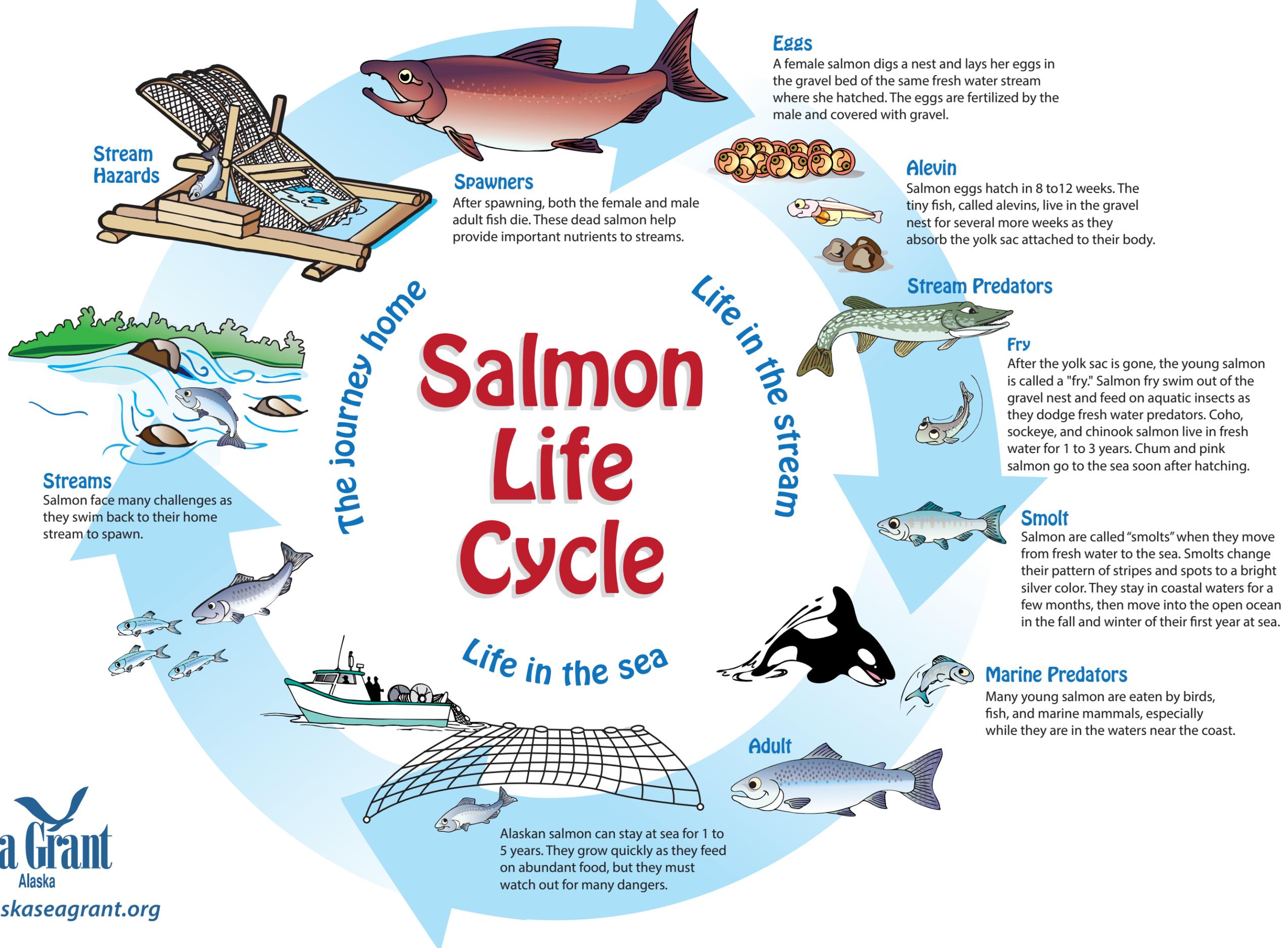


Salmon Life Cycle



Eggs

A female salmon digs a nest and lays her eggs in the gravel bed of the same fresh water stream where she hatched. The eggs are fertilized by the male and covered with gravel.

Alevin

Salmon eggs hatch in 8 to 12 weeks. The tiny fish, called alevins, live in the gravel nest for several more weeks as they absorb the yolk sac attached to their body.

Stream Predators

Fry

After the yolk sac is gone, the young salmon is called a "fry." Salmon fry swim out of the gravel nest and feed on aquatic insects as they dodge fresh water predators. Coho, sockeye, and chinook salmon live in fresh water for 1 to 3 years. Chum and pink salmon go to the sea soon after hatching.

Smolt

Salmon are called "smolts" when they move from fresh water to the sea. Smolts change their pattern of stripes and spots to a bright silver color. They stay in coastal waters for a few months, then move into the open ocean in the fall and winter of their first year at sea.

Marine Predators

Many young salmon are eaten by birds, fish, and marine mammals, especially while they are in the waters near the coast.

Adult

Alaskan salmon can stay at sea for 1 to 5 years. They grow quickly as they feed on abundant food, but they must watch out for many dangers.

Spawners

After spawning, both the female and male adult fish die. These dead salmon help provide important nutrients to streams.

Stream Hazards

Streams

Salmon face many challenges as they swim back to their home stream to spawn.

The journey home

Life in the stream

Life in the sea