

From the River to the Sea, and Back Again

Salmon: The Vital Link

Salmon play a crucial role in linking the ecosystems of ocean and river.

Throughout their lives salmon provide food for fish, animals, birds and insects in both marine and freshwater environments.

Salmon sustain communities

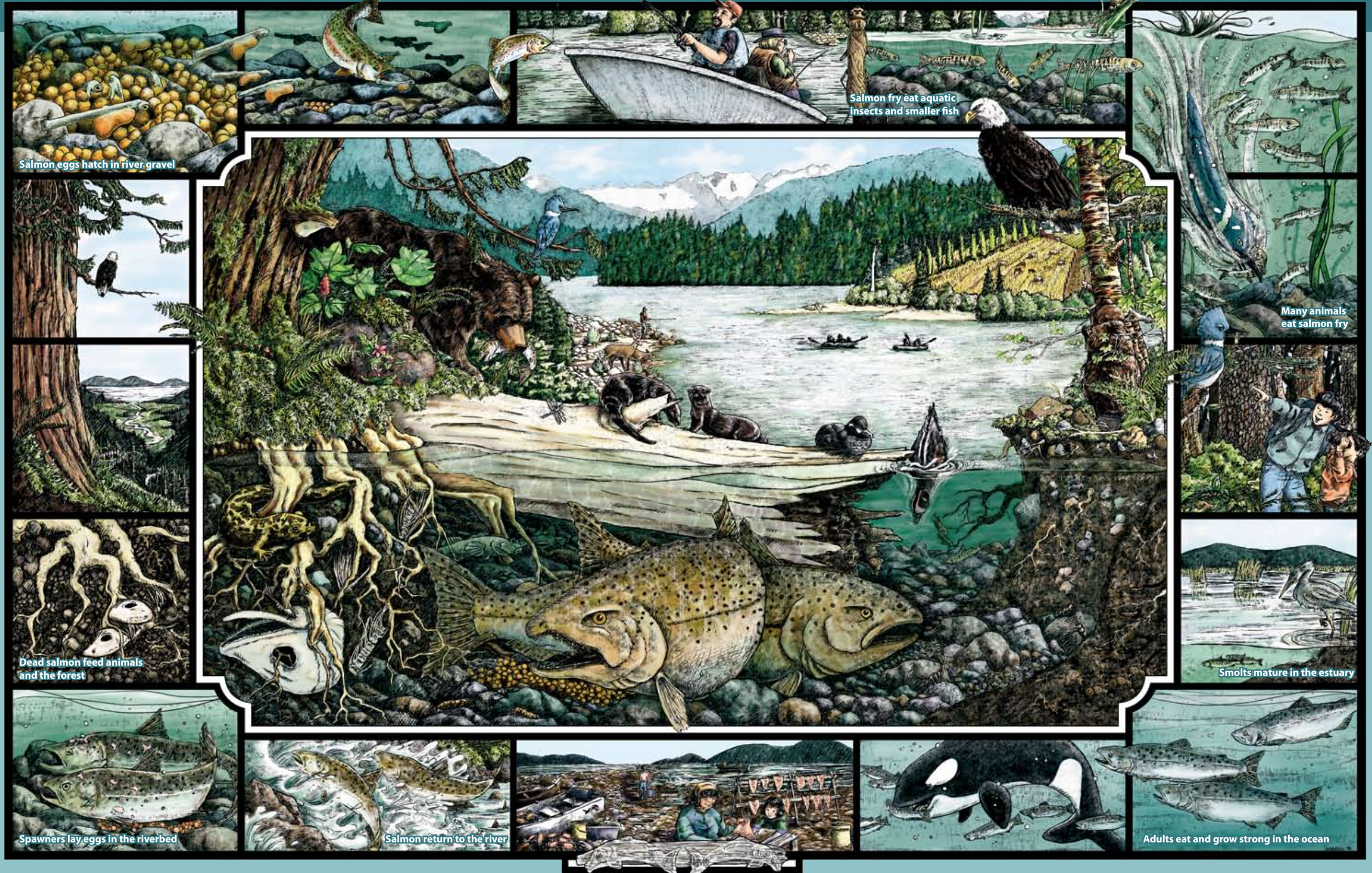
Salmon are an important resource for humans. They have been a source of food and spiritual inspiration to coastal and interior communities for thousands of years.

Salmon carry rich nutrients from the sea

In the ocean, they eat small fish and other foods. These sea nutrients help make salmon a rich food. Humans and other creatures benefit. They prey on the salmon at sea and in fresh water as the adults return to their home streams.

After spawning salmon die, their decaying bodies become food for scavengers. The carcasses fertilize riverside plants and trees in the surrounding forest.

Aquatic insects also thrive on these nutrients, and help nourish the next generation of young salmon. The cycle begins again, a precious heritage for all.



Salmon eggs hatch in river gravel

Salmon fry eat aquatic insects and smaller fish

Many animals eat salmon fry

Dead salmon feed animals and the forest

Smolts mature in the estuary

Spawners lay eggs in the riverbed

Salmon return to the river

Adults eat and grow strong in the ocean



Salmonid
Enhancement Program

Permission to use illustration courtesy of National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Puget Sound Energy, Seattle City Light, and the USDA Forest Service. Illustration by Andrea Gabriel.



Fisheries and Oceans
Canada

Pêches et Océans
Canada

Canada