



Schooled on Salmon

Crafting instructions for Go Fishin' magnets

Activity Time: Approx. 2-3 hours, family-friendly, grades 2-6

Materials:

- Stiff felt sheets (or foam)
- Old plastic placemats or thin cutting boards (optional)
- Magnetic toy fishing pole or DIY
- Magnets (or paper clips)
- Kiddy pool, tub, jar, or basket
- Salmon shape/stencil
- Table cloth
- Fine point black marker, sharpie
- Tacky craft glue
- Glue gun, glue sticks, protective tray (adult supervision advised)
- Laminator with sheets (optional)
- Paper, cardstock
- Scissors, paper cutter
- Embellishments (optional): googly eyes, puffy paint, sequins, etc.

Steps to Create Go Fishin' Magnets:

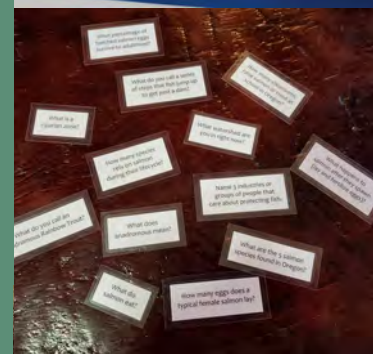
1. Gather supplies and cover work space with table cloth.
2. Find salmon shape online or draw one, then use cardstock to create stencil outline (see example provided). Trace salmon onto felt using fine point black marker and cut out with scissors. Flip stencil over to have salmon facing both right and left. The side of the felt you are tracing will be the back side. To make salmon more durable (i.e. for classroom or frequent use), use a thin plastic placemat or cutting board to reinforce felt by cutting out another salmon shape slightly smaller than felt one. Glue felt and plastic together with craft glue.
3. Find age-appropriate salmon questions (or other [fish species](#)). For a classroom set, 25-30 is best. See examples provided, adapt as needed. Type up questions or handwrite using marker. Cut out questions using scissors or paper cutter. Create answer sheet for easy reference.

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Photos by: Morgan Parks, NWF

4. Laminate questions to reinforce and re-cut. Glue questions to back of felt fish (or back of plastic) using craft glue.
5. Depending on the thickness of your salmon and strength of magnets and magnetic fishing pole, either glue magnet on back of salmon or on front using glue gun (will be stronger than craft glue, review [safety tips](#)). Paper clips in the mouth of the salmon works as an alternative.
6. Add embellishments such as googly eyes, puffy paint (for fins and spots), sequins as scales, etc. Once dry, place your school of salmon in a "pool" (without water).
7. Invite friends and family to Go Fishin'! Take turns fishing for salmon. Read questions aloud so everyone can learn something new. Remove salmon from the pool after each question has been answered.
8. Celebrate being Schooled on Salmon!





1. What does anadromous mean?
2. Name 5 salmon species in the Pacific Ocean.
3. When viewed under a microscope, what do salmon scales resemble? What can you learn from them?
4. Where do salmon go when they're ready to spawn?
5. What watershed are you in right now?
6. What do you call a series of steps that fish jump up to get past a dam?
7. What kind of water do salmon like? Describe the best conditions.
8. How do salmon find their home streams again as adults?
9. What is a riparian zone?
10. Name 3 industries or groups of people that care about protecting fish.
11. What do salmon eat?
12. What is the function of the swim bladder in the body of a salmon?
13. How many eggs does a typical female salmon lay?
14. What do you call an anadromous rainbow trout?
15. What is a salmon's underwater gravel nest called?
16. How many other wildlife species rely on salmon during part of their lifecycle?
17. What happens to salmon after they spawn (lay and fertilize eggs)?
18. What are salmon called when they're transitioning from fresh to saltwater?
19. Why is salmon flesh pink?
20. What weather event signals to salmon that it's time to swim back to freshwater?
21. What percentage of hatched salmon eggs survive to adulthood? Why is that?
22. Why are salmon considered a keystone species?
23. Explain two ways in which salmon are culturally significant to Indigenous Peoples.
24. What are two marine-derived nutrients that salmon carcasses provide to the ecosystem? How do they feed the forest?

Example Questions

Classroom Tip:

Have each student design and decorate their own salmon. Ask them to research salmon in order to develop a question and answer (or a few to choose from). Assign topics (anatomy, lifecycle, ecosystem services, culture, etc.) to avoid duplicate questions. Use your school of salmon as a classroom set to play the activity.





1. Fish born in freshwater that migrate to saltwater as adults then return to freshwater to spawn are anadromous.
2. 5 Pacific salmon species: Chum, Sockeye, Chinook, Coho, and Pink.
3. Salmon scales resemble tree rings and tell you the growth history and age of the fish.
4. Salmon swim back to their natal (birth) streams when they're ready to spawn (lay and fertilize eggs).
5. Specific watershed name: answers will depend on location.
6. A series of steps that fish jump up to get past a dam is called a fish ladder.
7. Salmon like water that is clean, clear, cold, and complex.
8. Salmon migrate back to their home streams using their sense of smell, magnetic cues, position of the sun or day length.
9. A riparian zone is the land and vegetation alongside streams—the interface between aquatic and terrestrial areas.
10. Many groups care about protecting salmon: conservationists, commercial fishermen, sport anglers, Indigenous Peoples, schools, restaurants, families, etc.
11. Salmon eat aquatic insects/ invertebrates (like plankton, stoneflies, mayflies, caddisflies), other small fish, shrimp, krill, etc.
12. A swim bladder enables salmon to maintain buoyancy—float up and down in the water column by expanding with or releasing gas (like a balloon).
13. A typical salmon lays between 2,000-5,000 eggs or even more!
14. Anadromous rainbow trout are also called steelhead.
15. A salmon nest is called a redd.
16. At least 137 species rely on salmon during part of their lifecycle (from bears to orcas!).
17. When salmon spawn, they die shortly after, their carcass fed on by macroinvertebrates which are food for the salmon's offspring.
18. Salmon are called "smolts" when they're transitioning from fresh to saltwater.
19. Salmon flesh is pink due to their diet—eating shrimp and krill (high in carotenoids).
20. Salmon are signaled to migrate back to freshwater when the autumn rain starts to fall.
21. Only about 2% of all salmon hatched will survive to adulthood due to predators, obstacles, pollution, etc.
22. Salmon are a keystone species because they influence survival or reproduction of other species in the ecosystem.
23. Salmon are culturally significant to Indigenous Peoples as part of their traditions, ceremonies, storytelling, diet, artwork, etc.
24. Nitrogen and phosphorous are two marine-derived nutrients transferred to forest plants after carcasses break down or are dragged away by animals. That's why salmon DNA can be found in trees!

Example Answers





Example Stencil

