

Identifying Alaska's 5 Pacific Salmon Species



Chinook (King), Coho (Silver), Sockeye (Red), Chum (Dog), Pink (Humpy)

Use the book, Alaska's Wild Salmon and the Salmon Identification Chart provided to identify which of the five Pacific salmon have the following characteristics.

COLOR: PRE-SPAWNING STAGE

Greenish-blue back with silvery sides- **Coho**

Dark blue-black back with silvery sides- **Sockeye**

Blue-gray back with silvery sides- **Chinook**

Dull gray back with yellowish-silver sides- **chum**

COLOR: SPAWNING STAGE

Develop dull green colored heads and brick-red to scarlet bodies- **sockeye**

Lose their silvery bright and take on a maroon to olive brown color- **Chinook**

Develop greeneish-black heads and dark brown to maroon bodies- **Coho**

Develop olive green coloration on the back with maroon sides covered with irregular dull red bars- **Chum**

Take on a dull gray coloration on the back and upper sides with a creamy white color below- **Pink**

MISCELLANEOUS: SPAWNING STAGE

Males develop a pronounced hump- **Pink**

Males exhibit many canine-like teeth- **Chum**

MARKINGS:

Small irregular shaped black spots on back, dorsal fin, and usually on both sides of tail- **Chum**

No distinct spots on back, dorsal fin or tail- **Sockeye**

Very large spots on the back and large black oval blotches on both tail lobes-
Pink

Small black spots on the back, dorsal fin and usually on upper lobe of tail only-
Coho

No distinct spots on back or tail- **Chum**

GUMLINE:

Black mouth with white gums at base of teeth on lower jaw- **Coho**

Black mouth with black gums at base of teeth on lower jaw- **Chinook**

SCALES:

Very small scales- **Pink**

EYES:

Large eye pupil covers nearly the entire eye- **Chum**

WEIGHT:

Usually weighs between 4 and 8 pounds- **Sockeye**

Usually weigh 8 to 12 pounds- **coho**

Usually weighs between 3.5 to 4 pounds- **pink**

Average between 20 to 40 pounds in weight- **Chinook**

Usually weigh between 7 and 18 pounds- **chum**

SIZE:

Between 15 and 24 inches long- **pink**

Between 18 and 24 inches long- **sockeye**

Between 24 and 32 inches long- **chum**

Between 24 and 30 inches long- **coho**

Between 30 and 50 inches long- **Chinook**