Chum Salmon

Dog Salmon | *Oncorhynchus keta (Walbaum, 1792)*



IN THE ARTWORK

A river-run *in autumn colour*

In British Columbia's coastal streams, chum salmon arrive from the North Pacific and transform as they near spawning grounds. This painting shows a breeding male in clear, shallow water, where sunlight, cobbles and current reveal its bold calico bars and hooked jaw.

SEASONAL CHANGES

Adults return from late summer into autumn. Ocean-bright silver fish darken in fresh water, and males develop a hooked snout, larger teeth and striking purple-to-charcoal vertical bars.

STREAM HABITAT

Chum salmon spawn in lower river reaches, side channels and coastal streams with cool flowing water and clean gravel. After hatching, young fry move seaward quickly and often rear in estuaries.

STEWARDSHIP

Healthy salmon runs depend on connected habitat from estuary to spawning stream. Protecting riparian shade, clean gravel, natural flow and fish passage helps chum salmon complete their life cycle.

FIELD NOTES

RECOGNIZE IT

Look for a slender tail wrist, no large black spots on the back or tail, and crisp white tips on the pelvic and anal fins. Spawning males show bold calico barring.

ROLE IN THE WATERSHED

Chum salmon carry marine nutrients inland. Their eggs, bodies and young support stream food webs, feeding insects, birds, mammals and forest ecosystems.

WATCH WITH CARE

Observe from the bank and avoid stepping on gravel redds, where eggs develop beneath the streambed. Give spawning fish space, especially in small channels and shallow water.

Sources: DFO Pacific Region, NOAA Fisheries, BC Conservation Data Centre