

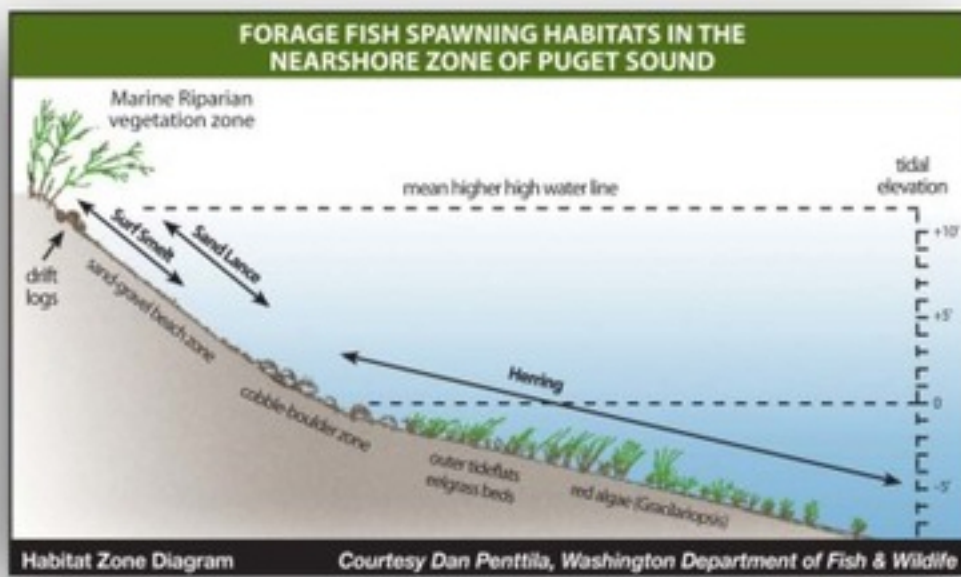
Beaches Are Vibrant!

THE FISH THAT CONSIDER OUR SHORELINE HOME

Did you know that many fish species depend on healthy beach and shoreline habits? Forage fish like Pacific herring, surf smelt, and Pacific sand lance all use the beach as their nursery. These fish are a critical part of the marine food web because larger organisms like salmon, marine birds and orcas depend on them for survival.



Different forage fish spawn or lay their eggs on very specific areas of the beach. Herring use the lowest part of the beach, sand lance use the mid beach and surf smelt use the upper beach near high tide. Spawning ranges from late winter to summer, depending on the type of forage fish.



Many questions remain about where in the Salish Sea these fish go, their habits, and spawning grounds of lesser-known sand lance. Scientists continue to do research to better understand these fish, so their populations can be protected into the future.

The Human Connection

Man-made creation can get in the way of forage fish and their habitat. Shoreline development such as roads and bulkheads take up their habitat and prevent natural changes that occur on the beach, like erosion, which provides the soft sand-gravel mix where forage fish lay their eggs.

Pacific Sand Lance



Photo credit: Erik Alexander, Suquamish Tribe

Forage fish play a critical role in sustaining a vibrant Puget Sound. Salmon are one of the larger fish that benefit from forage fish existence. For these larger fish to stay fed, there must be plenty of forage fish for them to consume. It is important for us to be mindful of the impact we have on these vital creatures.



Herring Highs!

This year was a record high for herring spawning in Kitsap County. Kitsap herring stocks saw the biggest spawn event in decades, with masses of eggs spotted in Port Madison bay near Suquamish and the north end of Bainbridge Island. Take a look at some of the photos below.



Suquamish beach covered in herring eggs



Closeup of herring eggs attached to eelgrass

Photo credit: Tom Ostrom, Suquamish Tribe

The Engine of Our Salish Sea

Take a look at a special video shot by the Coastal Watershed Institute that shows the secretive event of herring larvae emerging from their eggs! Look for link at the bottom of the newsletter.

About Shore Friendly Kitsap

Shore Friendly Kitsap is your waterfront partner. **Our mission is to empower Puget Sound waterfront landowners to create beautiful, environmentally friendly shorelines for themselves and generations to come.** Please visit us at: www.shorefriendlykitsap.com or contact Project Manager, Christina Kereki at ckereki@co.kitsap.wa.us or 360.307.4242 for more information.