

ALASKA CHINOOK SALMON

MY SCIENTIFIC NAME

Oncorhynchus tshawytscha

BY THE NUMBERS

2000 Distance in miles that some Yukon River Chinook migrate upstream.

126 Weight (pounds) of largest Chinook documented (near Petersburg, AK).

8 Upper age in years of spawning adults.

HOW TO IDENTIFY ME

I'm the largest of the Pacific salmon and have small black spots on both lobes of my caudal fin and black pigment along the base of my teeth.

WHY I MATTER

I'm highly valued by Alaska Natives and Canada's First Nations as food and am a prized catch for Alaskan residents and visitors from around the world. I'm a key part of the landscape and way of life here.

STATUS

Declining statewide with 10 "stocks of concern" as of 2015. The concern arises from fewer spawners returning than thought necessary to have a harvestable surplus or meet goals for the population set by fishery managers.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Chinook Salmon are also called *King*, *spring salmon*, *June hog*, and *blackmouth*.
- Like other Pacific salmon, Chinook are **anadromous** meaning they're born in freshwater, migrate to sea, and return to freshwater to **spawn** (reproduce).
- They are also **semelparous**, meaning they spawn only once and then die.
- Juveniles spend 1-2 years in freshwater before migrating to sea. During this time they move among big rivers, tiny streams, and everything in between.
- Barriers like road culverts can delay or totally prevent juveniles and adults from reaching habitats that will help them survive and/or spawn.
- Spending time at sea (typically 2-5 years) lets Chinook to reach their large size; the ocean offers a smorgasbord of nutritionally-rich prey like herring, sand lance, and squid.
- There's a benefit to being big: large females make more (and bigger) eggs. Small females dig shallower **redds** (nests) that don't protect eggs from high flows as well as deeper redds.
- Rural Alaska residents harvest tens of millions of pounds of fish each year. Sustaining this **subsistence** way of living is a priority in Alaska.



Range in Alaska

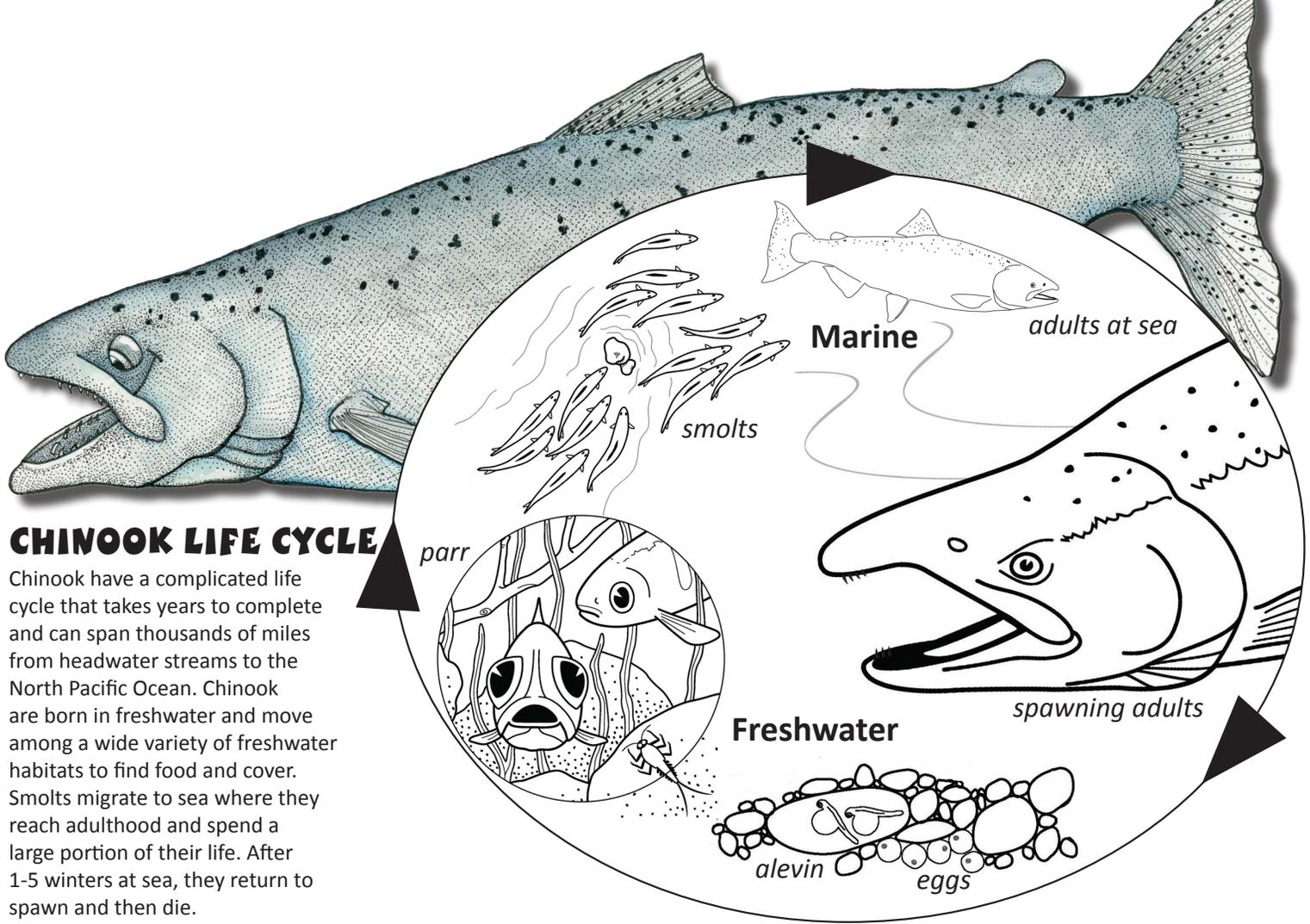


Fish illustration by Laury Zicari, USFWS, Retired.

Website: www.fws.gov/fisheries



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Juvenile Chinook Salmon.



Adult Chinook Salmon.

Learn more about Alaska's fish and their habitat!
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YOU CAN HELP ME
 Get to know me, if you don't already. Help make me visible to people who don't have the chance to see me by sharing your stories about me. Get involved in efforts to help conserve my habitat and maintain my populations into the future.



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