

Atlantic Salmon

Salmo salar

Extraordinary transformation

Atlantic salmon are an indicator of the health of our rivers. They need clean, flowing and productive water to grow successfully. Most Atlantic salmon are anadromous. This means that they are born in freshwater rivers, and then migrate to the sea to grow big on a rich ocean diet. Eventually, they return to the very river where they were born to reproduce.

The Atlantic salmon has many different names at different points in its life. Alevin, fry, parr, smolt, post-smolt, grilse, and kelt are all names for different stages of the salmon's life cycle, with distinct appearances and traits adapted to the conditions they find themselves in.

[Learn more about my life cycle here](#)

An unforgiving journey

On a journey that can see them cover 1,000 of miles, this incredible species will encounter many dangers that threaten its survival. One of which is the devastating impact of open-net salmon farming in Scotland. Poorly run and badly sited open-net salmon farms put wild salmon at risk from parasites (notably sea lice) and diseases. Farmed fish can also escape and threaten the genetic integrity of wild salmon, compromising their future survival.

As their journey continues, Atlantic salmon will come up against barriers in the form of weirs and dams that prevent them from swimming freely, pollution from sewage and agriculture that devastates water quality and the impacts of climate change that increase water temperature and reduce flow.



When to see me?

To see Atlantic salmon adults migrating up rivers, early morning and evenings during **October and November** are best. Rain after a dry spell will provide the perfect conditions for the salmon to leap.

How to identify me?

Adult Atlantic salmon are silvery with a few dark spots on the back, they may have a pinkish flush to the belly. Adult males may develop a hooked lower jaw, or 'kype'.

Juvenile



Adult



WildFish.

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