

SALMON HABITAT SCAVENGER HUNT

Streams are better habitat when they are interesting! Salmon don't like a straight, boring stream with no structure. They like a twisting, curving channel with side channels and lots of hiding places. They like deep pools, shallow riffles, shade, overhanging plants, and lots of wood. They need food, oxygen, clean water, spawning gravels and places to hide.

HOW MANY OF THESE HABITAT FEATURES CAN YOU FIND?

	<p>RIPARIAN PLANTS: Trees, shrubs, and other plants that grow along the stream bank. They create shade that keeps the water cool. When trees and branches fall in the water, these create hiding places for fish. Insects fall off riparian plants into the water- these insects are food for baby fish. The plant roots hold the stream bank soil while still allowing gradual erosion that is needed for a healthy stream.</p>
	<p>IN-STREAM WOOD: Logs and branches in the stream create hiding places for fish. They change the direction of water flow, creating resting pools and side channels that are good habitat. They help build up gravel that salmon need for laying eggs.</p>
	<p>SPAWNING GRAVEL: Small gravel, about the size of a pea, is the perfect size for salmon to dig a redd and lay their eggs. The gravel is big enough to not smother the eggs but small enough that the salmon can dig in it using their tails. They cover the eggs with a layer of light gravel to protect them. Gravel is moved downstream by the water flow, so it needs to be continually replaced by stream bank erosion and gravel coming from upstream.</p>



STREAM BANK EROSION: You can see where stream bank erosion has occurred by looking for stream banks that are bare dirt and not growing any plants. Stream bank erosion is important because it puts more sand and gravel into the stream, which salmon need to spawn. But if people cut down riparian plants along the stream, it can cause too much stream bank erosion at once, which can smother salmon eggs so it's important to protect riparian plants.



REDD: A nest dug by a salmon to lay their eggs. This can look like an area of cleaner gravel where the algae and sediment have been cleaned off by the salmon's digging. They can also look like a gravel pit in the stream.



RIFFLES: Areas of shallow, faster moving water tumbling over rocks help move gravel, wood, and insects downstream. Riffles also stir up the water, which helps dissolve more oxygen which salmon need. Salmon often dig redds in riffles where the oxygen is high and the eggs are less likely to be smothered by fine sediment.



POOLS: Areas of deep, slow moving water. Adult salmon use pools to rest during their migration upstream. Baby salmon like to live in pools where they can rest, hide, and find food.



	<p>UNDERCUT BANK: A stream bank that erosion has cut under so the bank hangs over the stream. Salmon like to hide under the bank from predators.</p>
	<p>FLOODPLAIN BENCH: Flat areas along the stream that are dry when flows are low but that become flooded during and after storms and heavy rains. Fish can use floodplains to escape fast storm flows, and floodplains help protect the stream from damage that could be caused by very large storms.</p>
	<p>MEANDER: A curve or bend in the stream channel. Streams are better habitat when they are more interesting! Salmon don't like a straight boring channel- it has nowhere to hide, nowhere to rest, and the water flows through it too quickly.</p>



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