

Greetings everyone and welcome to the 2024 Bristol Bay Season,

We are about to begin Port Moller Test Fishery (PMTF) operations right on time. The **R/V Ocean Cat (OC)** is back for its 6th season and will be on station this evening. The **R/V Miss Leona (ML)** is back for its 2nd season and left Akutan this morning and should be on transect by tomorrow mid-afternoon. The plan is to fish stations 2 – 16 tomorrow, June 10. On June 11 the vessels will begin fishing the full transect.

The genetics lab (8'x16' Connex) has been mounted on the Miss Leona (ML) and, like last year, the lab will provide all the genotyping service without bringing tissues ashore. Personnel on the ML will email genotype data to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game's Gene Conservation Laboratory, which will produce the stock composition estimates, as has been done for close to 20 years.

We have a great team working on PMTF again this year. **Dr. Scott Raborn** will lead the daily catch updates and analysis as he's done for 16 years. **Jeff Regnart** will oversee vessel operations and assist in all aspects of project management. **Chris Allison** and **Adam Maw** will captain the Miss Leona and Ocean Cat respectively, both of which are skilled captains who have experience performing the test fishery. And finally, we have a skilled scientific crew on the vessels this year: **Natura Richardson, Will Wrigley, Hayden Ulbrich, Jack Wrigley, and Tristan VanLeuven**. Finally, **Michael Link** will weigh in on any and all aspects of the project from time to time, whether we really want it or not.

This season you can expect the same level of information that you have come to rely on. Each day we will send out the daily update with CPUE's from station 2-22. You should expect regular genetic stock composition updates once sufficient fish have been captured to perform stock composition analysis. We will also provide periodic age composition updates, average weight of sockeye in the test fishery, and interpretations of the run strength and arrival timing.

In addition to the Port Moller Test Fishery, BBSRI has an ambitious project schedule in 2024. We will be operating the Nushagak District Test Fishery for the 5th consecutive year to aid in the early season management of the Nushagak District. We will begin phase 1 of a multi-year Nushagak Chinook salmon assessment program by establishing escapement weirs on two Chinook spawning tributaries of the Nushagak River. We will be operating the Nuyakuk River Counting Tower and participating in studies designed to assess the potential impacts of the proposed Nuyakuk Hydroelectric project. This year we will also be launching a genetics lab in Dutch Harbor which will provide inseason assessment of the stock of origin of chum salmon bycatch in the Bering Sea pollock fishery. A lot of work goes into executing this suite of projects and I would like to thank BBSRI staff and contractors **Tami Matheny, Bryan Nass, Jeff Regnart, Scott Raborn, Abi Duffy, Jason Smith, Sam Harris, Rob Stewart, Natura Richardson, Addison Green, and Warner Lew** for their hard work and dedication to getting these projects in the water this season.

Of course, this work is made possible by strong support and collaboration by all those involved in the Bristol Bay Fishery. We would like to thank **ADF&G Bristol Bay Staff, ADF&G Gene Conservation Lab, BBRSDA, and our industry partners** for your continued support. A special thanks goes out to **Northline Seafoods** this year for logistical support in getting all non-PMTF project materials to Dillingham.

Whether you are fishing, processing, or just along for the ride, we wish you all a safe and prosperous 2024 Bristol Bay Salmon Season.

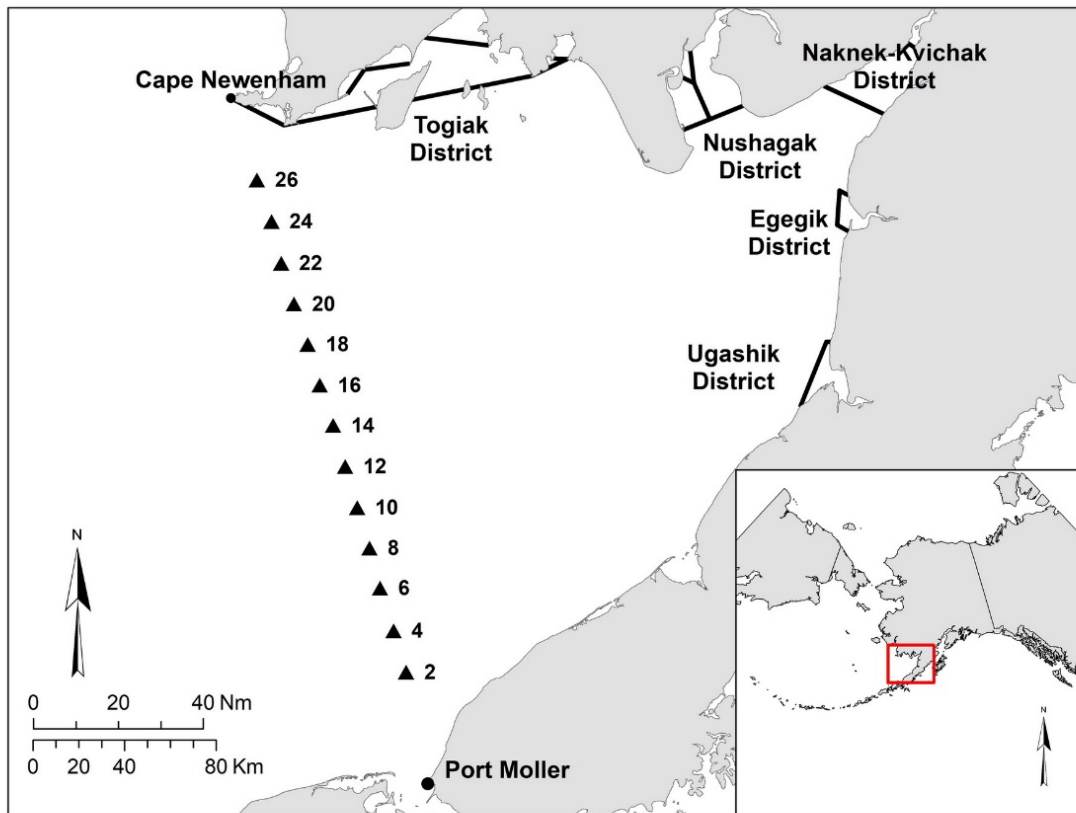
Jordan Head
Executive Director, The Bristol Bay Science and Research Institute



Crew of the R/V Miss Leona (Left to Right): BBSRI Technician Will Wrigley, BBSRI Genotyper Abi Duffy, BBSRI Technician Tristan Van Leuven, Deckhand Landon Baker, Deckhand Lee Samuel Cruze-Bondurant. (Not Pictured: BBSRI Genotyper Natura Richardson, Captain Chris Allinson)



Crew of the R/V Ocean Cat (Left to Right): Deckhand Conner Mulvey, Deckhand Ryan Mills, Captain Adam Maw, Deckhand Tyler Deal, BBSRI Technician Jack Wrigley, and BBSRI Technician Hayden Ulbrich.



Map of the study area, showing the stations of the 2024 Port Moller Test Fishery and the locations of Bristol Bay fishing districts. Sockeye passing the test fishery stations take approximately six to nine days to reach the Bristol Bay fishing districts in typical years.