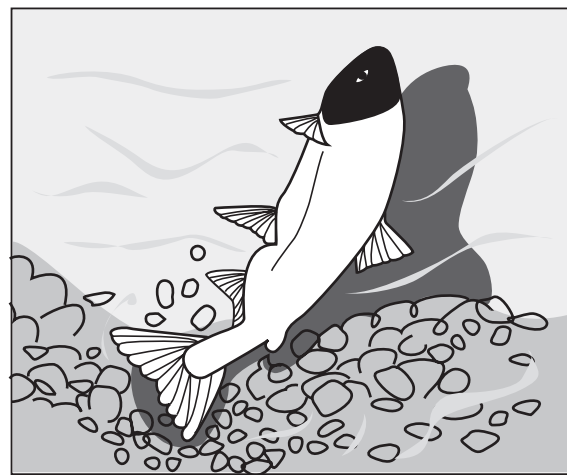


After 1 to 7 years in the ocean, the **adult salmon** that have survived countless hazards from predators, ocean conditions, and commercial harvest return to the Columbia River and head for their home streams.



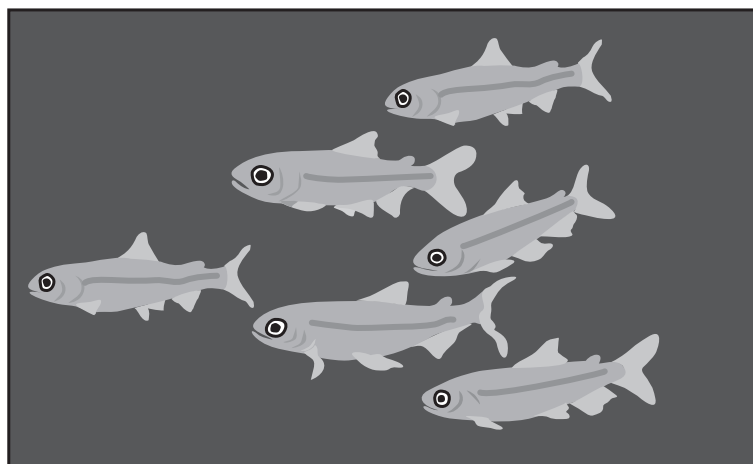
Arriving at her home stream, a female builds a nest, or **redd**, in fine, clean gravel.

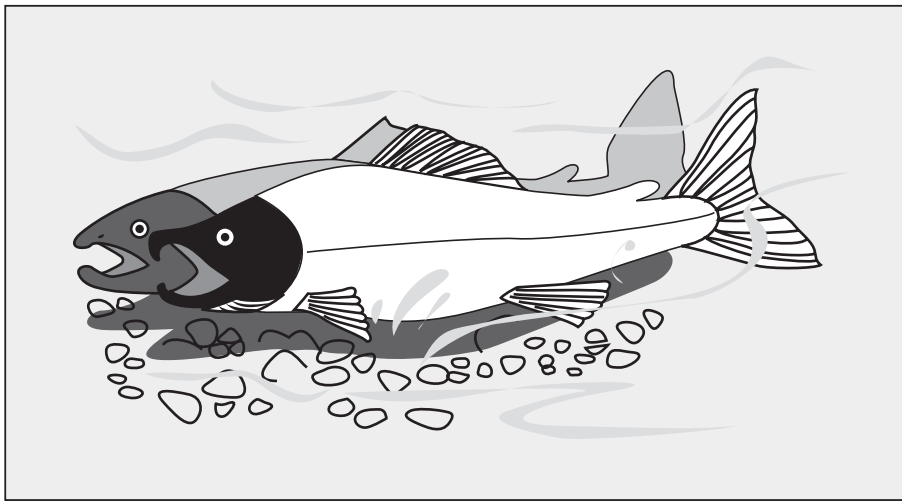
# Wild Salmon



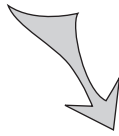
By the time they reach the estuary, the fry have become **smolts**, and their bodies are adapting to saltwater. Here they linger to feed and grow before entering the ocean. Predators, unfavorable conditions, and failure to adapt will deplete their numbers further.

During migration the fry are vulnerable to predators, such as birds or northern pikeminnow, walleye, and bass, which thrive in the reservoirs. Seven to 15 percent die passing each dam.

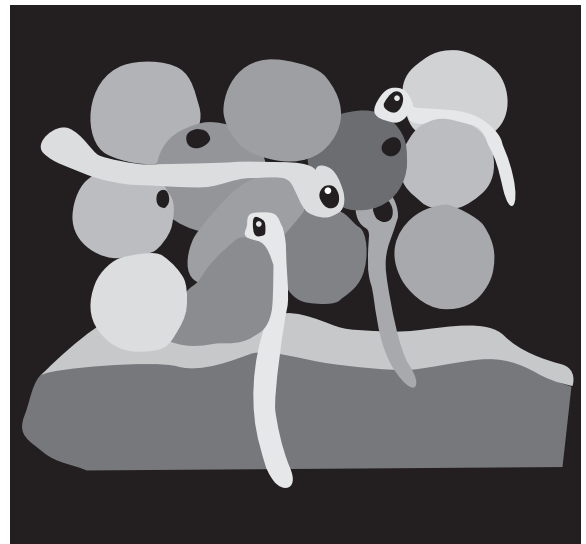




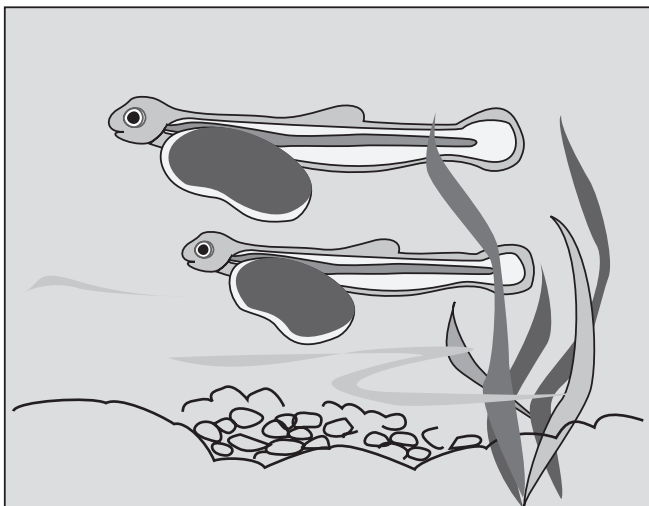
As a female deposits her thousands of eggs, a male releases milt, fertilizing them. Both male and female salmon die soon after **spawning**, except steelhead and cutthroat, which may survive another year or more to spawn again.



# Life Cycle



Tiny yolk-sac fry, or **alevins**, hatch after 2 to 8 months. They stay in the gravel for another 1 to 3 months until the food from the yolk sac is used up. They need cold, pure water to breathe and wash away their wastes.



The **fry** emerge from the gravel and begin to feed on their own. Many are lost to predators, competition, or failure to adapt to stream conditions. Some types of salmon begin their migration downstream soon after emergence, while others stay in freshwater for a year or more.

