

SALMON SPAWNER

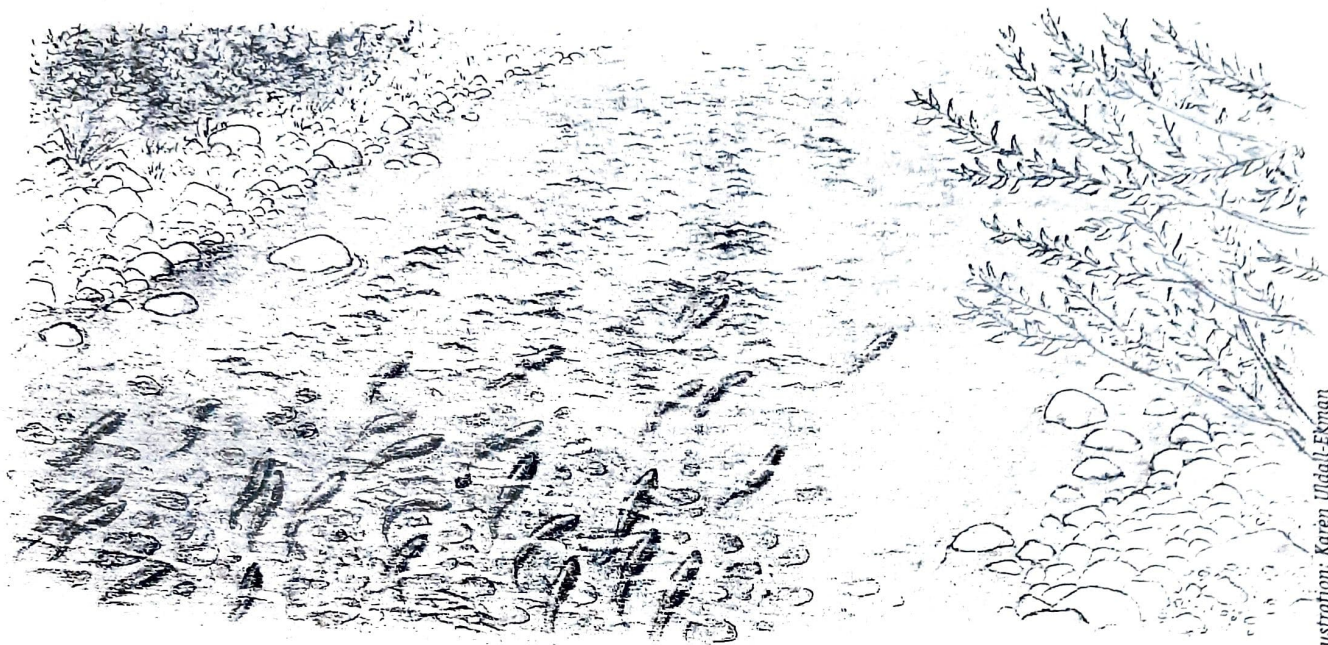


Illustration: Karen Uttaal-Ekman

Salmon **spawners** leave the ocean in the fall or early winter. They swim upstream to the stream or lake where they were born.

On the long trip upstream, spawners do not stop to eat. Their shape and colour changes. Their skin may become bright red, green or purple. Some grow a large hump. Some grow a hooked jaw.

As they swim, they face many dangers. They must jump waterfalls and rapids. Logs and rocks block the way. Human fishers try to catch them. Eagles and bears want to eat them.

Spawners smell the water to find their home stream or lake. When they reach their home stream or lake, the **female** builds a **redd**. She sweeps rocks and gravel with her tail to make a stone nest. Then she chooses a mate.

She lays her eggs in the redd. The **male** deposits his **milt** so the eggs will grow. The female covers the eggs. Often she builds another redd, finds another mate and lays more eggs.

The male and the female die soon after spawning. Other animals eat their bodies. Salmon bodies also **fertilize** the stream and forest.