





Chinook Salmon***Oncorhynchus tshawytscha***

Chinook (also called King Salmon, Tyee, or Blackmouth) are the largest of the Pacific Salmon, averaging 22 lbs. and 36 inches in length as adults, with reports of fish reaching 50-100 lbs in some areas. After hatching, the young stay in fresh water for a few weeks up to a year before migrating to the ocean. There they pass 3 to 4 years or longer before returning to spawn. Most Chinook return to spawn from August to September and are known as "Fall Chinook". However some return much earlier, arriving in the spring and spawning in July. These are known as "Spring Chinook". Chinook only spawn in larger rivers, but they may go inland as far as 600 miles.

Distinguishing characteristics:

In salt water: Dark greenish-blue on the back with silvery, spotted sides. Caudal fin spotted on both lobes. Black gums around teeth in the lower jaw.

In fresh water: Color darkening to brownish or rust color.

Chum Salmon***Oncorhynchus keta***

Chum (also called Dog Salmon) spend very little time in fresh water. They spawn only a short distance inland, and their juveniles return to salt water almost immediately after hatching. Chum make extensive ocean migrations, returning to spawn after 3 to 5 years. They average 10-15 lbs. and about 25 inches in length at maturity. Chum spawn from September through November.

Distinguishing characteristics:

In salt water: Steel-blue and silver, with a few black speckles on the back and faint gridlike bars on the sides. Anal fin usually has a white tip.

In fresh water: Male has vertical patterns of black, yellow and purple on the sides and fierce teeth. Female has dark purple stripe along sides.

Coho Salmon***Oncorhynchus kisutch***

Coho (or Silver Salmon) are creek fish. The young spend a year in fresh water streams before migrating to the sea; there they live for another 2 years. Returning Coho will swim hundreds of miles up streams, overcoming obstacles such as beaver dams, logs and shallows. They spawn in shallow pools of medium sized streams from October to January. Coho salmon are magnificent jumpers, and are prized as a sports fish. At maturity, Coho average 6-12 lbs. and about 24 inches in length.

Distinguishing characteristics:

In salt water: Dark, metallic blue on the back, with black spots down the back and a few on the upper surface of the caudal fin (tail). Gums and nostrils white, but tongue black.

In fresh water: Color turning red-black with broad, red lateral stripe. Males develop hooked upper jaw.

Pink Salmon***Oncorhynchus gorbuscha***

Pinks (also known as Humpies) are the smallest of the commercial Pacific salmon, averaging 4 lbs. and about 20 inches in length as adults. The young migrate to salt water in April and May, almost as soon as they emerge from the gravel stream bed. They stay in salt water only until the fall of the following year, returning to spawn from August to September. Their other name, "Humpy" or "Humpback" comes from the prominent hump which forms on the backs of male spawners. Pinks spawn in small streams very close to the river mouth. They live exactly 2 years, and in many places they are only seen during odd numbered years.

Distinguishing characteristics:

In salt water: Tiny scales, silver sides, and dark, oval spots on upper body and tail.

In fresh water: Colors darken, bright Pink edge to gill covers. Males develop prominent dorsal hump.

Sockeye Salmon***Oncorhynchus nerka***

Sockeyes (or Red Salmon) spawn only in streams which have a major lake somewhere in the watershed. After hatching, the young Sockeye move into the lake, where they will stay for at least 1 year and often up to 3. They then move out to the ocean where they spend 1 to 4 years before returning again to spawn. They spawn in the fall from August to December near or at the edges of a lake. Some Sockeye populations are landlocked and reproduce without making an ocean migration. These landlocked Sockeye are known as Kokanee Salmon. Sockeye average 6 lbs. in weight and about 25 inches in length.

Distinguishing characteristics:

In salt water: Almost toothless, with prominent glassy eyes. Backs dark, greenish-blue with fine black specks, bellies silver.

In fresh water: Heads green, shading to red on rest of body. Male has humped back, female with broad. dark stripe along sides.

Steelhead***Oncorhynchus mykiss***

Steelhead are the same species as rainbow trout, only Steelhead migrate to salt water while Rainbows remain their entire lives in fresh water. Steelhead spawn January to April in riffles (shallow areas of turbulence) in medium sized streams. The fry remain in the stream for 2-3 years, but once in the ocean they make extensive migrations. Unlike most other Pacific salmon, the adults may survive spawning and reproduce for several years. Steelhead average about 8-10 lbs. and are about 24 inches in length. They are an important game fish for sport fishers, and they are used by Native Americans as a subsistence fish.

Distinguishing characteristics:

In salt water: Bluish back, silvery below, with small black spots on back, sides and fins. Sometimes a red to pinkish side stripe. Inside of mouth white.

In fresh water: Greenish back, less silvery below.

Cutthroat Trout
Oncorhynchus clarki

Cutthroat Trout are primarily a freshwater fish, but along the coast many populations make migrations to salt water. They are the smallest of the Pacific salmon, averaging 2-3 lbs and running 12-15 inches in length, although populations which stay in fresh water may get much bigger. Cutthroats spawn from January to March. Their juveniles stay in the stream for 2-4 years before making a brief ocean migration lasting only a few months. Like the Steelhead, but unlike other Pacific Salmon, Cutthroat adults usually survive spawning. Their importance to humans is primarily as a sports fish.

Distinguishing Characteristics:

In salt water: Bluish above, silvery below, with a red or orange "cutthroat" mark on lower jaw. Body and fins have dark spots.

In fresh water: Greenish back, with light sides and silvery below.