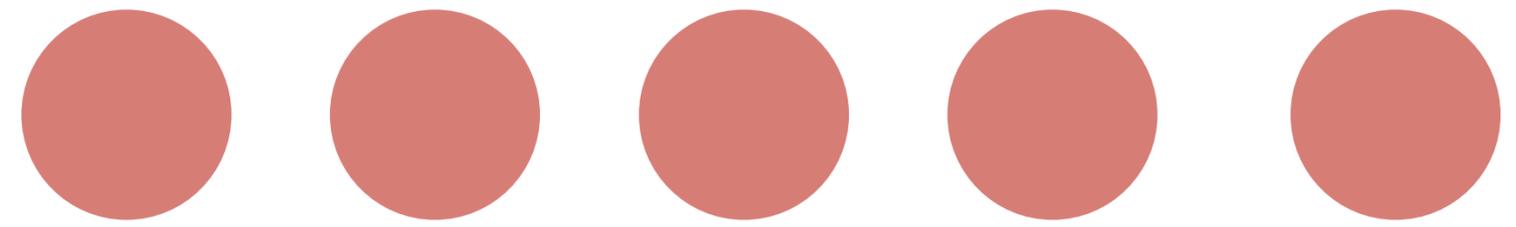
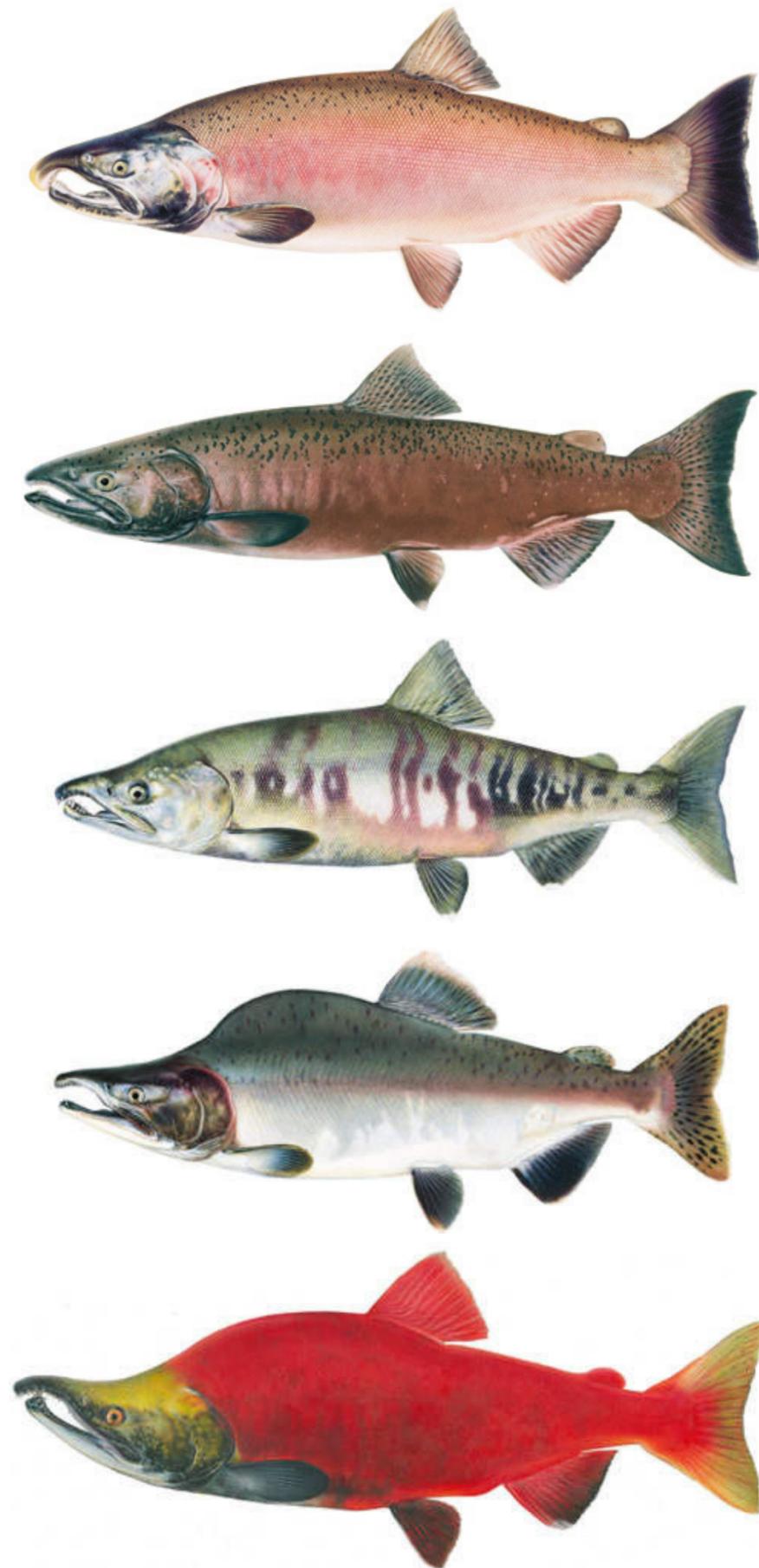


