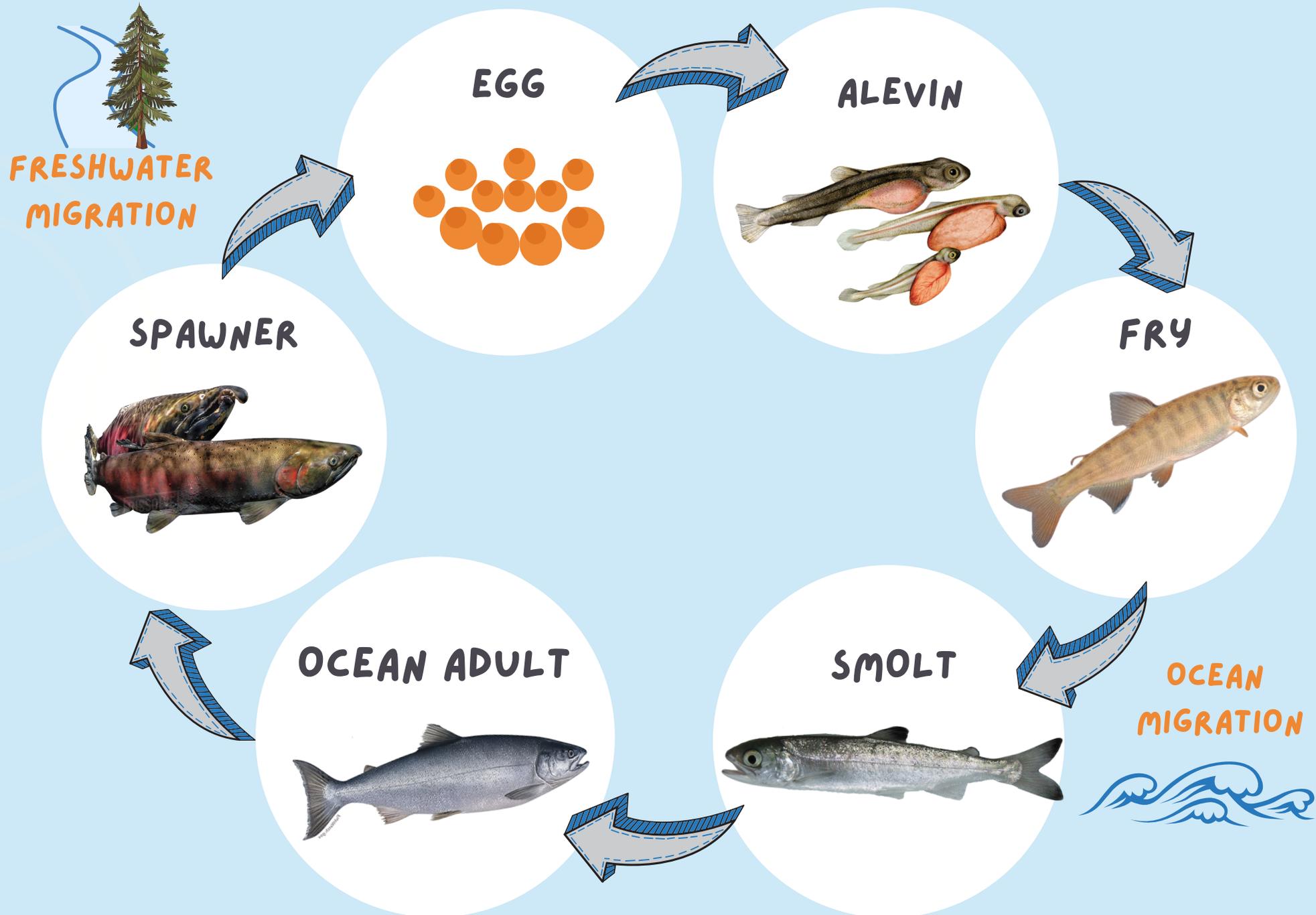


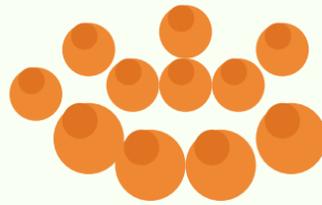
THE LIFE CYCLE OF A COHO SALMON



THE LIFE CYCLE OF A COHO SALMON

EGG

The life cycle of a salmon begins as an egg. In the fall, female salmon lay up to 5,000 pea-sized eggs in a gravel nest called a redd. After a few months spent safely in the redd, these eggs finally hatch.

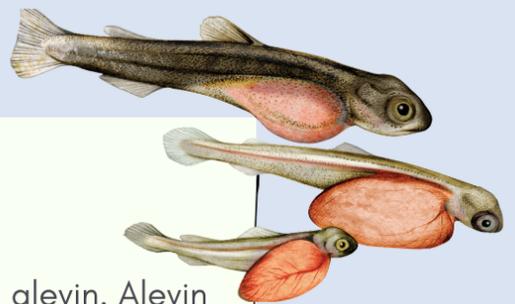


FRESHWATER
STREAM



ALEVIN

Once hatched, the salmon are called alevin. Alevin remain at the bottom of the stream in the redd their mother created for them. They carry an orange yolk sac which feeds them and allows them to grow in the safety of the redd.



FRY

After the alevin absorb their yolk sac, they emerge from the stream bed as fry. These young fish grow rapidly in the spring and summer, when the water is warm and food is abundant. The dark marks on their sides help them hide from predators and blend in with their surroundings.



SMOLT

After a year or two in the creek, young salmon become silvery smolts and undergo changes that prepare them for life in saltwater. In spring, smolts migrate downstream to estuaries, where they complete their transformation before venturing out into the ocean.



OCEAN

MIGRATION

ADULT

As salmon enter saltwater the adult stage of their life cycle begins. Adult salmon in the ocean have camouflaging coloration called counter-shading that helps protect them from their many ocean predators. These fish grow large as they swim the vast ocean in search of food. During their ocean travels, salmon may cover thousands of miles before navigating back to their home stream.



MIGRATION

SPAWNER

In the fall and winter, adult salmon in the oceans use their sense of smell to migrate back to the freshwater streams where they were born. Females dig redds, where they lay their eggs to start the next generation. Coho die after spawning and provide nutrients to the stream that will help their young survive.



A LOOK AT HOW SCIENTISTS COLLECT DATA ON COHO SALMON

SPAWNER SURVEYS



Spawner surveys help biologists discover how many fish survived their time in the ocean and successfully migrated back to their home stream to spawn. In the fall, scientists count the number of gravel nests found in a stream, document the species that made them, and record the number of carcasses they find.

SMOLT TRAPPING



Scientists operate traps to monitor the migration of smolts as they make their way to the ocean in the spring. Smolt traps help measure how many fish survived their time in freshwater. This information can also tell scientists how and where to improve salmon habitats.

ELECTROFISHING



Scientists perform electrofishing to count and identify juvenile fish found in streams during the summer. In electrofishing, a fish is "stunned" and safely collected with a dip net. This is an easier way to catch fish without harming them with a hook.

SNORKEL SURVEYS

Snorkel surveys are a great way to observe and count fish underwater. Scientists conduct these surveys to monitor juvenile salmon in the summer without handling the fish or disturbing their sensitive habitats.



The Watershed Stewards Program (WSP) is dedicated to improving watershed health by actively engaging in restoration science, civic service, and community education while empowering the next generation of environmental stewards.

A program of the California Conservation Corps, Watershed Stewards Program is one of the most productive programs for future employment in the environmental field. Watershed Stewards Program is administered by CaliforniaVolunteers, the Office of the Governor, and sponsored by AmeriCorps and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

