

Chinook Salmon a.k.a. King Salmon

Oncorhynchus tshawytscha (on-cor-AIN-cus shaw-E-scha)



Adult Chinook Salmon at McAllister Springs in Washington State.
Photo by Roger Tabor, USFWS

Chinook Salmon exhibit two distinct types of life history strategies, ocean-type and stream-type.

Ocean-type Chinook Salmon migrate to the ocean within their first three months of life. They spend their ocean life in coastal waters and use estuaries and coastal areas more extensively than other juvenile salmon species.

Stream-type Chinook Salmon are common in freshwater streams of large river systems. They have longer stays in freshwater than their ocean-type counterparts. At their time of saltwater entry, stream-type chinook are much larger than ocean-type Chinook Salmon.



Juvenile Chinook Salmon. Photo by Roger Tabor, USFWS

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

Average weight: 30 lbs

Average length: 36 in

Adult Chinook have been recorded to weigh as much as 135 pounds and as long as 50 inches.

The maximum reported age for Chinook Salmon is 9 years old.



Chinook Salmon hiding under woody debris in the North Fork Skokomish River. Photo by Roger Tabor, USFWS

DIET: Juvenile Chinook feed on terrestrial insects and small crustacean, while adults feed on squid and fish such as the sandlance and herring.

CONSERVATION: Multiple state and federal fishery management agencies are taking efforts to restore habitat, remove and modify dams, improve water quality, improve in-streamflow and acquire essential fish habitat for Chinook Salmon.

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