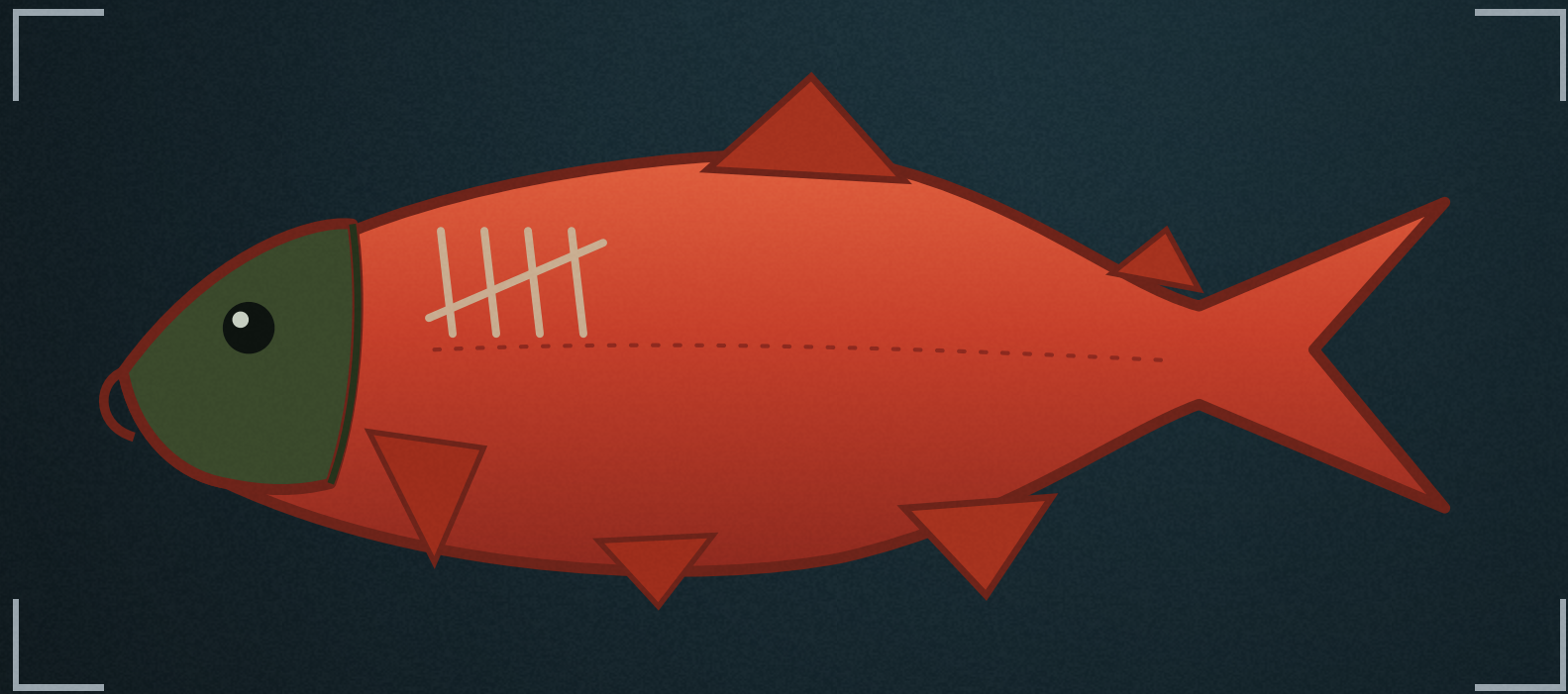


BRISTOL BAY / WOOD RIVER / 2026 SEASON

[DRONE VISION CONF 0.00 UNTRAINED]



One river.
Two ways to count it.
Only one is proven.

