

Port Moller Test Fish Catch Update

Pre Season Update, June 9, 2026

Greetings everyone and welcome to the 2026 Bristol Bay Season,

For the 2026 season, the Port Moller Test Fishery reaches a remarkable milestone, its 60th season of providing critical in-season information to support the Bristol Bay salmon fishery. Since its inception by ADF&G in 1967, its operation by the University of Washington Fisheries Research Institute during the 1980s and 1990s, and BBSRI's stewardship of the project since 2003, the program has evolved into one of the longest-running and most influential test fishing projects in Alaskan fisheries.

Reaching 60 seasons is a significant achievement in any field, but particularly in fisheries science, where programs must continually demonstrate their value to withstand changing priorities, funding challenges, and evolving management needs. The longevity of the Port Moller Test Fishery is a testament to the importance of the information it provides and the trust it has earned among fishermen, processors, managers, researchers, and communities across Bristol Bay. Its continued operation reflects decades of support from the State of Alaska, industry partners, regional organizations, and the many dedicated individuals who have worked to operate, improve, and sustain the program. As we celebrate this milestone season, we recognize that the Port Moller Test Fishery's success is built on the collective efforts of those who saw its value, invested in its future, and continually refined it into the indispensable management tool it remains today.

In 2026, [Port Moller Test Fishery \(PMTF\)](#) operations are set to begin right on time. The **R/V St. Andrew (SA)** will embark upon its 2nd season on the project, however, it is owned and operated by the Maw family who have been operating the R/V Ocean Cat and are back for their 8th season. *The St. Andrew will be making its way through False Pass this evening and will be on Station 2 to start fishing the morning of the 11th. The R/V Miss Leona (ML) is back for its 4th season and left Dutch Harbor early this morning and should be on transect by tomorrow mid-day. The plan is to have the R/V Miss Leona fish 2-3 stations in the middle portion of the transect 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. ADF&G 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 18 years. **Jeff Regnart** will oversee vessel operations and assist in all aspects of project management. **Chris Allinson** and **Robert Maw** will captain the Miss Leona and St. Andrew 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: **Elijah Lindley (BBSRI)**, **Will Harrast (BBSRI)**, **Grace Turner (BBSRI)**, **Jack Wrigley (BBSRI)**, **Jodi Estrada (ADFG)**, and **Marko Arias-Gutierrez (ADFG)**.

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 2-24. 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 2026. We will be operating the [Nushagak District Test Fishery](#) for the 7th consecutive year to aid in the early season management of the Nushagak District. We will operate [Chinook salmon weirs](#) on the Koktuli and Upper Nushagak Rivers for the 3rd consecutive season and add additional weirs on the Stuyahok and Klutuspak rivers. We will be operating the [Nuyakuk River Counting Tower](#) for the 4th consecutive year. In addition, we will also operate a [genetics lab in Dutch Harbor](#) which will provide weekly reports on the stock of origin of chum salmon bycatch in the Bering Sea pollock fishery for the 3rd consecutive year. Inseason data for the Port Moller Test fish project and all BBSRI's other projects listed above can be found on our new Inseason Data Page (Link Below). 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, Tyler Henegan 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.

Whether you are fishing, processing, or just along for the ride, we wish you all a safe and prosperous 2026 Bristol Bay Salmon Season.

