

Life cycle and food requirements of West Coast chum, chinook, sockeye, coho, and pink salmon and steelhead trout.

Species	Freshwater stage	Primary diet in ocean	Ocean stage	Total lifespan
Chum (keta)	Up to 6 months; fry migrate Feb.-June, immediately upon hatching, with most migrating April-May.	Mainly copepods; also crustaceans, squid, fish.	2-5 years; migrating adults present in coastal waters July-Oct.	2-7 years, with most living 3-5 years; adults die after spawning.
Coho (silver)	Juveniles overwinter in coastal streams and small lakes; remaining in freshwater 1-3 years.	Insects, copepods, other invertebrates and small fish.	1-2 years males; 2 years females.	3 years; adults die after spawning.
Sockeye	Juveniles overwinter in coastal watersheds and remain in lakes 1-3 years, migrating from streams in the spring; a few go directly to sea.	Plankton, krill, and small crustaceans.	1-4 years, returning to spawn in late summer and fall.	3-5 years; adults die after spawning.
Pink	Fry migrate from rivers and streams mid-April to mid-May; they spend the least time in fresh water of all species.	Mainly copepods, other plankton and crustaceans; also small fish.	18 months.	2 years; adults die after spawning.
Chinook (king or spring)	“Ocean-type” migrate late summer, 1-3 months after emergence; some overwinter and migrate the next year. “Stream-type” migrate during 2nd or 3rd spring.	Copepods and other invertebrates; small fish supply larger part of diet than for other species.	4-5 years; (2 or more for males; 3-4 for females).	3-6 years; adults die after spawning.
Steelhead	1-2 years in coastal streams; most hatch in early summer and migrate from rivers the next spring.	Fry eat bottom-dwelling invertebrates, fish eggs, plankton; also small fish and crustaceans.	1-4 years; “summer run” steelhead enter rivers spring-late summer, spawn the next spring. “Winter run” fish enter rivers late fall or winter, spawn in spring.	Adults can migrate and spawn repeatedly.