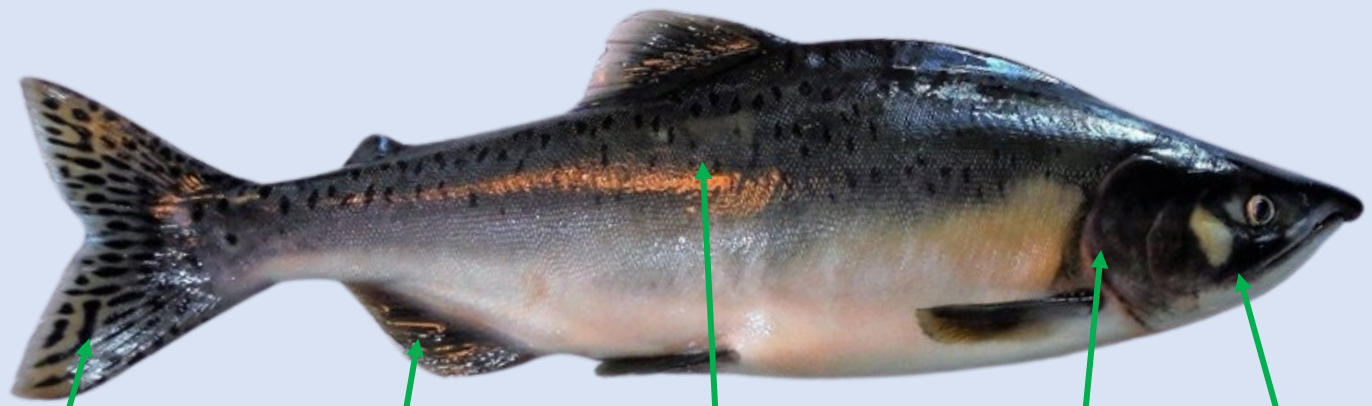


Pink Salmon

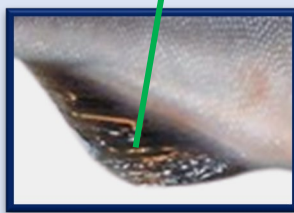
Oncorhynchus gorbuscha

Invasive Species Alert

Photo by Ola Ugedal, NINA



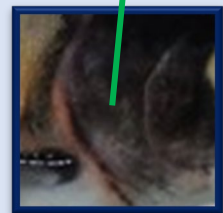
Large black oval spots on tail



11-19 rays on anal fin. Atlantic salmon have 7-11 rays



Scales are very small and much smaller than Atlantic salmon



No notable dark spots over gill cover



Upper jaw typically extends beyond eye

If you encounter pink salmon in any Northern Ireland waterway, please send your record into:



Contact NIEA Invasive Non-Native Species Team
invasivespecies@daera-ni.gov.uk
028 9056 9558

Note to Anglers!!

It is normally an offence to be in possession of any species of salmon outside of existing regulations. However, if you catch a pink salmon in the DAERA fisheries jurisdiction (outside of the Loughs Agency & Carlingford areas) and are confident of identification you must:

1. Retain the fish (even on rivers where catch and release is mandatory)
2. Immediately notify DAERA Inland Fisheries via the 24hr Pollution Hotline on 0800 80 70 60
3. A DAERA Fisheries Officer will contact you and arrange for the fish to be collected or left at a nearby DAERA office

For further ID guidance and information check out the
Invasive Species NI website:

invasivespeciesni.co.uk



What is a pink salmon?

The pink salmon, also known as the humpback salmon, is a migratory species, moving from cold coastal waters, upstream into rivers to spawn. Native to the Northern Pacific and Arctic Oceans, the fish was first introduced outside its native range into Northwest Russia, for commercial food production which took place in the second half of the 20th century. Self-sustaining populations can now be found in the rivers of Northern Norway and the Northwest of Russia.

Outside of their native range they can become invasive, spreading diseases to our native fish species, displacing native salmon from spawning sites and acting aggressively towards them. If the population size grows, the numerous deaths after a spawning event can increase the nutrient load on a river, impacting entire ecosystems.

How to identify a pink salmon?

- Adult fish taken from the sea have steel-blue to blue/green colouration on their backs, silver flanks and a white belly
- Typically grow 40-55cm in length, maximum 76cm
- Typically weigh 1-2.5kg, maximum 6.8kg
- They have distinctive large oval spots on their back and tail fin
- Upper jaw extends beyond the eye
- No black spots on gill cover
- They have very small scales, much smaller than Atlantic salmon
- 11-19 fin rays on anal fin
- Spawning males found in freshwater become dark and red, with brown/green blotches on their flanks
- Near-spawning males also develop a hump on their back, giving them the name 'humpback' salmon
- Pink salmon tend to spawn earlier in the year (June/July through to early autumn), compared to Atlantic salmon



Above: Pink salmon in its ocean phase

Photo: Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

Below: Male pink salmon in its freshwater phase

© Aleksey CC BY-NC www.inaturalist.org/photos/61940629



Are they present in Northern Ireland?

There have been many records of pink salmon in Scotland, alongside several reports from the Republic of Ireland. There have only been two reports of pink salmon in Northern Ireland, one in the River Mourne and one in the River Bush, but it is likely that there are many more present in our rivers which have so far gone unrecorded.

Report all sightings of pink salmon

