



Swimming with the Salmon!

Slippery Salmon!

Did you know that there are 5 species of migrating salmon in Oregon. Salmon are a type of fish that are mostly born in freshwater streams (like the Umpqua) and then migrate to the ocean to live as adults. They only come back up the stream when its time to lay eggs. In Oreogn, the Chinook salmon, is the largest salmonid, and usually weighs in at 50 lbs! The Chinook salmon is Oregon’s state fish! Chum salmon, Coho salmon and Pink salmon are also found by anglers (people who catch fish). [Sockeye salmon](#) make their way up the Columbia river in Northern Oregon before laying eggs in streams all the way in Idaho!

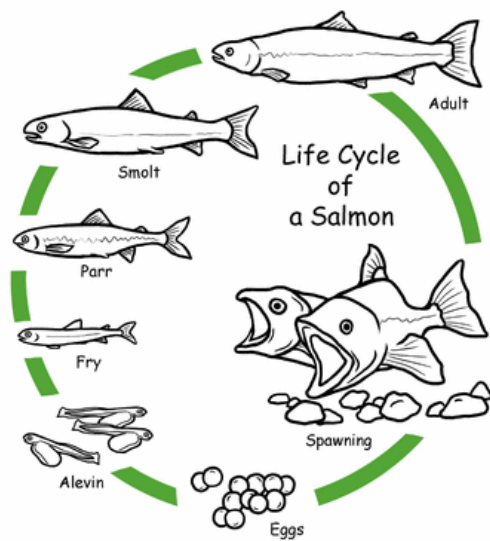


The Salmon Life Cycle

Salmon have an amazing life that starts in shallow stream beds in places like the Umpqua River and its **tributaries** (side streams). The adult salmon will **spawn**, using their bodies to dig holes in the gravel, then the female will lay thousands of **eggs**, and the male salmon will fertilize them.



Watch this video of salmon spawning!
9:08

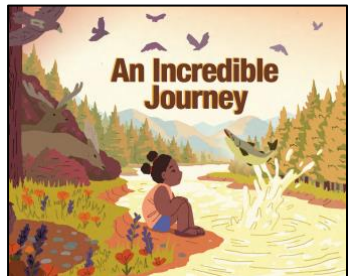


The eggs stay protected in the gravel until they hatch. At night the tiny **alevin**, swim out of the nest and hide in the river. They eventually grow into **fry** fish and start turning silver and **migrate** downstream towards the ocean!

As **parr**, they live in estuaries near where the river meets the ocean. Once they are **smolt** transitioning into **adults**, they are big enough to start going into the ocean and beginning feeding on everything! For years they live in the ocean until they are big enough to migrate back up stream to spawn. After spawning, the salmon are so exhausted from their journey up river that they die.

Why are salmon important to our watershed?

The South and North Umpqua River Umpqua are important river habitat for the life-cycle of these fish! Salmon provide a [food source for predators](#) in our watershed, like eagles, otters and bears. When they die, the nutrients from the salmon’s body feed our ecosystem too. A healthy stream has salmon in it, so if the salmon disappear it tells us that our streams need to be better taken care of! Salmon are important for the culture and tradition of Native Americans here in the Pacific Northwest.



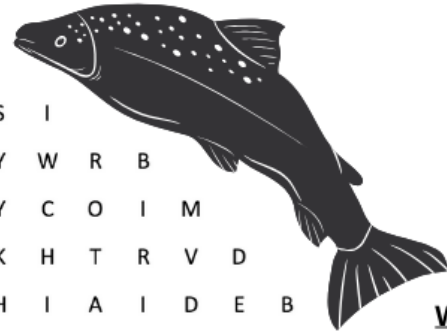
You can read this amazing children’s book about salmon – with lots of pictures of a watershed!

ACTIVITY 1: Salmon Word Hunt



We just learned so much about salmon! See if you can find all of the important salmon words in this crossword puzzle!

Looking for more of a challenge? Check out this activity book from the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission. Click [HERE!](#)



J S M U D S S I
 F V I E A N U U Y W R B
 W P P M V V O O R Y C O I M
 E J T A B J S S L S K H T R V D
 H Q G N P R E Y F M U H I A I D E B
 C O M G F I R K I S F Q N D Y D K R
 E A U A D S D C G D O Y V O E A L N A Y
 O D Y B V E O R T U U Y P O R K J B Z W
 Y Q F P E X A B F G P P Q K P V S E X U
 P F V A S T Y L O O N W N H L V M K H T
 F F T P E N F R E S H W A T E R O N S H
 Y B A L E V I N U K F Y K S O S L I Z E
 S I P F T R X F D B U B G V T X T P K U
 O U R E Y K R Q Q S W N X P H A S Z S Z
 D H Z R Y L P H N W A P S U I U Q I
 J V V C X P D E M X D H Q A V Z P Z
 H L E V A R G K N L P J Q A G U
 S Q A M U G E V M C Y J L I
 K X Z J Y E U W A P R
 P X Z L F O A L



