

About Salmon

Coho (*Oncorhynchus kisutch*)

Other Names: silver

Average size: 6-12 lbs, up to 31 lbs

Fall spawner



Illustration by Joseph Tomelleri

Coho are a very popular sport fish in Washington and Oregon. This species uses coastal streams and tributaries, and is often present in small neighborhood streams. Coho can even be found in urban settings if their needs of cold, clean, year-round water are met.

Spawning: Coho spawn in small coastal streams and the tributaries of larger rivers. They prefer areas of mid-velocity water with small to medium sized gravels. Because they use small streams with limited space, they must use many such streams to successfully reproduce, which is why coho can be found in virtually every small coastal stream with a year-round flow.

Returning coho often gather at the mouths of streams and wait for the water flow to rise, such as after a rain storm, before heading upstream. The higher flows and deeper water enable the fish to pass obstacles, such as logs across the stream or beaver dams, that would otherwise be impassable.

Rearing: Coho have a very regular life history. They are deposited in the gravel as eggs in the fall, emerge from the gravel the next spring, and in their second spring go to sea, about 18 months after being deposited. Coho fry are usually found in the pools of small coastal streams and the tributaries of larger rivers.