

Outdoor Recreation

is

Outdoor Education

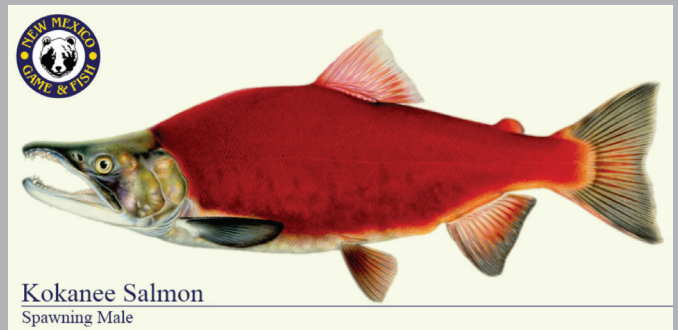
Learning About New Mexico's Wildlife Kokanee Salmon

Kokanee salmon (*Oncorhynchus nerka*)

Ages ago, young sockeye salmon were migrating downstream, heading for the ocean. Their parents had beaten a torturous path to the spawning grounds from the ocean the previous fall. After making redds (nests), they spawned the eggs for these smolts (young) and then died. Now the smolts were completing the second phase of sockeye life cycle.

New Mexico's first kokanee were stocked in 1963 in the Pine River, which was flowing into Navajo Reservoir. Now kokanee fry are routinely stocked into five of New Mexico's northern lakes. Kokanee fry come from eggs given to, traded to or purchased by the Department of Game and Fish and hatched at a Department hatchery, usually Parkview. Eggs are also obtained from the Department's own spawning operations, usually conducted at Heron Lake.

Kokanee prefer cool (near 50 degrees Fahrenheit), well-oxygenated water. That is why they are found at 50-foot depths during the summer and near the surface in the spring and fall.



New Mexico Department of Game and Fish

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