

Herring Roe Fishery at Port Mouton

The Little Hope Herring Roe Fishery takes place each year near Port Mouton Island and in Port Mouton Bay. This is a directed fishery which surveys the specific locations where herring are spawning before the gillnets are deployed. The specific locations and their timing vary from year to year. One fishplant in the community processes herring, and buyers come from four other locations as well.

Figure 1 shows the gillnet herring catches for the 2006 fall fishery (September 1 to November 30) along the Little Hope Fishing Area. In 2006 the activity took place near Port Mouton Island and in inner Port Mouton Bay. This indicates that the spawning area occupied the western end of Port Mouton Bay as well as the entrance to the Western Channel. Juvenile herring are also regularly observed by fishermen at the breakwater in inner Port Mouton Bay.

In 2006, the total pounds of herring caught were 6,791,902 (3,080 metric tonnes). A total of 151 boats signed up with the association, 44 of these boats actively fished in the Little Hope fishing area. The first day fished was September 27, last day fished October 27. There was a total of 20 fishing nights and an average of 339,595 lbs. caught per night. There were 5 fish plants buying the herring. (Information courtesy of Little Hope Herring Fishery Management Committee). One fish plant in Port Mouton processes herring and buyers come to Port Mouton from four other locations to buy the catch. The economic impact of this valuable fishery extends beyond Port Mouton to four other communities.

It is worth noting that elder and experienced fishermen reported that they ceased placing their gillnets for various species including herring in the same area as proposed site #1251 during storm periods in the fall because of the very large number of berried female lobsters there indicating a critical habitat for lobster (Friends of Port Mouton Bay report on Traditional Ecological Knowledge, March 23, 2007).

Proposed Aquaculture Site # 1251 lies in the general area where herring are known to spawn and where juvenile herring frequent; this territory is a critical habitat area for herring as well as lobster.

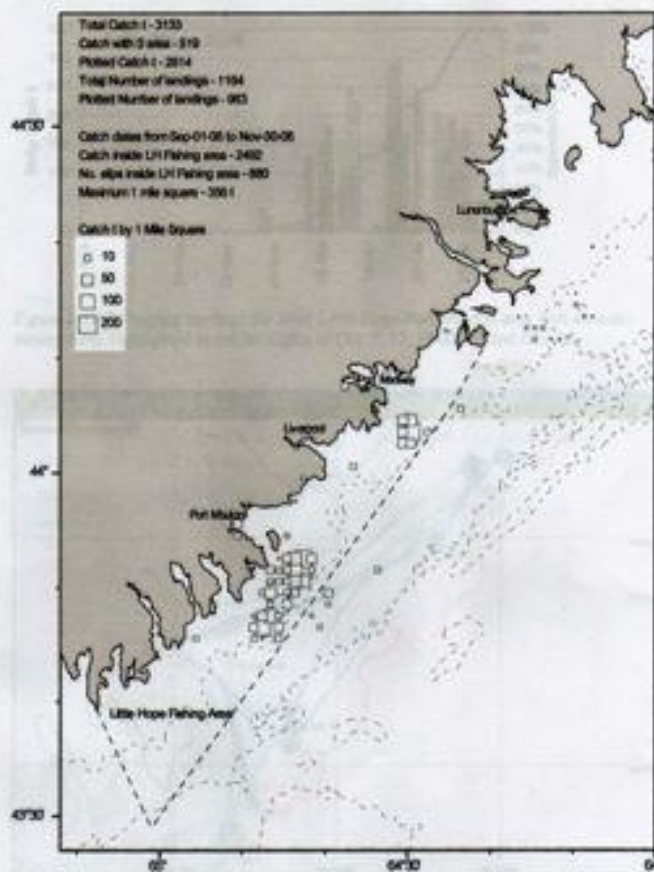


Figure 1. Gilloet herring catches for the 2006 fall fishery from Sept. 1 to Nov. 30, 2006 along the Little Hope Fishing Area (catches summed by 1 mile squares).