1955

01 / 09

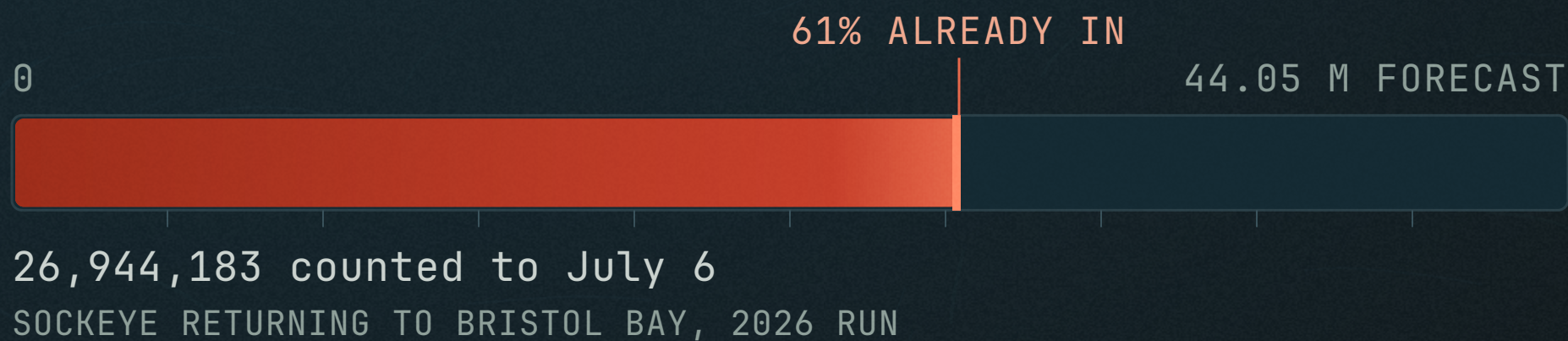
2026



A number opens the fishery.

In Bristol Bay the escapement count is not a statistic. It is the switch that opens and closes the season. This year's run is forecast at **44.05 million** sockeye.

As of July 6, crews had already counted **26,944,183**.



METHOD A / THE TOWER / SINCE 1955

Counted by hand, every ten minutes.

For seventy years, Fish and Game crews have counted Bristol Bay's salmon from towers, in ten-minute intervals across twenty-four-hour shifts. Most of the bay's count still comes from nine tower sites.

144 TEN-MINUTE COUNTS IN EVERY 24-HOUR SHIFT



WOOD RIVER TOWER, 2026

2,112,834

counted to date (July 6)

57,258

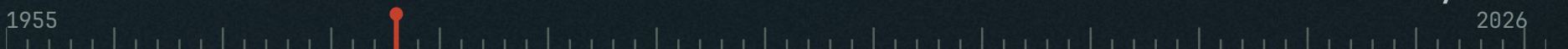
counted Sunday, one day

**700,000 to
2.8M**

escapement goal, within it

Every number the fleet trusts today came from a human hand.