A person wearing a brown jacket is holding a large, silvery salmon over a body of water. The fish's mouth is open, and its reflection is visible in the water below. The background is a soft, hazy view of the water and sky.

THE SALMON LIFE CYCLE

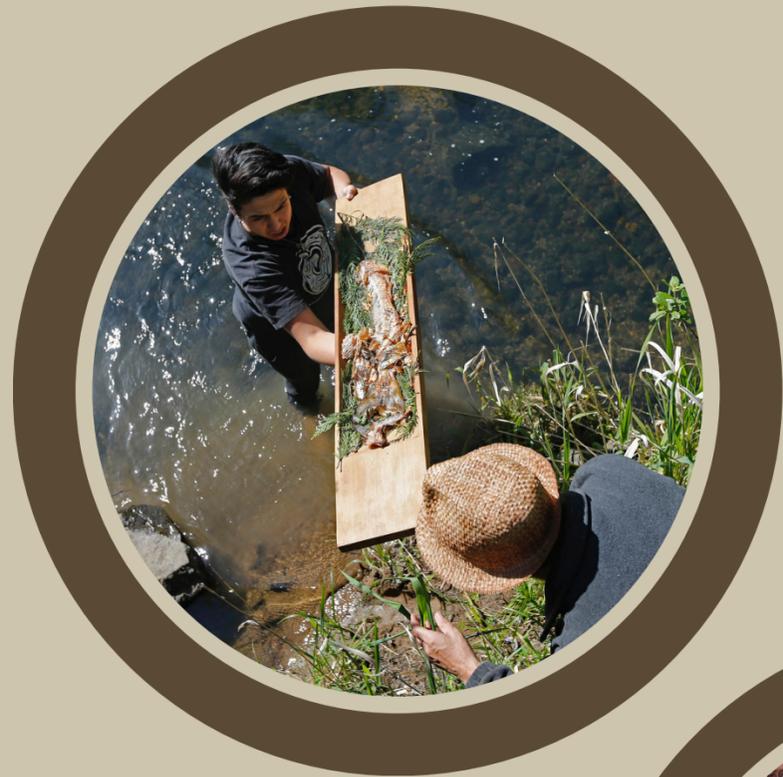
FROM RIVER TO SEA AND BACK AGAIN



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

TYPES OF SALMON IN THE PNW

- Chinook
- Coho
- Chum
- Pink
- Sockeye



THE CONFEDERATED TRIBES OF GRAND RONDE

SALMON AND THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF THE PNW

Salmon are sacred to Native people

Their arrival each year to the home waters is a chance to celebrate and reflect on the many blessings Creator has shared, including the first salmon. People would collect the bones of the salmon caught and consumed and return them to the ocean, thereby honoring the Salmon People and inviting them to return the next year.

First Salmon Ceremony

The people of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde have an agreement with the salmon - that the salmon would forever feed the people, as long as they did not forget to sing to him and to honor him.

[Attend a First Salmon Ceremony](#)



THE CIRCLE OF LIFE

Salmon are anadromous fish. This means they are born in freshwater, migrate out to the ocean to mature into adults, and then swim back to freshwater to spawn (reproduce). Most anadromous fish die after spawning and their decaying carcasses provide nutrients back in to the ecosystem, providing food to many other living life forms.

