

# Salmon Life Cycle

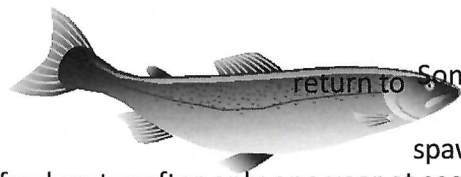
A salmon goes through many changes as it grows and become an adult. These changes are part of its life cycle. The stages are described below but the order is mixed up. Read each description carefully and then using scissors, cut them out and put them in the right order.



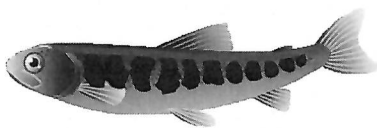
A female salmon lays approximately 1500-1600 eggs per kg of her weight. A fish of 5 kg would lay 7,000-8,000 eggs.



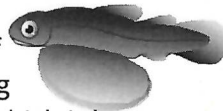
Some salmon return to spawn in freshwater after only one year at sea. They are called **grilse** and usually weigh about one or two kilograms.



Until the fish becomes approximately 12 to 24 centimeters in length, it is called a **parr**. A parr has a dark back with nine to eleven bars, called parr marks, along its sides. A single red dot occurs between each pair of parr marks. These markings help camouflage the parr while it lives among the rocks and weeds of the river.

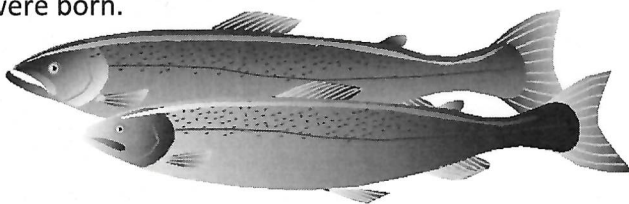


The small fish, about two centimeters long, is called an **alevin**. It feeds on the yolk of the egg from which it has hatched while it is still in the gravel. The yolk is contained in a yolk sac attached to the belly of the fish.



When the yolk sac is nearly gone, the tiny salmon wriggles its way up through the gravel out into the stream. Now it will feed on microscopic materials in the water. It is finally on its own. Until the young fish is five to eight centimeters long, it is called a **fry**.

Some salmon spend two, three or even four years at sea. They may weigh from 4 to 20 kg. They return as **adults** to the river where they were born.



They then spawn, completing another generation and continuing the life cycle.

An amazing change takes place. The marks and spots disappear and the fish becomes gleaming and silver. It is now called a **smolt**. It swims swiftly down the river, heading to sea where its silvery colour will protect it. It is dangerous for the fish to enter the sea with brightly coloured stripes and spots!

