

Identification of Juvenile Salmon

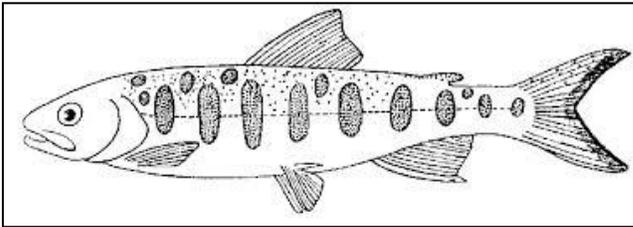
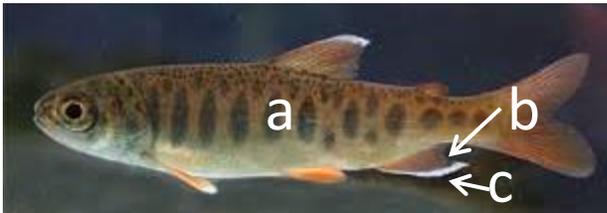
All Pacific salmon are anadromous, having both a freshwater and marine stage of life. In the fall of the year, adult salmon migrate to freshwater to reproduce (spawn) and the hatched juvenile salmon (the parr stage) reside and grow in freshwater from a few days (as do pink and chum salmon) to more than a year for king, coho, and sockeye salmon.

A hatchery simulates the reproduction and freshwater growth period of the salmon by increasing survival in their parr stage, and just prior to entering into the marine environment, transform into a smolt that enables them to survive the saline marine water. This exercise will help you learn to identify the parr stage of the five Pacific salmon.

The important anatomical characteristics that identify the species of the part salmon are:

- The position, shape, and size of the parr marks that are the dark patches along the side.
- Occurrence and position of spots on the tail.
- Shape of the anal fin.
- Size of the eye.

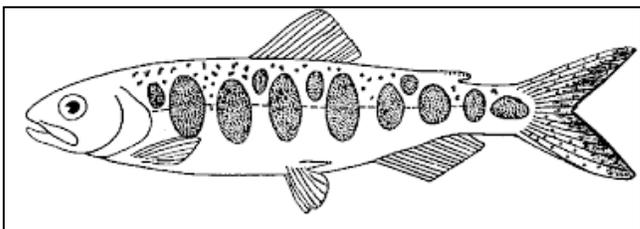
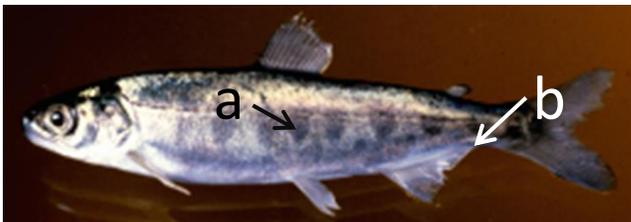
Coho Salmon



A coho salmon parr has three distinguishing characteristics and is often confused (particularly on the internet) with a king salmon parr. The distinguishing characteristics are:

- Parr mark center along the side
- Parr marks (a) are long and thin, narrower than the space between the parr marks
- The posterior margin of the anal fish is curve and sharply pointed (b)
- Lower margin the anal fin is often white (c)

King Salmon

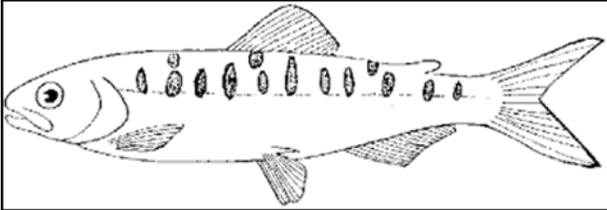
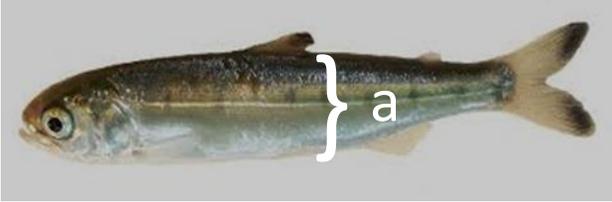


The king salmon parr also has parr marks on arrange centrally along the side, but is distinguished by:

- Parr marks that a wide and more rounded, with the wide of the parr mark wider than the space between the parr marks.
- Posterior margin of the anal fish in straight and not sharply pointed

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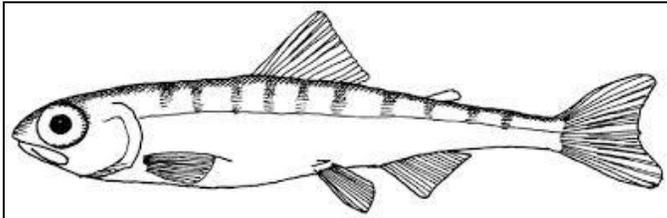
Sockeye Salmon



Small sockeye salmon can be confused with chum salmon, however since sockeye salmon parr reside in lakes for 1 to 3 years, they are significantly larger. Chum salmon migrate to the ocean in the spring after hatching, so are not in freshwater during the summer through the winter. Distinguishing characteristics are:

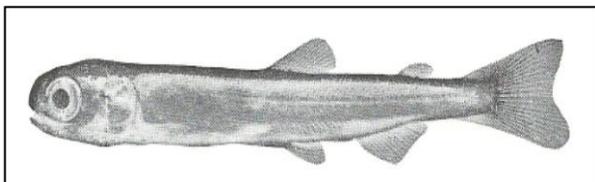
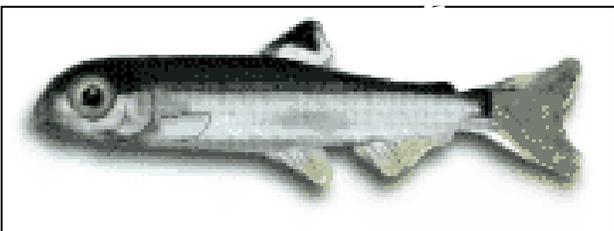
- Parr marks on or above the lateral line (a)
- Leave freshwater in the spring after hatching (small in size, less than 2 inches)
- Have a wide body posterior to the dorsal fin (b)
- Have a small eye in proportion to the size of the head

Chum Salmon



- Chum salmon will not be found in freshwater after the first spring after hatching.
- Large eye in proportion to the size of the head
- Narrow body from posterior to the dorsal fin

Pink Salmon



Pink salmon parr are also small and migrate to the ocean in the spring after hatching. They are quite distinctive.

- No parr marks or marks that are very dim and difficult to see.
- Very large eye in proportion to the head
- Blunt snout.