LIFE CYCLE

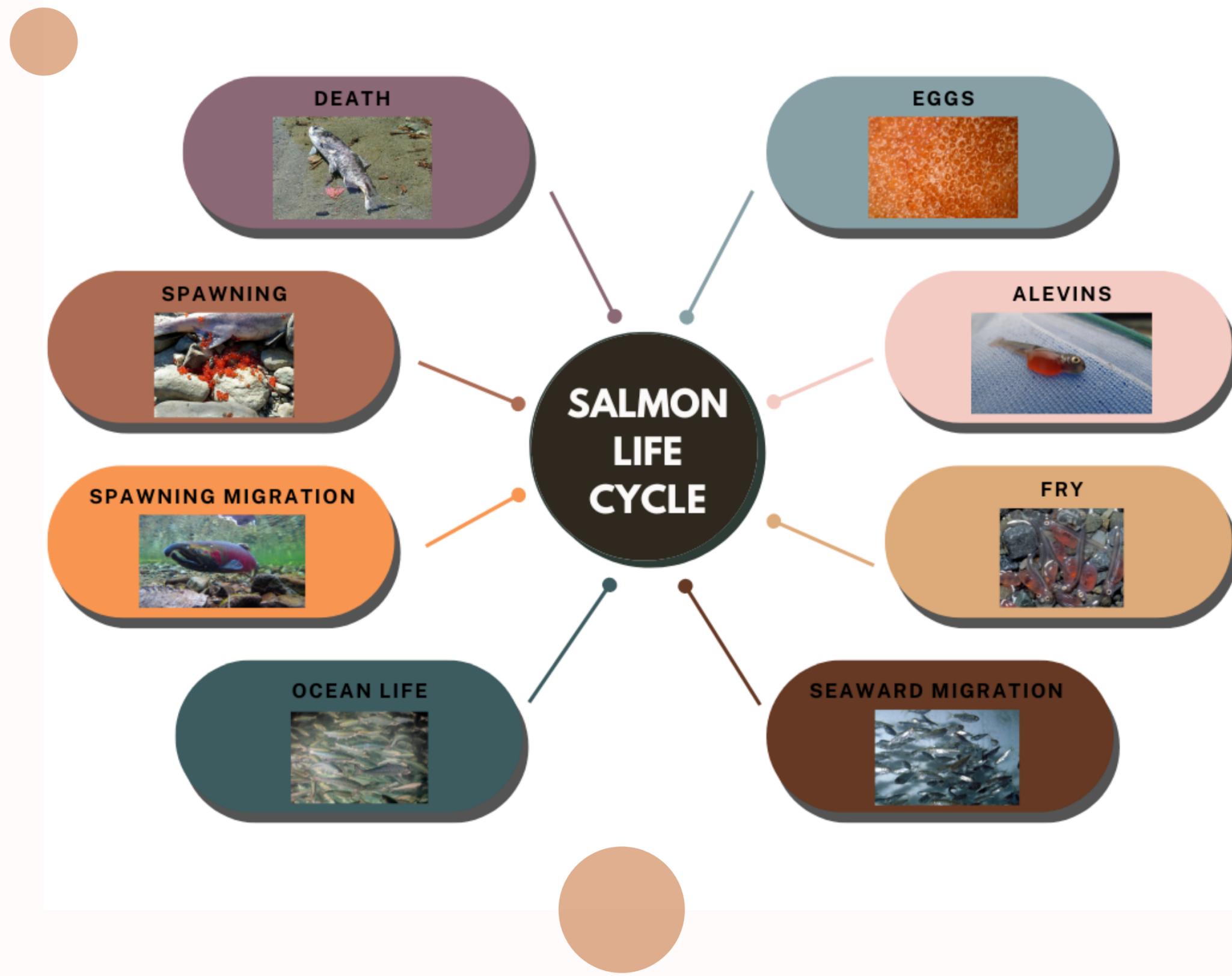
Eggs - A female salmon creates a gravel nest (redd), which is fertilized by a male salmon. The eggs remain in the gravel through winter. In spring the eggs will hatch.

Alevins - Once the eggs hatch, the tiny salmon are called alevins. These small fish have the yolk sac from the egg attached to their bellies. They will stay near the redd until they have consumed all of the yolk sac.

Fry - Once an alevin has consumed the yolk sac and have grown larger, they emerge from the gravel. They are now called fry. Fry spend up to a year or more in their home stream. The survival of the fry is highly dependent upon the stream habitat.

Seaward Migration - Environmental cues signal the fry to travel downstream towards the ocean. At this time, smolting begins and scales grow as they turn a silvery color. Estuaries, are crucial to the survival of young smolts. While allowing their bodies to adjust to the new conditions, they feed heavily, hoping to ensure survival in the ocean.

Ocean Life - Salmon may spend one to seven years in the ocean.

