
ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



Sam Cotten, Commissioner
Scott Kelley, Director



Contact:
Eric Coonradt

Phone: (907) 747-6688
Fax: (907) 747-6693

Sitka Area Office
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Sitka, Alaska 99835
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SITKA SOUND HERRING FISHERY ANNOUNCEMENT

Sitka. . . The Alaska Department of Fish and Game announced today the guideline harvest level (GHL) for the 2018 Sitka Sound sac roe herring fishery is 11,128 tons based on a 20% harvest rate of a forecast mature biomass of 55,637 tons.

The forecast indicates that the mature biomass in 2018 will consist of 11% age-3, 47% age-4, 2% age-5, 32% age-6, 1% age-7, and 7% age-8+ fish (percent by number). This forecast uses spring commercial purse seine weights at age from last year's fishery and the average weights were as follows: age-3, 77 grams; age-4, 88 grams; age-5, 117 grams; age-6, 125 grams; age-7, 137 grams; and age-8+, 175 grams. Like last year, the forecast will not be updated with winter test fishery weight at age, as had been done prior to the 2017 fishery.

To forecast biomass, the department uses an age-structured assessment model with a long time series of egg abundance, age composition data from the harvest, and age composition data from department surveys conducted during and following the spring fishery. Herring egg abundance is estimated using aerial surveys, designed to map the length of shoreline receiving spawn, and dive surveys, which are used to estimate the density of eggs and average width of the spawn. The department mapped 62.3 nautical miles of herring spawn in the Sitka Sound area during the spring of 2017, compared to the recent 10-year average of 65.6 nautical miles. The estimated post-fishery spawning biomass in 2017 was 49,347 tons, the total sac roe harvest was 13,923 tons, and an additional 140 tons of herring were harvested in personal use and test fisheries. The observed age composition of spawning herring in 2017 was 30% age-3, 6% age-4, 57% age-5, 1% age-6, 4% age-7, and 2% age-8+.

The department will hold a stakeholders meeting at the Northern Southeast Regional Aquaculture Association in Sitka on Friday, January 12, 2018, at 6:00 p.m. The purpose of the meeting will be to discuss management strategies for this coming season.

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

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