

Salmon Identification

OCEAN PHASE



Chinook Salmon

Large black spots on back, dorsal fin, and both the upper and lower lobes of the tail. Dark mouth with a black gum line. Average size scales. Silver pigment on the tail. Prominent teeth.



Coho Salmon

Black spots on back with a few spots on the upper portion of the tail. White mouth with a white gum line and dark tongue. Average size scales. Silver pigment on the tail.



Chum Salmon

No prominent spots on back or tail (small speckles may be present). White mouth with a white gum line and dark tongue. Large scales. Caudal peduncle (tail base) is slender. Silver pigment on the tail.



Pink Salmon

Generally large black spots on back and heavy oval shaped black blotches on the upper and lower lobes of the tail. White mouth with a black gum line and tongue. Very small scales. No silver pigment on the tail. Flexible (rubbery) lower jaw.



Sockeye Salmon

No prominent spots on back or tail (small speckles may be present). White mouth with a white gum line and dark tongue. Average size scales. Prominent gold-colored eyes. No silver pigment on the tail. Small teeth.

SPAWNING PHASE



Chinook Salmon

Chinook salmon do not display the conspicuous morphological changes of pink, chum, and sockeye salmon during the spawning stage. Typically, Pacific salmon turn from the silvery bright ocean coloration to a darker bronze color as they approach spawning.



Coho Salmon

In mature male coho salmon, the upper jaw forms an elongated hooked snout and the teeth become greatly enlarged. The male is generally brighter than that of the female and is characterized by the dorsal surface and head turning bluish-green. The sides of the males develop a broad red streak. In females, the jaws also elongate but the development is much less extreme than that of the males.



Chum Salmon

Chum salmon display characteristic olive-green and purple (calico) vertical bars on the sides of the body as they approach the spawning phase. Both males and females develop hooked noses and large canine-like teeth



Pink Salmon

As male pink salmon begin to enter the spawning phase, they develop a prominent hump in front of the dorsal fin, an elongated snout, and large teeth. Body color in both males and females darkens from a bright silvery appearance to a pale slate, brownish, or greenish-gray on the back and sides and a pale whitish color below. Small, oblong irregular black spots are present on the back and sides, and on the dorsal and tail fins.



Sockeye Salmon

Sockeye turn bright red on their body, and olive-green on the head. Males develop a prominent hump in front of the dorsal fin; the male's snout becomes elongated; and canine-like teeth grow out of the receding gums. Females undergo a distinct color change, but retain their body shape.

Atlantic Salmon



Male Atlantic salmon



Female Atlantic salmon

Atlantic salmon have large black spots on the gill covers and back, and rarely any spots on the tail fin. Their scales are large, there is no red stripe along the lateral line, and they have 8-10 anal fin rays. Atlantic salmon may be taken from marine waters during any open salmon season, and from anadromous (not landlocked) freshwater during any open salmon or trout season. Anglers may not, however, continue to fish for Atlantic salmon after a daily limit of another species of salmon has been retained. In landlocked lakes, Atlantic salmon may be taken as part of the trout daily limit. Seasons and size limits in place for Atlantic salmon in landlocked lakes. Opportunities to harvest Atlantic salmon beyond those listed in the pamphlet will be announced to the news media and carried on WDFW's recreational fishing hotline. Please report sightings to (360) 902-2700.

Chinook, Coho, and Pink Salmon Identification

Chinook

Jaw- has a dark mouth and black gums at the base of its teeth. Immature chinook are known as a "blackmouth."



Coho

Jaw- mouth is white and the gum line is almost white, but the tongue may be black. The teeth are sharp and strong.



Pink

Jaw- mouth of a pink is white, but the gums and tongue are black, as they are in a Chinook. It does not have "teeth" on its tongue.



Tail- both the upper and lower lobes of the tail are covered with spots and silver is prominent.



Tail- has just a few scattered spots, usually on the upper lobe, with silver streaks. It has a wide caudal peduncle.

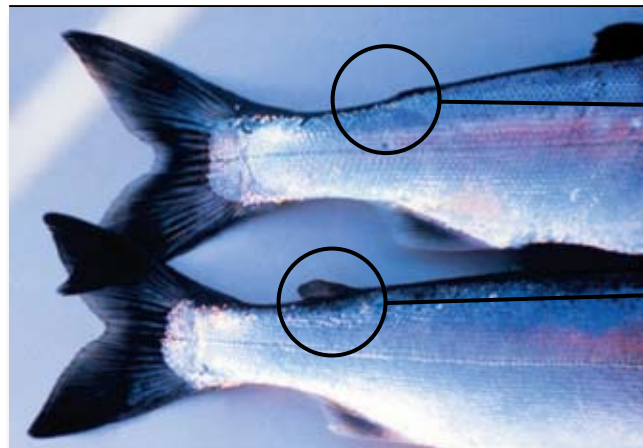


Tail- is covered with large oval spots. It does not have silver on the tail. The scales are very small compared to other salmon of the same size.



Wild/Hatchery Identification

In order to provide salmon & steelhead fishing opportunities, WDFW and the Tribes have marked salmon & steelhead by clipping the adipose fin (a small fatty fin directly behind the dorsal fin). In areas designated "release wild <insert fish name>", fin-clipped salmon and steelhead are the only fish that may be retained. The picture to the right shows a wild coho salmon and a fin-clipped or hatchery coho salmon. Please be careful in releasing wild fish- they are your fishing future! For tips on the best way to release fish, please see page 13. In Marine Areas 5-13, it is illegal to bring a wild salmon or a species of salmon aboard a vessel if it is unlawful to retain those salmon. "Aboard a vessel" is defined as inside the gunwale. In Marine Area 2-2, it is unlawful to totally remove salmon from the water if it is illegal to retain those fish, except anglers fishing from boats 30' or longer are exempt.



Hatchery coho
Adipose fin has been clipped – leaving a healed scar in its place.

Wild coho
Intact adipose fin.