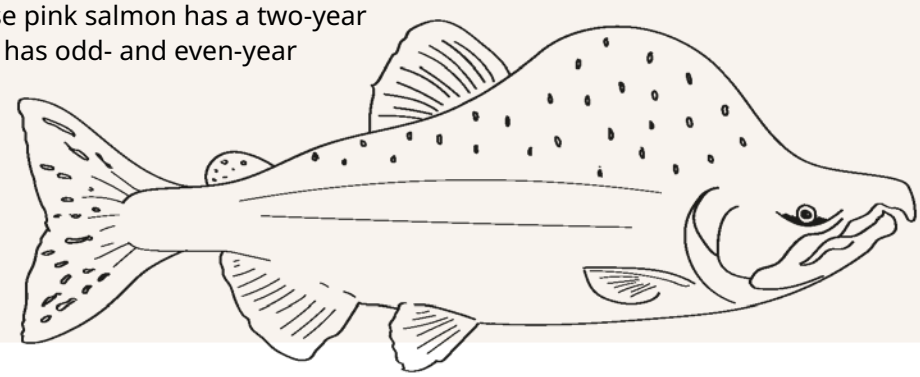
PINK SALMON – *What is the current situation?*

PINK SALMON HAS ARRIVED IN THE ATLANTIC

Pink salmon is the smallest salmonid native to the Pacific Ocean. It has a two-year lifecycle: young individuals spawned from eggs migrate into the ocean after spawning and return to the river the next year to reproduce.

Pink salmon arrived in the Atlantic Ocean, in the Kola Peninsula and the White Sea, in the 1950s stocked by people. Because pink salmon has a two-year lifecycle, it always has odd- and even-year populations that do not reproduce with each other. Odd-year populations have been significantly more successful.

Pink salmon migrates into Finnish rivers, Tenojoki and Näätämöjoki, from Norway. The size of pink salmon populations has increased rapidly in Finland since 2017.



THE IMPACT OF PINK SALMON ON WATERBODIES AND OTHER SPECIES

Because the size of pink salmon populations has not increased rapidly until in recent years, only limited research data on its impact is available. However, the increased size of pink salmon populations is expected to have various impact on waterbodies and other species: young pink salmon individuals require large amounts of nutrition, and carcasses of fish dying after spawning release nutrients into waterbodies.

Because pink salmon only migrates in significant volumes into Finnish rivers during odd years, information about its impact can only be acquired every other year. Then again, rivers can have a rest during even years, but the situation may change if even-year populations also grow stronger.

The scale is key considering ecological changes: the impact caused is less dramatic in large rivers than in smaller rivers, to which pink salmon has also spread.

Furthermore, catching pink salmon to remove it is not completely unproblematic. If pink salmon were removed in large volumes, it would have to be done without causing any harm to other migratory fish, including Atlantic salmon.

PINK SALMON IN FINLAND

Because pink salmon migrates into Finnish waterbodies from Norway, Norwegians' attitudes towards pink salmon are key considering the development of the situation in Finland. In Norway, pink salmon is classified as an invasive alien species, and effective methods have been developed to remove it.

Not all measures have always been successful – for example, the dam built in the Tenojoki river in 2023 did not stop pink salmon. In contrast, it harmed the migration of already weak populations of Atlantic salmon. Norway is already planning a new dam project for 2025.

OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED BY PINK SALMON

Pink salmon is not classified as an invasive alien species by Finnish law. However, people are encouraged to catch it to remove it. Pink salmon can be caught and is regarded as an excellent species for human consumption. The input of local communities is important in catching and removing pink salmon.

If the migration of pink salmon into Finland continues, pink salmon will also offer opportunities to attract fishing tourists, and fishing to remove pink salmon will therefore provide benefits for tourism. Fishing tourism could provide jobs in local communities. Then again, the small size of even-year populations sets challenges when setting up business activities.

BARENTS
Invasive Alien Species

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