

The Salmon People

Native Nations of the Pacific Northwest define themselves as the Salmon People. They regard salmon as a very important gift of food from the Creator, and during special ceremonies each year, they honor the salmon's sacrifice. These ceremonies are different from place to place, but people ritually prepare and eat the first salmon caught in the spring. Then they return the fish bones to the water in a formal act of thankfulness.

Salmon is not only a foundation of the diets of native peoples, it is also linked to their cultures, communities, and identities. For ages, shovel-nose canoes, which are flat-bottomed and made of a single tree, were used in fishing for salmon in the rivers. Today, there is a growing trend among the Native Nations of the Pacific Northwest to restore the use of shovel-nose canoes.

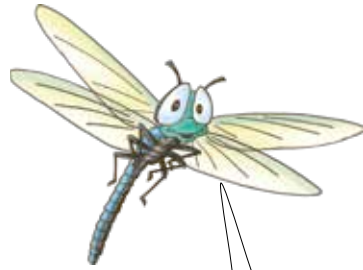
As you hike today, what types of boats do you see on the water? Draw a picture below of what you see, and think about the different reasons we use boats today.



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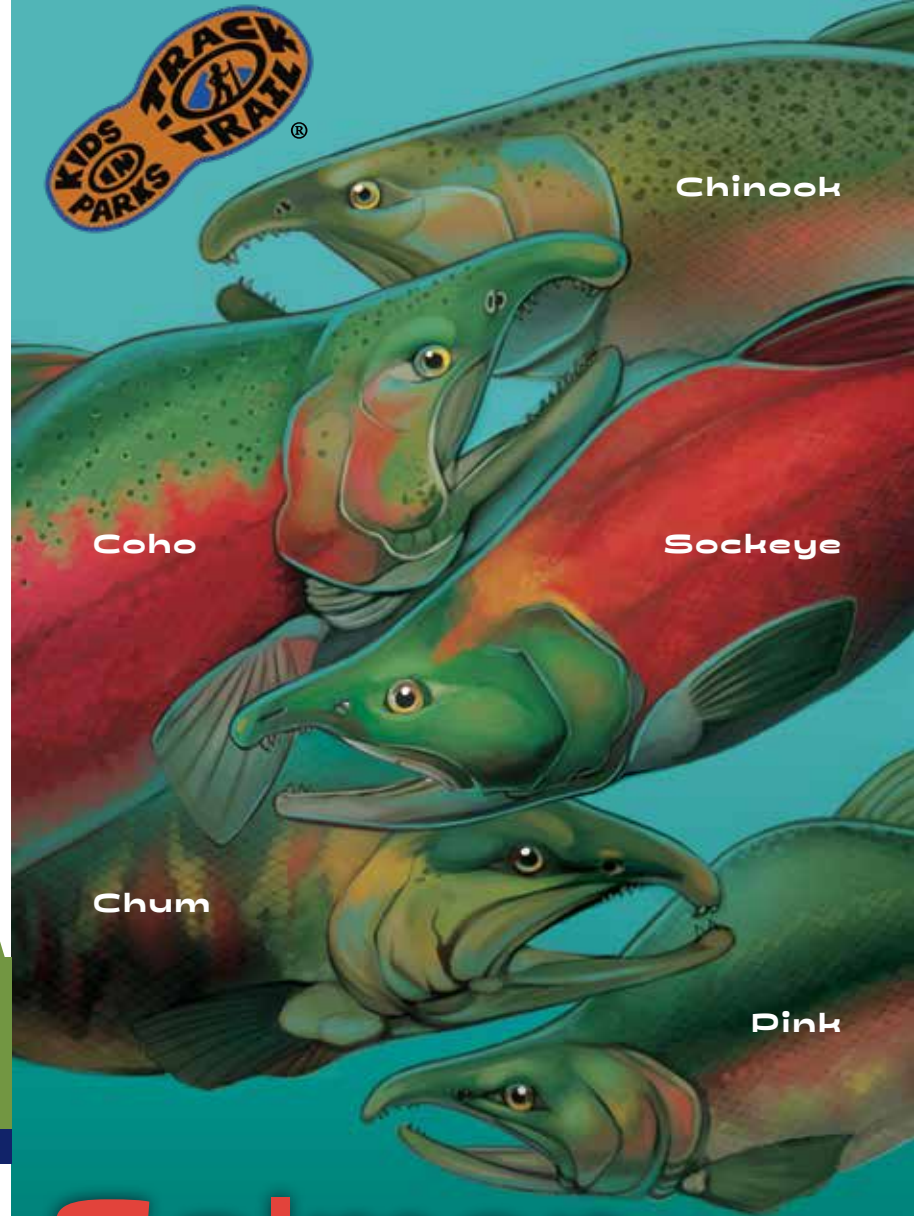
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Salmon of the Pacific

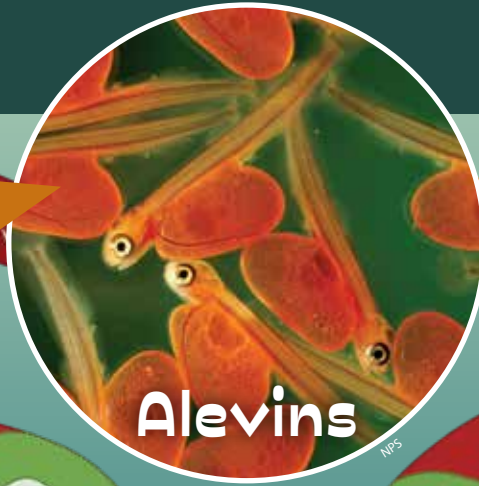
Five species of salmon thrive in the North Pacific waters of the U.S. Salmon are an anadromous fish, meaning they spend part of their life in freshwater and part of their life in the ocean. And as salmon return to freshwater, they bring nutrients to the rivers they travel as well as provide food for other animals and people. Use this brochure to learn about the salmon's life cycle and their transition from rivers to the ocean and back.

Life of a Salmon

Alevins are newly-hatched salmon. They stay in the nest and live off a food sac that is attached to their bodies.

● Like newborn salmon have food to carry around with them, did you bring a snack with you today? What's your favorite food to take hiking?

Eggs are laid in a nest by a spawning female and are fertilized by a spawning male. Females can build 3-5 nests, or redds, in just a few days. Shortly afterward, both the adult female and adult male salmon will die.



Parrs are salmon fry that have grown large enough to leave the nest and find food on their own. They swim to a body of freshwater where they feed and mature for the next one or two years.

Spawning salmon are in their final stage of life. This is when many salmon develop bright colors and they return to the streams where they were born.



● Can you spot any spawning salmon swimming underwater?



Smolt are young salmon that are ready to make their transition to the sea. They become silvery to match open water, and their gills and kidneys change to process saltwater.

Salmon Run

Salmon face many predators. Orcas, seals, and sharks rely on adult salmon for food, and will hunt them in the ocean. Find a spot on the trail to run to and then run back. As you run back, have a partner play a "predator" and try to tag you. Make it back without being caught.



Adult salmon will stay in the open ocean until maturity. Most salmon remain silver in color and it can take 1-7 years for the fish to become spawning adults.



Salmon Swim

Swimming upstream requires a lot of muscle power for young salmon. You can build strength too by laying on your belly and lifting you legs and arms away from the ground. How long can you hold that pose? Pretend you're swimming for an added challenge.