nmi) of unique shoreline with herring spawn in the Sitka Sound area during the spring of 2024, compared to the recent 10-year (2014–2023) average of 68.9 nmi. The total harvest for the sac roe herring fishery in 2024 was approximately 12,700 tons of herring; an additional 244 tons of herring were harvested in test and bait fisheries. Although the 2024 egg deposition estimate was about 26% less than in 2023, it was still relatively high and was the fifth highest on record since the department began egg deposition surveys. About 23% of the surveyed egg deposition occurred on the Kruzof Island shore, south of Hayward Strait. About 26% of the egg deposition was in the areas of Krestof Sound, Magoun Islands, Krestof Island, and the Siginaka Islands. The remaining 51% of the egg deposition was found in the areas of Middle/Crow Islands, Kasina Island, along the Sitka road system, and areas south of Sitka such as Aleutkina Bay and Redoubt Bay.

Table 1.– Summary of forecasted Sitka Sound herring age-class percentages and weights for 2025 and post-fishery age-class percentages from 2024, based on the 2025 forecast ASA model.

Age	2025 Forecasted percent mature (numbers at age)	2025 Forecasted weight at age (g)	2024 Model-estimated percent post-fishery mature (numbers at age)
3	7%	70	8%
4	18%	97	51%
5	43%	116	5%
6	4%	136	6%
7	5%	151	1%
8+	23%	162	29%

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