

Activity 1: Getting to Know Salmon and Steelhead

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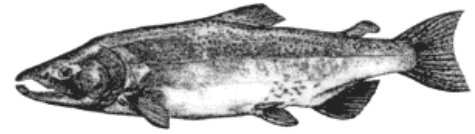
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Chinook salmon. Illustration from California Department of Fish and Game

Overview

This activity introduces young people, families, and community members to the unit and engages them in thinking about salmon and steelhead in their community. It also acquaints the group with members of the community who will partner with them in various unit activities.

Background Information

Salmon and steelhead have been a cause for celebration throughout time, and particularly in the coastal regions from Northern California to Alaska, where they were a crucial part of Native American culture.

In this Northwest region, salmon and/or steelhead was the most important staple food and most valuable natural product. Native Americans here considered salmon to be more than just a resource – they were thought of as sacred Salmon People. The human people showed their respect by greeting the returning Salmon People with song, prayers, special ceremonies, and celebrations. After catching and eating salmon, the people would return the bones to the ocean, where they would come back to life as more Salmon People. The Salmon People were believed to travel on invisible canoes, with the chiefs of the different families (species) standing in the stern to direct their movements landward.

In other parts of California, people depended less on salmon and steelhead as the main source of food. Still, tribes in Northeastern and Central California ate salmon and steelhead as part of their diet and looked for their return each year.

Sources

[Museum Exposition of California Indian Life](#)

[Carnegie Museums](#)

Objectives

Participants will: (1) list what they know about salmon and steelhead, (2) describe what they would like to learn about salmon and steelhead, and (3) participate in an event with community members to celebrate salmon and steelhead.

Time

Setting the Stage: 30 minutes

Activity: One group session or more, depending on the celebration planned

Materials

- Sheets of chart paper or butcher paper
- Marker Pens
- One or more of the following:
 - Video about salmon and steelhead* (see [Resources: Videos](#))
 - Photos of salmon (see Individual Species Information under [Resources: Information About Salmon and Steelhead](#))
 - Picture book about salmon* (see Children's Literature under [Resources: Stories and Music](#))
 - Salmon story (see [Resources: Stories and Music](#))
 - Salmon fishing gear (borrowed from parent or other angler)
 - A salmon (from market or other source)
 - Music CD with song about salmon (see [Resources: Stories and Music](#))
- VCR and monitor or CD player (optional)
- Copies of “What I Know and What I Want to Learn” worksheet, 1 per participant
- Celebration food (see Advance Preparation below)
- Napkins, plates, cups, utensils as needed for the food
- Folder or binder for each team (see [Participant Teams](#) under [Unit Overview: Tips for Managing the Unit](#))
- Camera

* = Included in Adopt-A-Watershed Kit

Advance Preparation

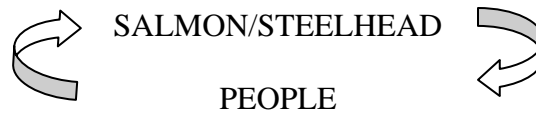
1. Decide on an appropriate celebration for introducing the unit. The purpose of the celebration is to help the participants and community members feel a connection and enthusiasm for the subject of salmon and steelhead. It can be as simple as a walk to your nearby creek, where participants taste salmon soup and listen to a children's book about salmon. Or, it can be as elaborate as a salmon and steelhead fair that has stations with a variety of activities staffed by parents and local resource specialists, commercial or sport fishers, or representatives of local fishing clubs.

As much as possible, have participants help with ideas and preparations for the celebration.

Activities for the celebration may include:

- Inviting indigenous people to share their cultural history and connection to salmon and steelhead through stories and activities.
 - Making fish prints from a salmon for team portfolio covers (see Making Fish Prints under [Resources: Art Projects](#)).
 - Listening to an elder tell a story about salmon (see [Resources: Stories and Music](#)).
 - Watching a video about salmon (see [Resources: Videos](#)).
 - Reading a picture book about salmon (see Children’s Literature under [Resources: Stories and Music](#)).
 - Taking a walk along a nearby creek.
 - Handling salmon fishing gear and a casting lesson.
 - Viewing maps or displays brought by the salmon and steelhead resource professional.
 - Listening to songs about salmon (see [Resources: Stories and Music](#)).
 - Tasting something made from salmon (see [Resources: Recipes](#)).
 - Beginning the Community Art Project (see [Activity 3: Community Art Project](#)).
2. Contact your local water district, state fish and game department, or other local agency or organization (see [Resources: Resource Agencies and Organizations](#)) to establish a resource professional contact for the unit. Explain the purpose of the unit and invite him or her to the salmon and steelhead celebration and to act as a group partner throughout the unit. Discuss working with him or her in planning and carrying out a [restoration project](#), [community art project](#), and other unit activities. See the [Resource Professionals](#) section under [Unit Overview: Tips for Managing the Unit](#) for a list of activities where you may seek help.
 3. Gather materials for the celebration activities you plan.
 4. Plan where you will have the celebration and make necessary arrangements. If you will be visiting the local creek or other natural area, read the suggestions for [Planning Field Study Trips](#) under [Unit Overview: Tips for Managing the Unit](#).
 5. Ask parents to help by bringing celebration food, keeping in mind any allergies or other dietary restrictions. If possible, include at least one thing made from salmon or that is fish-related:
 - A kid-friendly salmon recipe (see [Resources: Recipes](#))
 - Store-bought salmon/cream cheese spread and bagel chunks
 - Store-bought smoked salmon and crackers
 - Fish-shaped crackers
 6. Using 4 sheets of chart paper, prepare a “KWLR” chart, with the following question and graphic at the top of each sheet:

