

Concerns expressed regarding herring and shellfish:

1. Herring biomass

The North Gulf Coast is experiencing a huge biomass recently. The ocean conditions, for whatever reasons, are good for herring.

The Togiak (Bristol Bay) commercial herring quota is normally 20-30,000 tons. This year it is a record 70,000. The Sitka quota is generally 12-15,000 tons. This past year it was double that. Fish & Game has no money for Cook Inlet surveys but it is part of the North Pacific ecosystem.

2. Shellfish

In the mid-60's, there were a handful of sea otters in the kelp beds near Seldovia. With the passage of the Marine Mammals Protection Act, the population exploded to 6,000 by a recent survey. Each 80 lb. adult eats about 20% of their body weight each day. Assuming a portion of the population is not adults, figure the average sea otter eats 10 lb. per day. For the 6000 otters that would be 60,000 lbs per day. They are here 365 days a year so that equates to nearly 20,000,000 lbs of shellfish per year.

3. Pink Fry

The pink fry weight about 1/2 gram when released into the ocean. About 480 grams are needed to equal a pound so it requires about 1,000 fry to equal a pound. An 80 million fry release at Tutka would equal 80,000 lbs or 40 tons which would be a small commercial herring set. This would not fill one crab tank on a crab boat. Most of the fry have exited the bay or been eaten within a month.

The amount of larva eaten by pink fry in this one month is nothing compared to the amount consumed by herring, juvenile cod, pollack and other predators that are present in Kachemak Bay year round.

*Jessie Nelson*