

Atlantic Salmon Scales

An Atlantic salmon's scales tell the story of the fish's life – and even its ancestry and place of birth.

Growth rings on the scales tell the story of the salmon's growth, when it moved to salt water, and its return to fresh water after time at sea. The scales can tell us how many times the salmon has spawned, and can indicate the age.

Even growth rings can be an indication of Atlantic salmon raised in captivity, and whether the fish is an escaped farm-raised aquaculture salmon

DNA, that can be extracted from the scales, can determine the relationship of that particular salmon to other groups of salmon, and ultimately can tell us from which stream, and even which section of stream the salmon came.

When growing conditions are good, a salmon will grow faster. This means the rings will be further apart. If the living conditions are not as good, the salmon will not grow as fast and the rings will be closer together.