1955



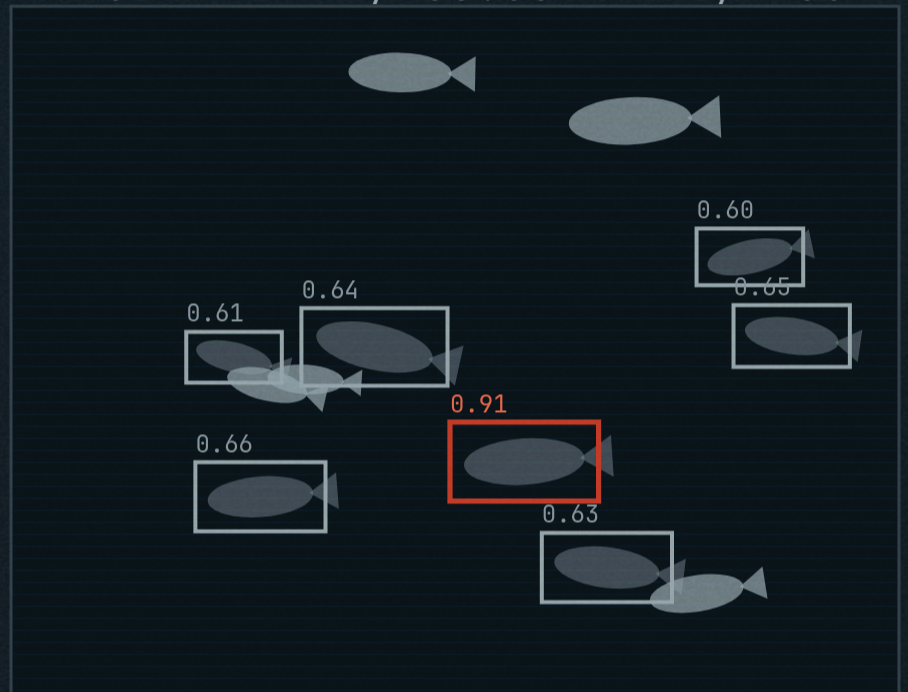
03 / 09

2026

At 8:30 a.m., the box opens.

On the Wood River, an autonomous drone launches at 8:30 a.m., flies to a fixed post above the right bank, and films the salmon below. The footage feeds a computer-vision model built to count them. The team expects to need several thousand hand-labeled images first.

DRONE FRAME / 08:30 AKDT / WOOD RIVER



7 DETECTED, MORE FISH MISSED /
MODEL STILL IN TRAINING

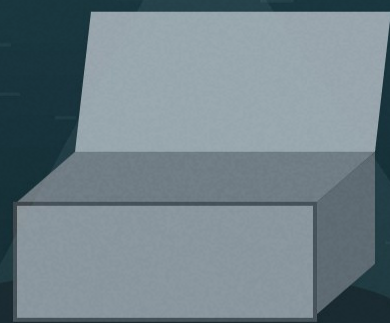
"we'll be able to feed in a video, and then we'll have a computer vision model that will be trained on picking out salmon."

IAN CHIU, MACHINE LEARNING DEVELOPER



WOOD RIVER / RIGHT BANK / 08:30

One drone. One river.
One season to prove it.



59.28 N 158.61 W (approx)

1955

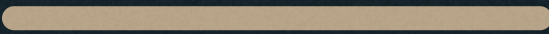
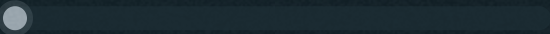


05 / 09

2026



Seventy years versus one.

