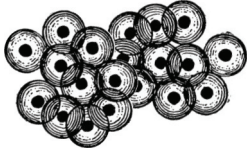


The Salmonid Life Cycle

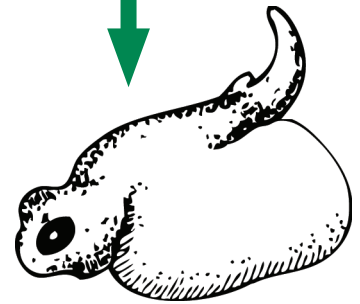
Fact Sheet



Spawners lay eggs in gravel stream bottoms. After spawning, Chinook and Coho salmon die. Steelhead may swim back to the sea and then return to the river to spawn again. They often spawn several times in their lives.

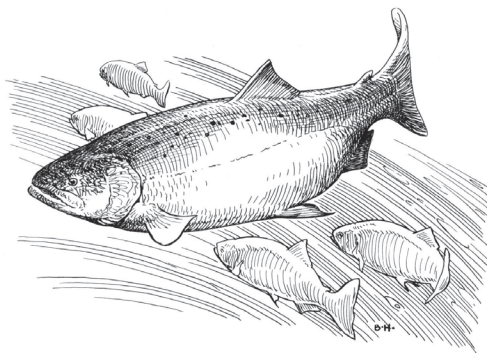


Eggs develop in the gravel and hatch into alevins.



Alevins stay in the gravel and live on their rich yolk sacs and grow bigger.

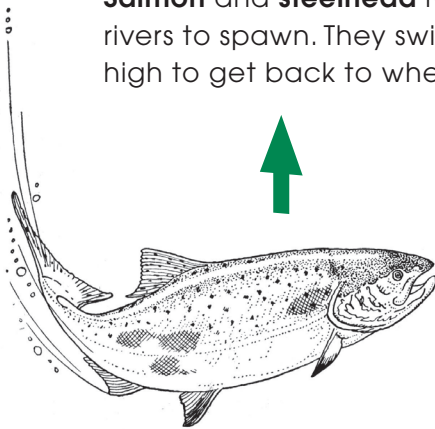
After the yolk sac is used up, the tiny fish are **fry**. They swim out of the gravel to find insects and other small animals that live in or fall into the stream. They will live in gentle water near the stream bank until they get bigger.



The salmonids—**smolts**—migrate downstream, toward the sea. The smolts spend some time in the estuary, getting ready to enter the ocean.



Salmon and **steelhead** return to their home rivers to spawn. They swim hard and jump high to get back to where they were born.



Adults often eat other fish. Trout do not grow as large as their relatives, the salmon and the steelhead trout, because they do not go out to sea. Adult salmon spend several years in the ocean, where they swim many miles and grow very large. Some trout live in lakes. They may live there all their lives, but often spawn in streams.