

**PROPOSAL 177**

**5 AAC 27.160. Quotas and guidelines harvest levels for Southeastern Alaska Area.**

Reduce the minimum harvest rate to 10 percent and increase the threshold that allows for a fishery from 25,000 tons to 50,000 tons for the Sitka Sound herring sac roe fishery.

In 2021, Sitka Tribe of Alaska updated the methodology ADF&G used to develop the harvest control rule (Supplemental Comments to PC329 from 2022 Southeast and Yakutat Finfish and Shellfish meeting). The proposed harvest control rule below is based on the findings of that report. Please note that the 2021 analysis does not include data from 2021-2023; those data would likely make the average unfished biomass larger and the resultant harvest control rule would be even more conservative.

(g) The guideline harvest level for the herring sac roe fishery in Sections 13-A and 13-B shall be established by the department and will be a harvest rate percentage that is not less than **10** [12] percent, not more than 20 percent, and within that range shall be determined by the following formula:

$$\text{HARVEST RATE PERCENTAGE} = 2 + 8 [\text{SPAWNING BIOMASS (IN TONS)}] / 20,000]$$

**Harvest Rate Percentage = 8 + 2 [Spawning Biomass (in tons)] / 50,000**

The fishery will not be conducted if the spawning biomass is less than **50,000** [25,000] tons.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** The harvest control rule for the Sitka Sound sac roe herring fishery is based on an outdated analysis of the average unfished biomass (AUB; Carlisle 1998) and should be updated to better reflect nearly thirty years of additional data. Sitka Tribe of Alaska followed the methods of Carlisle (1998) with data through 2020 and found an updated AUB between 109,000 and 136,000 tons. STA suggests using the mid-point of this range (rounded to nearest 5,000 tons) for an updated AUB of 125,000 tons. STA also suggests a threshold of 40%, close to the 37% threshold ADF&G has stated they are using (ADF&G 2021) and equal to the threshold recommended to ensure ecosystem needs for forage fishes are met (Pikitch et al. 2012). Lastly, STA suggests reverting from the aggressive “2+8” harvest control rule used only in Sitka Sound to the more conservative “8+2” rule used by all other Southeast Alaska herring populations, including populations that have not been able to sustain commercial fisheries or subsistence harvests. Please see Sitka Tribe of Alaska’s Supplemental Comments to PC329 from the 2022 Southeast and Yakutat Finfish and Shellfish meeting for detailed methods and results on the update to the average unfished biomass.

**Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local Fish and Game Advisory Committee? Explain.**

**PROPOSED BY:** Sitka Tribe of Alaska

(HQ-F24-041)

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