

Salmon Anatomy Vocabulary Sheet

Air bladder: Also called a swim bladder. This long balloon like sac holds gasses that help salmon control how much they float.



Adipose fin: Soft, fleshy, round fin found on the back behind the dorsal fin. This fin may act as a sensory organ and may help to improve maneuverability in turbulent water. This fin is removed from most hatchery fish so that they are easily identified.

Anadromous: The term to describe fish that are born in freshwater, but migrate to the ocean to live as adults, before returning to spawn in freshwater.

Anal fin: A small fin located on the ventral surface behind the vent. It is used to stabilize salmon while swimming.

Caudal fin: The large tail fin on a salmon, used for propulsion/locomotion; similar to the rudder on a boat.

Dissolved oxygen: A measure of how much oxygen is present in water and available to living aquatic organisms. It is an important parameter in assessing water quality.

Dorsal fin: Located along the top of the back, the dorsal fin is used to stabilize and to assist with sudden turns.

Fecund/Fecundity: The number of eggs carried by a female indicative of a fish's reproductive capacity (i.e., the number of offspring a single organism is capable of producing).

Gills: Absorb oxygen from the water allowing the fish to "breathe". They can use up to 80% of the oxygen dissolved in water, while human lungs only use up to 25% of the oxygen in the air.



Gill rakers: Long, fine tooth-like structures used to filter food (plankton) from the water. Gill rakers help to guide food to the stomach, instead of back out through the gills.

Gall Bladder: Collects and stores bile, which is used by the intestine to help digest fat.

Heart: Bony fish like salmon have a two-chambered heart. This muscular organ circulates blood through the body, helping circulate oxygen from the gills and nutrients from the stomach to the other organs in the body.



Intestine: Connects the digestive system to the anal vent. This is where the last bits of nutrients are pulled out of food before it is released as waste.

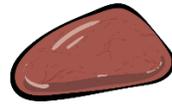


Kidneys: Paired organs located under the backbone. The anterior kidney is responsible for red and white blood cell formation and contains hormone producing tissues. The posterior kidney filters waste from the which is released as urine. Kidneys also help with osmoregulation, which balances of amount of chemicals inside the body from the amount of chemicals in the water outside the body.



Lateral line: A sensory organ, comprised of cells that allows fish to detect vibrations and nearby objects (including predators, food, and other fish). It also helps fish determine current speed and direction so they can orient themselves within the water current.

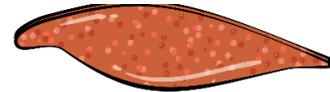
Liver: Large, reddish-brown organ that assists in digestion by secreting enzymes that break down fats. It stores and secretes essential nutrients. It also destroys old blood cells and maintains proper levels of blood chemicals and sugars.



Operculum: Covers and protects the fragile gills.

Osmoregulation: The process by which cells and organisms maintain the correct balance of ions and water.

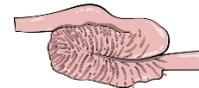
Ovaries The female reproductive organ, ovaries produce eggs. A group of eggs is often referred to as a skein.



Pectoral fin: Paired fins located on the sides of the fish used for steering, balance and for moving the fish up and down in the water column.

Pelvic fin: Paired fins located on the ventral sides of the fish used for steering, balance and stabilization.

Pyloric Caeca: strange folds and noodle-like appendages that help the body digest food by adding more surface area where nutrients can be absorbed into the blood.



Semelparity/ Semelparous: A specific life-history characterized by a single, highly fecund reproduction, followed by death.

Spleen: Solid, dark red organ where white blood cells are produced and red blood cells are recycled. The spleen holds a lot of blood that can help the body in emergencies.



Stomach: A sac-like muscular organ that holds food that has been swallowed and starts digesting it. It secretes digestive enzymes and squeezes the food into the pyloric caeca for more digestion.

Testes: The male reproductive organ, testes produce milt which contains salmon sperm.



Vent: The anus where wastes are excreted.