Jordan Head

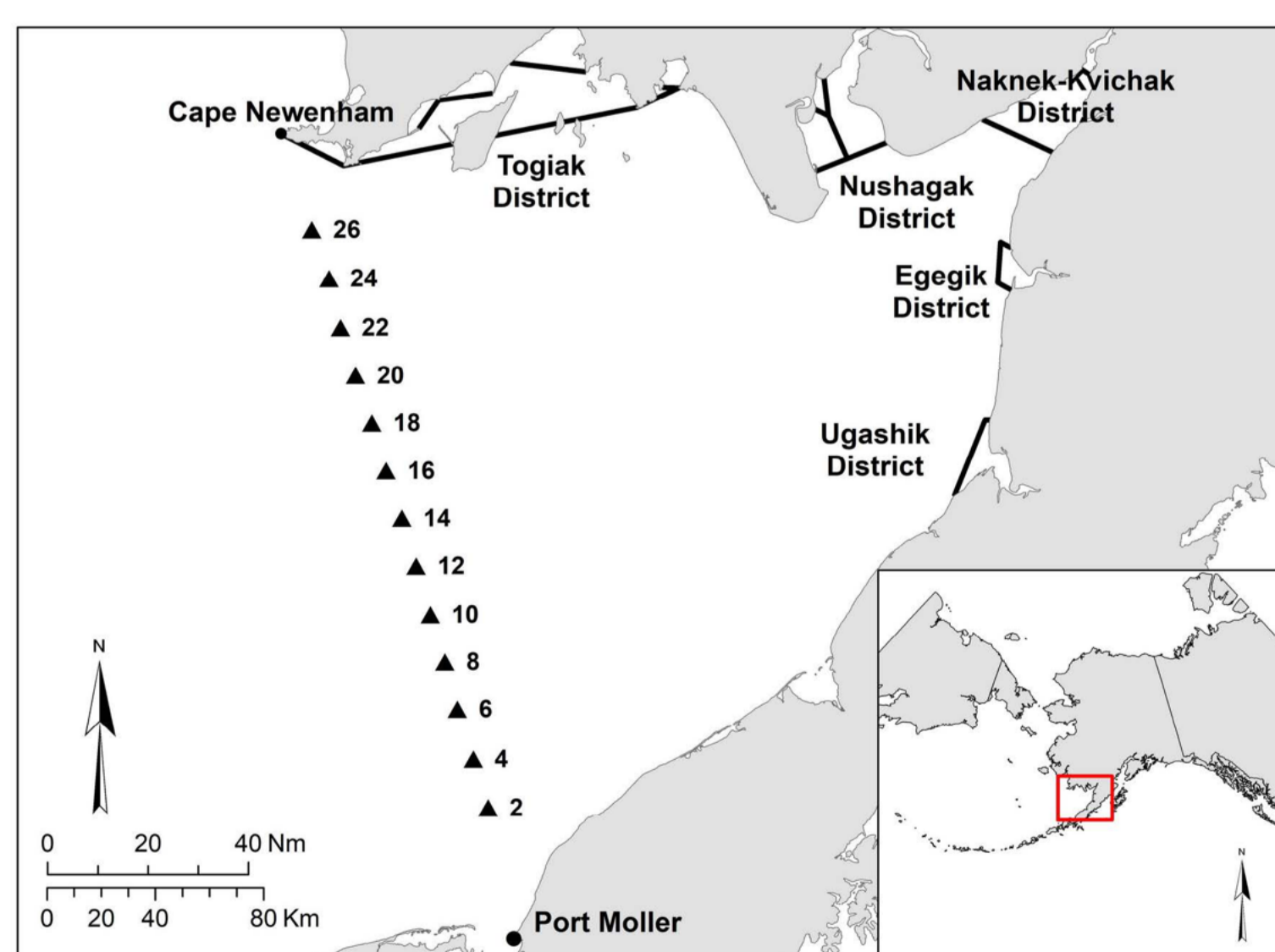
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Crew of the R/V Miss Leona (Left to Right): BBSRI Technician Elijah Lindley, Deckhand Thor Methodius Berestoff, Deck boss Lee Cruz-Bondurant III, Captain Chris Allinson. (Not Pictured - BBSRI Technician Will Harrast, ADFG Gene Lab Manager Jodi Estrada, ADFG Genotyper Marko Arias-Gutierrez)



Crew of the R/V St. Andrew (Left to Right, Back to Front): Deckhand Anthony Payne, BBSRI Technician Grace Turner, Captain Robert Maw, BBSRI Technician Jack Wrigley.



Map of the Study Area: Shows the stations of the 2026 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 districts in typical years.

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