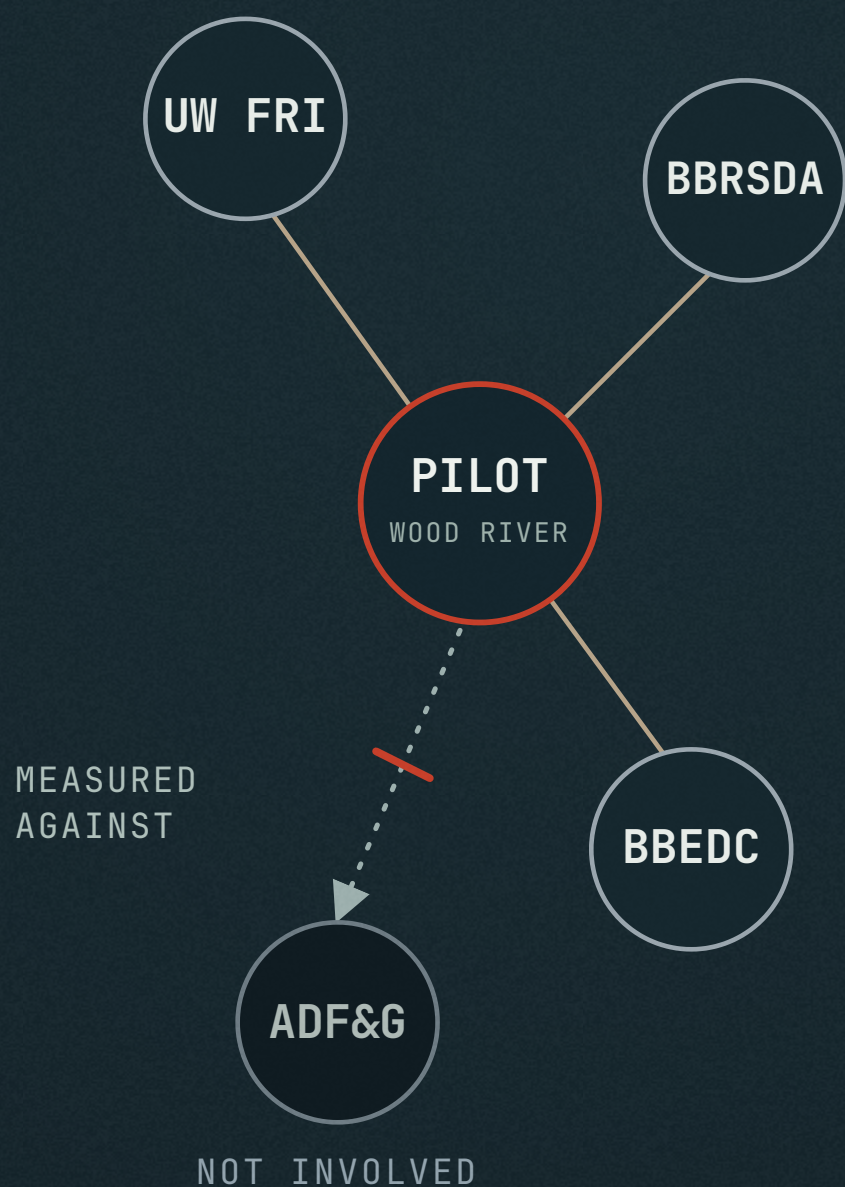
	# THE TOWER	□ THE DRONE
YEARS IN SERVICE	70+ counting since 1955 	0 first season, 2026 
COUNTING SITES	9 tower sites most of the bay's count	1 pilot reach one river, this year
CADENCE	every 10 min 24-hour human shifts	continuous one 8:30 a.m. launch
WHO DOES IT	human crews on the riverbank	autonomous box launched by itself
DEMONSTRATED ACCURACY	decades of record the number the fleet uses	UNPROVEN still in training, no accuracy shown yet



WHO IS, AND ISN'T, IN THE ROOM

Who counts, and who does not.

The pilot is run by the University of Washington's Fisheries Research Institute, with the Bristol Bay Regional Seafood Development Association and the Bristol Bay Economic Development Corporation. **Fish and Game, which has run the towers since 1955, is not directly involved.** The drone is measured against the towers, not run with them.



WHY NOW

"An amazing convergence of technology."

NORM VAN VACTOR, FORTY YEARS IN THE FISHERY

He means it literally: drone in a box, machine learning, Starlink Mini, lithium batteries, and solar panels, all maturing in the last year or two. Only now do they meet on one riverbank.

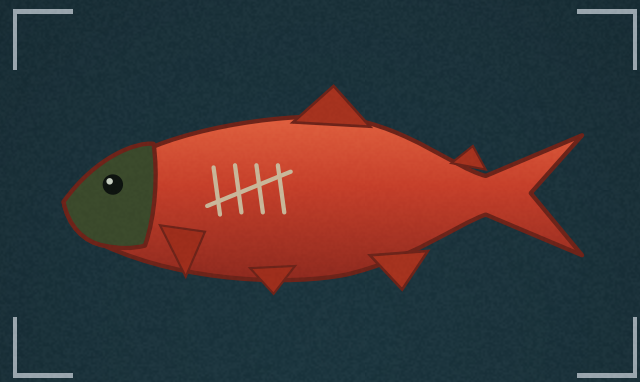


1955

08 / 09

2026





Would you stake the
season on a count
the machine has
not proven?

ALASKA.AI ✨

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Sources in comments