

Stop

The Invasion



Photographs courtesy of William Hartley, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Hans-Petter Fjeld

Atlantic Salmon

Salmo salar

Report Sightings

@

invasivespecies.wa.gov

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What are they?

Atlantic salmon are native to eastern North American coastal drainages from northern Quebec to Connecticut. The growth of the farmed Atlantic salmon industry has brought with it concerns about Atlantic salmon impacts on wild salmon stocks including disease transfer, pollution from net pen facilities, and ecological impacts from escaped salmon.

Are they here yet?

Atlantic salmon are raised along the Washington and British Columbia coasts; escapes from these aquaculture operations concern fishery biologists and others working to restore native Pacific Northwest salmon runs. As of 2006, the Aquatic Nuisance Species Project states that there have been sightings of juvenile Atlantic salmon on the West Coast. The last reported sightings were on Vancouver Island in 2000.

Why should I care?

In recent years there has been specific concern about the potential impact on wild salmon stocks from sea lice (*Lepeophtheirus* sp.), originating from net pens of Atlantic salmon in British Columbia. Sea lice can kill juvenile fish, even at low infestation levels.

What should I do if I find one?

Report online at www.invasivespecies.wa.gov/report.shtml.

How can we stop them?

Do not purchase or trade this species. Prevent the spread of Atlantic salmon by reporting sightings.



Photograph courtesy of Ken Beland, ASC

What are their characteristics?

- The average size of Atlantic salmon is 28-30 inches long and 8-12 pounds after two years at sea.
- The land-locked salmon is smaller, averaging 3 to 5 pounds in weight.
- Coloration varies, but generally it is brownish along the back with silvery sides and belly. Black spots are on the gill covers and on their back.
- The tail is deeply forked and has no spots on it.

How do I distinguish them from native species?

- The key distinguishing feature of Atlantic salmon is the black spots on the gill covers and back, but no black spots on the tail.
- Atlantic salmon also have black x-shape spots above the lateral line, a slender or pinched caudal fin, and 8-12 rays of the anal fin.
- Native Pacific Northwest salmon have 11-13 anal rays.

Where do I get more information?

- Alaska Department of Fish and Game: http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=invasiveprofiles.atlanticsalmon_characteristics
- Oregon Invasive Species Council: <http://www.oregoninvasivespeciescouncil.org/>
- National Marine Fisheries Service: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/species/fish/atlantic-salmon.html>
- Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/salmon/atlantic.html>
- Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife, "Atlantic Salmon in Washington State: A Fish Management Perspective:" <http://wdfw.wa.gov/publications/pub.php?id=00922>

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