



The chinook salmon is also known as the king salmon. It is distinguished by dark spotting on the back and usually on both lobes of the tail, a long anal fin and teeth set in black gums.

Chinook feed primarily on fish such as alewives and smelt. Most Chinook have a four-year life span. Mature Chinook spawn similarly to coho salmon, then die. A portion of a year class of Chinooks may return before the normal four years to spawn.

Some Chinook may live longer than 4 years and reach 40 pounds or more.

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The elusive Chinook is typically found in deep water except when it starts its fall spawning run into rivers and/or harbors. For this reason the bank fishermen's catch of the Chinook is restricted to early fall, casting with lures and snagging during the latter fall period (check local and state snagging regulations) . The Chinook run usually peaks before the coho run.

The Chinook fishery is maintained by annual stocking because it does not reproduce in adequate numbers in Lake Michigan tributaries. Chinook spend about 6 months in the hatchery until they are stocked as 2-3 inch long fingerlings each spring.

Chinook tend to prefer warm temperatures in the mid-50s and seem to be more light sensitive and harder to catch than coho. Chinook are active in water temperatures from 45 to 60 degrees F. with a peak feeding temperature at 54 degrees F.