

chinook salmon *Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Osteichthyes

Order: Salmoniformes

Family: Salmonidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, nonnative

FEATURES

The chinook salmon averages about three feet in length and is the largest salmon. It is iridescent green to blue-green on the back and upper sides. The lower sides and belly are silver to white. The fleshy gums of the lower jaw are black. There are small, black spots on the caudal (tail) fin, dorsal fin and adipose fin. The breeding male is dark green-brown to purple. As in all salmon, an adipose fin may be seen on the back close to the tail.

BEHAVIORS

The chinook salmon is stocked in Lake Michigan. It is a native of the Pacific Ocean, from Alaska to California. It was originally introduced to Lake Michigan by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources for sport fishing and to help control the alewife population. It does not reproduce in Lake Michigan but has spawned successfully in some Lake Michigan tributary streams in Michigan and Wisconsin. It eats aquatic invertebrates and small fishes.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

Lake Michigan

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none

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