Word List

- ALEVIN
- CHINOOK
- EGGS
- FRESHWATER
- FRY
- GRAVEL
- MIGRATE
- PARR
- PINK
- PREDATOR
- RIVER
- SMOLT
- SPAWN
- UMPQUA

CRAFT 2: Fish Origami

Explanation

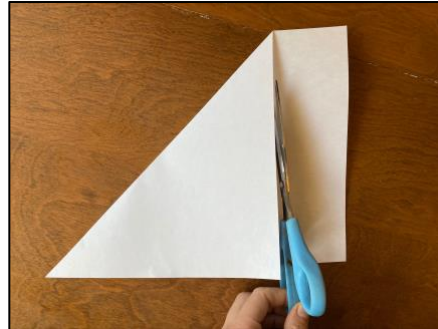
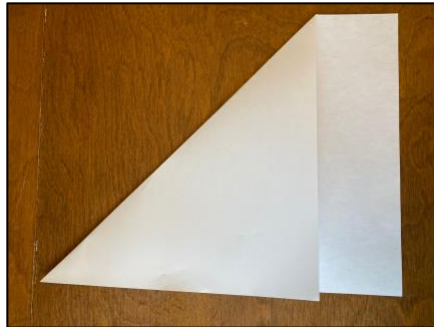
You will need:

- Piece of paper
- Scissors
- Colored pencil or crayon

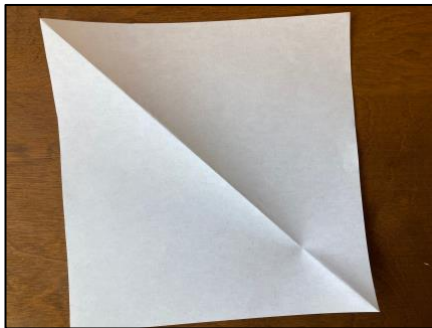


Instructions:

1. Fold a regular piece of printing paper towards a long edge to make a square. Cut the remaining piece of paper off of the bottom.



2. Now color one side of your with colored pencils or crayons in whatever shades you want your salmon to be.



3. From here, follow the folding instructions in this video to help you finish your fish!



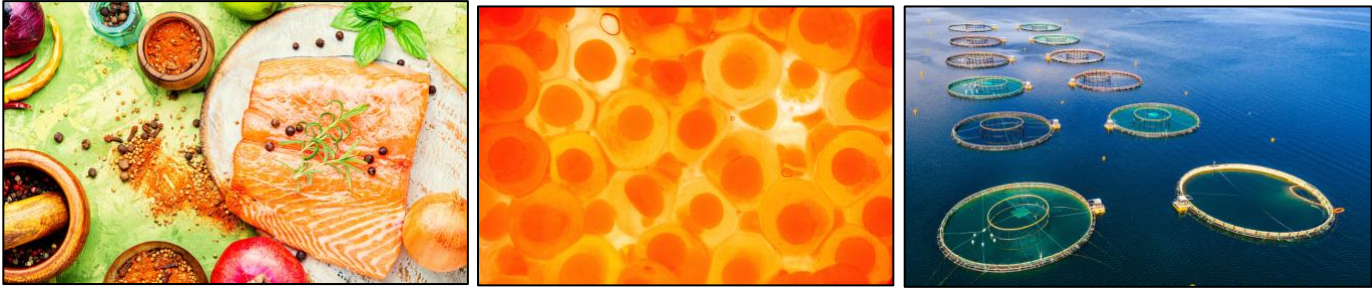
4. You can make many salmon, in all different colors, and hang them from strings if you like!



Digging Deeper: What about eating salmon?

Turns out, most of the salmon that we eat doesn't come from the wild salmon runs, they come from salmon farms out in the ocean. Huge nets go into the water and house thousands of salmon. They are fed by machines that go over the nets. These salmon are artificially born in laboratories called hatcheries. The good thing about this type of salmon is that it helps feed our demand for salmon on the dinner table and letting more wild salmon swim upstream. However, these farms can release a lot of pollution into the ocean, and if they break, then farmed salmon may mix with wild salmon and bring diseases or bad genes.

You and your family can learn more about how to eat sustainable seafood by downloading the [Seafood WATCH app](#) from the Monterey Bay Aquarium. You can support your watershed by shopping responsibly!



Here we have a picture of cooked salmon, salmon eggs (also known as roe) and large salmon farms in the ocean.

Local Fish Viewing: Do you want to see some real fish in action? If you time it right, you can see Salmon swimming up the Umpqua river. You can also see other fish like steelhead trout. Up the North Umpqua near Steamboat Spring, a large pool is being protected for steelhead trout as they migrate upstream to spawn. Check out this video on one of our local conservation heroes: Click [HERE!](#)

Thanks for conducting science with me for this Home Explorer activity from Umpqua Watersheds Education Program.
Join me for new activities posted every week!

- Ms. Robyn

