THE LIFE CYCLE OF RUSSIAN RIVER SALMON

The Salmon life cycle begins and ends in the same freshwater stream. Salmon may lay as many as 7,000 **eggs** in cool, clean water where the eggs are protected in the underwater gravel. The young fish hatch in the late winter and are called **alevins**. They are attached to a yolk sac that provides nourishment until they can get food for themselves.

The baby salmon are now called **fry**. They develop dark stripes or spots on their sides that are called **parr marks**. These marks act as camouflage and help the young fish hide from predators. They stay together, school in shallow water close to where they were born, and feed on tiny plants and animals.

In the late spring the juvenile fish are ready to leave the freshwater and migrate to the ocean. Their bodies change from fresh water to salt water fish, and the young fish are now called **smolts**. They spend most of their adult life in the ocean.

After living in the ocean for several years the adult salmon are ready to **spawn** (lay their eggs). They travel upstream against the river's current to the same location where they began life. During their return migration they are guided by their sense of smell. The adult fish usually die within a couple of weeks after spawning.

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