

Roe Herring

SPECIES

Herring (*Clupea pallasii*)

OTHER NAMES

Pacific herring, Kazunoko

ABOUT

Herring are small, pelagic schooling fish belonging to the *Clupeidae* family (sardines, shads, and anchovies) and are found all along the Pacific Coast, from Japan to California. There are five major herring stocks in British Columbia (BC): Queen Charlotte Islands (QCI), Prince Rupert (PRD), Central Coast (CC), Strait of Georgia (Gulf) and the West Coast Vancouver Island (WCVI).



Pacific Herring (left)
 Spawn on Kelp (back)
 Herring Roe (front)

Herring are bluish green with shiny silver sides and bellies, and have a trout-like body shape, large scales, a single soft dorsal fin and a forked tail. Commercially caught fish average 20 cm (8 inches) in length. The eggs, called roe, are naturally formed together into a single rectangular shaped product called a skein.

STOCK STATUS

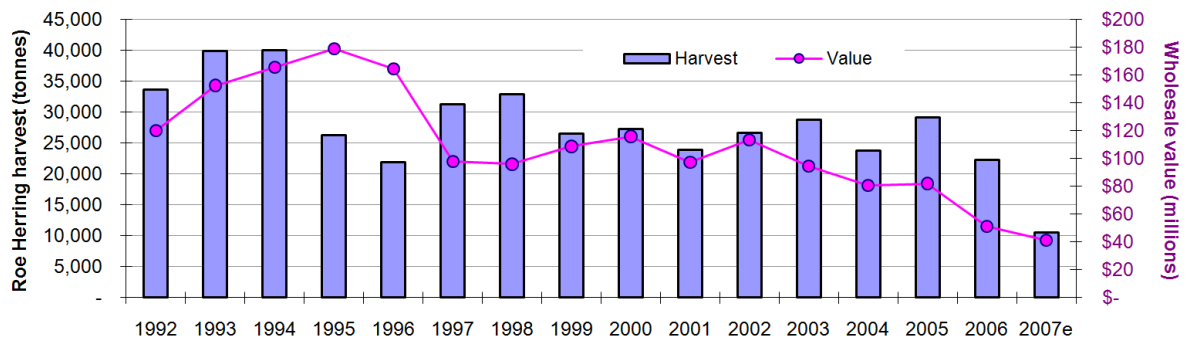
A coast-wide decrease in herring abundance was reported in 2007. Forecast returns were above cut-off levels in all areas except for the CC, QCI and WCVI (*DFO - Fisheries Management*).

MANAGEMENT

BC's roe herring fishery is managed federally by Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO). Individual licences are assigned a quota based on the coastwide annual total allowable catch (TAC). Seine licences are required to organize into a minimum pool of 8 licences, and gillnets are required to organize into minimum pools of 4 licences. Hail out, dockside monitoring and plant validation are required (*DFO - Fisheries Management*).

PRODUCT VALUE

Roe herring harvests and wholesale values fluctuate: 27,200 tonnes at \$116 million in 2000; 10,500 tonnes at \$41.2 million in 2007 (*BC Seafood Industry Year in Review*).



e: estimate

LIFE HISTORY

Off the BC coast, young herring inhabit inlets, protected waters, and near-shore waters while adults migrate into deeper waters offshore.

Spawning usually occurs between February and April in protected waters where there is favourable substrate such as kelp or eelgrass for egg deposition.

Herring primarily feed on small crustaceans, krill, molluscs, smaller fish and some phytoplankton species. Predators include sardines, hake, pollock, larger herring, salmon and marine mammals.

Approximately 25,000 tonnes of harvested roe herring produces around 8,000 tonnes of roe or kazunoko.

PRODUCTS

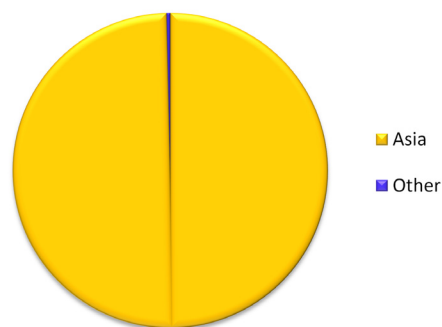
Herring roe is available as egg skeins packed in brine.

PRODUCT MARKET

Market for herring roe is primarily in Japan.

MARKET TREND

Demographic shift in the Japanese market has caused a decline in volume and prices - the younger generation do not consume much roe, which is traditionally used in gift boxes. There has been substantial marketing effort by the BC industry within the Japanese market to promote herring roe for everyday use with newer products such as flavored roe. Canada is branding its roe as a distinct and high quality product in the Japanese market.

**LINKS**

DFO - Fisheries Management Plans: www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/ops/fm/fishmgmt_e.htm

BC Seafood Industry Year in Review: www.env.gov.bc.ca/omfd/reports/index.html

Herring Conservation and Research Society: <http://hcrs.bc.ca>

BCSeafood.ca: www.bcseafood.ca/index.php

Fish and Seafood Online: <http://www.ats-sea.agr.gc.ca/sea-mer/index-eng.htm>