



Fraser River Salmon



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The Big Bar Landslide has raised concerns over the possibility of potential losses to critical salmon runs of the Fraser River as it is partially obstructing salmon from migrating upstream to their spawning beds. Millions of salmon migrate up the Fraser River every year and it is imperative to the species success. Currently, both the sockeye and chinook salmon are starting to make their way up the Fraser River to their spawning grounds, with Coho salmon migrating later in the summer and fall period.

Chinook Salmon

- Chinook salmon are the largest Pacific salmon species and, on average, grow to be three feet (0.9 meters) long and approximately 30 pounds (13 kilograms). Because of their large size and strength, Chinook salmon are one of the most sought after recreational fish species on the west coast.
- While still feeding in tidal waters, the chinook has a dark back, with a greenish blue sheen. As they approach fresh water to spawn, the body colour darkens and a reddish hue around the fins and belly develops. The teeth of adult spawning males become enlarged and the snout develops into a hook.
- Chinook spawn in large rivers stretching from California to Alaska, mainly in major river systems, but the most important of which is the Fraser River.
- After hatching, chinook remain in fresh water for varying lengths of time depending on water temperature. In southern areas, some migrate vast distances and are found sparsely distributed throughout the Pacific Ocean. The age of chinook adults returning to spawn varies from two to seven years.



Chinook Salmon

Sockeye Salmon

- The best known Pacific salmon, sockeye, are the most sought after for their superior flesh, colour and quality.
- The main spawning area of sockeye salmon extends from the Fraser River to Alaska. Most sockeye in BC spawn late summer or fall in lake-fed systems.
- Young sockeye remain in their freshwater nursery lakes for a year or more, with some waiting until the second or third year to make their journey to the Pacific Ocean. Once in salt water, BC sockeye move north and north-westward along the coast.
- In many of the lakes of the Fraser River in particular, sockeye are abundant every four years.
- Ocean-going sockeye are silver in colour, with small black speckles along the body. As sockeye make their way to fresh water, they turn varying shades of red— resulting in a brilliant scarlet fish with a green head by the time they have arrived at their point of natural origin.



Sockeye Salmon