

# PACIFIC SALMON MARINE PHASE IDENTIFICATION

Please note, when salmon enter fresh water they undergo significant physical changes including changes in coloration. This chart is intended to help anglers identify salmon by species. However, it is the angler's responsibility to be able to positively identify the species at any point in its life cycle.

## Chinook (king) Salmon



- Spots on back and both lobes of the tail
- Black mouth with a black gumline

## Coho (silver) Salmon



- Spots on back and upper lobe of the tail
- Black mouth with a white gumline

## Sockeye (red) Salmon



- No distinct spots on back or tail
- White mouth with a white gumline
- Large, bright gold eye

## Pink (humpy) Salmon



- Large, oval spots on back and both lobes of tail
- White mouth with a black gumline

## Chum (dog) Salmon



- No spots; calico bands on body (often faint in saltwater)
- White mouth with a white gumline

### Chinook (king) Salmon



- Spawning adults turn maroon or olive brown
- Spots on body and both lobes of the tail remain

### Coho (silver) Salmon



- Males develop pronounced “kype” (hooked-nose)
- Spots on back and upper lobe of the tail remain
- Male and female turn dark maroon and have dark backs

### Sockeye (red) Salmon



- Spawning adults develop dull-green heads
- Males develop hump on back
- Both female and male turn red

### Pink (humpy) Salmon



- Spawners turn dull gray on their backs and upper sides
- Lower sides appear cream color or white
- Large, oval spots on back and both lobes of tail remain

### Chum (dog) Salmon



- Spawners develop pronounced, vertical calico bands on sides
- Males exhibit large, canine-like teeth

Photographs by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.