How do people in our community affect salmon and steelhead, and how do salmon and steelhead affect people in our community?



7. Write one of the following labels on each sheet:

K - What We Know

W - What We Wonder

L - What We Have Learned

R - What Resources We Have

8. Prepare a binder or folder for each team to use as a portfolio.

9. On the day of the celebration, set up the materials and resources you have gathered for the event.

Setting the Stage

1. Introduce the unit by telling participants that they will be spending the next several weeks exploring salmon and steelhead and their connection to the community. Show them the KWLR chart with the guiding question of the unit, and explain that participants will be exploring how people in your community affect salmon and steelhead, and how salmon and steelhead affect people.
2. Using the KWLR chart, ask participants to name things they already know about the question and list their ideas under the “K” sheet (writing all their ideas, even if what they “know” is incorrect).
3. Ask participants to name things they wonder about salmon and steelhead and people, and list their ideas under the “W” sheet.
4. Ask participants to name experts they could ask, web sites they could look at, books they could read, or other resources for finding the answers to their questions about salmon and steelhead.
5. Explain that the group will have a celebration to start off the unit. Have participants write invitations for their parents and other community members.

Conducting the Activity

1. On the day of the celebration, do the activities you have planned for the event.
2. As part of the event, explain to participants, parents, and other community members that the group will be investigating salmon and steelhead in your community. They will explore the question, “How do salmon and steelhead affect people, and how do people affect salmon and steelhead?”

Point out that throughout the unit participants will be finding out:

- Whether salmon and/or steelhead live or have lived in the community.
 - The different stages of the salmon and steelhead life cycle.
 - What salmon and steelhead need to survive.
 - The community’s knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes about salmon and steelhead.
 - What participants can do to enhance understanding and responsibility for salmon and steelhead in the community.
3. Point out specific ways that you will be asking for parent and community help, including:
 - Help with the community art project (see [Activity 3](#)).
 - Participation in community survey (see [Activity 4](#)) and mapping activities (see [Activity 8](#)).
 - Chaperones for trips to the local creek (see [Activity 5](#) and [Activity 11](#)).
 - Help in planning and carrying out a restoration project (see [Activity 12](#)).
 4. Let participants, parents, and other community members know that they will also participate in a community celebration at the end of the unit (see [Activity 13: Community Celebration](#)). At that time, participants will share the work they have done with community members (so participants will want to do their best work throughout the unit).
 5. Thank individual parents and other community members who helped with the event.

Wrap-Up

1. Ask participants to share what they enjoyed about the celebration event.
2. Have participants write thank-you notes to parents and community members who helped with the event.
3. Divide the class into teams for the duration of the unit.
4. Give teams their portfolio binders or folders. If participants made fish prints during the celebration, have them choose one and attach it to the front of the portfolio. Add the other fish prints to the portfolio. Tell the teams that they will be keeping a portfolio for the unit

to help them see what they have learned.

5. Have each team pick a species of salmon or steelhead to represent their team. You may want to give each team time to design a poster representing the team.
6. Have participants fill in the worksheet, “What I Know and What I Want to Learn.” Have them place the worksheets in the portfolios. At the end of the unit, they will have an opportunity to revisit the worksheet to reflect on their own learning.
7. Save the KWLR chart for use throughout the unit.

Name: _____

Date: _____



Coho salmon. Illustration from California Department of Fish and Game

What I Know and What I Want to Learn

What I know about salmon/steelhead and their connection to people	What I want to learn about salmon/steelhead and their connection to people

Name / Nombre: _____

Date / Fecha: _____



Coho salmon. Illustration from California Department of Fish and Game

What I Know and What I Want to Learn

Lo que sé y lo que deseo aprender

**What I know about salmon/steelhead
and their connection to people**

*Lo que sé sobre salmón/trucha del mar
(steelhead) y sus asociaciones con la gente*

**What I want to learn about salmon/steelhead
and their connection to people**

*Lo que deseo aprender sobre salmón/trucha del
mar (steelhead) y sus asociaciones con la gente*