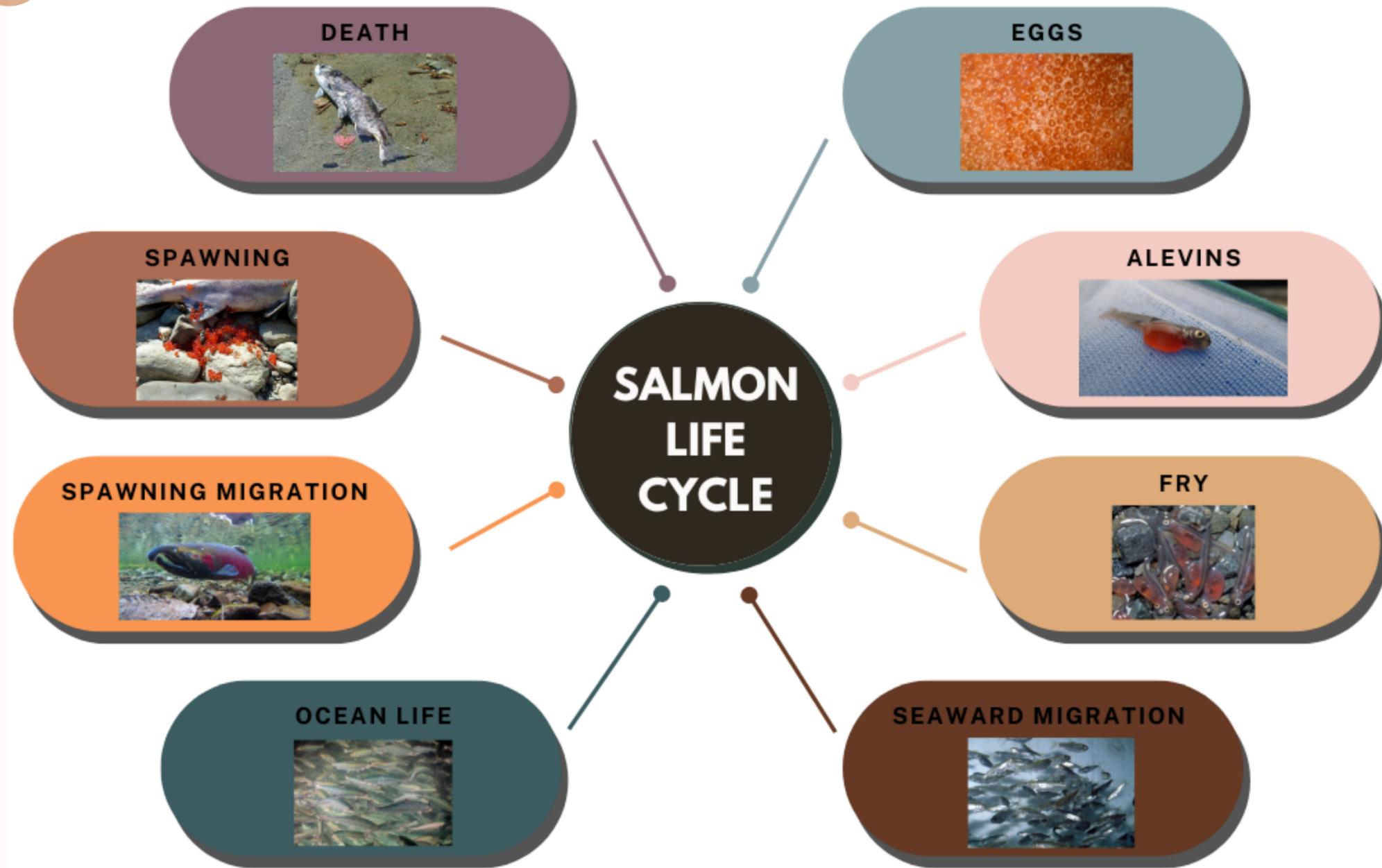


LIFE CYCLE

Spawning Migration - Once the salmon is finished in the ocean, they return to their home streams to spawn. It is unknown how exactly salmon detect their home streams, though it is suspected that scents and chemical cues, as well as the sun, play an important role in the homeward migration. Once the salmon reach freshwater, they stop feeding and their bodies prepare for spawning.

Spawning - Upon reaching home streams, females build redds. These nests in the gravel are made by the female by turning on her side and using her tail to dislodge stones or pebbles. Males fight with other males for spawning rights with a female. The dominant male will court the female and upon spawning, they release eggs and milt simultaneously. The eggs will settle into the gravel, and the female will cover the eggs with loose gravel and move upstream in order to prepare another redd.

Death - Both males and females die after spawning. Their death supplies the river with nutrients for the next generation.



Sockeye salmon. Credit: NOAA Fisheries



Coho salmon. Credit: NOAA Fisheries

LIFE HISTORIES

LENGTH OF OCEAN LIFE

- Pink Salmon: 18 months
- Chum Salmon: 3-4 years
- Sockeye Salmon: 2-5 years
- Chinook Salmon: 1-6 years
- Coho Salmon: 18 months - 2 years