

Chinook salmon

Oncorhynchus tshawytscha ((Walbaum, 1792))



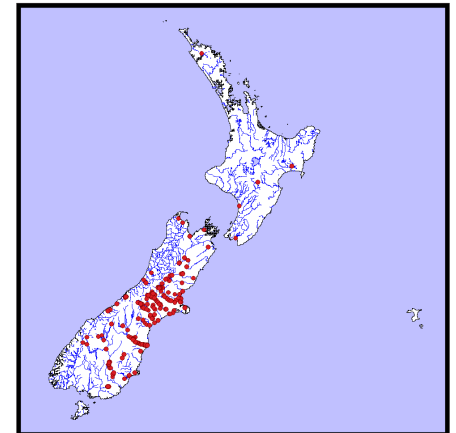
R.M. McDowall

Chinook salmon are one of three Pacific Salmonidae from the genus *Oncorhynchus* that has become established in New Zealand. Native to the northwest coast of North American and northeast Asia, the specific name of this fish (pronounced shaw-witch-shaw) comes from the Kamchatka Peninsula and is thought to refer to their distinctive black gums. This character can be used to distinguish chinook salmon from the other Salmonidae in New Zealand. This species is also known as quinnat or king salmon.

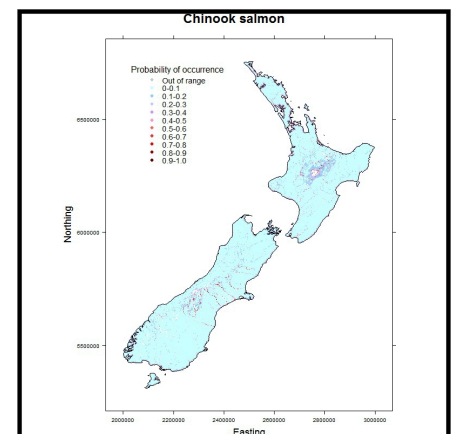
Chinook salmon in New Zealand have a life cycle that is typical of salmon in the North Pacific. The adults grow to maturity in the sea and migrate upstream to spawn, usually when they are three years old. After spawning, which occurs in autumn, all of the adults die. Juveniles hatch in spring, and typically spend 3 months in fresh water before migrating downstream to enter the ocean in summer. In some populations, a second downstream migration, consisting of individuals that have spent a year in fresh water, occurs the following spring.

Chinook salmon are a highly prized sports fish in New Zealand although the population is not large enough to support commercial fishing. However, there are a number of successful salmon farms in New Zealand, and it is possible to buy fresh chinook salmon in most supermarkets nowadays. When the spawning migration of adult fish is in progress between December and April, picket lines of eager anglers are a common sight at major river mouths along the east coast of the South Island. Salmon lose condition as they migrate upstream and thus the most prized fish are

Known distribution



Predicted Distribution



Penetration

