



Bradán's Journey Ends and Begins All Over Again

THE SALMON AT SEA

Bradán survived through the estuary and swims happily into the Atlantic Ocean. She has to build up her strength as she only weighs 50 grams and measures about 12 - 16 cm. In the next year and a half (if a seal or a shark hasn't already eaten her) she will increase her weight to 2,500 grams.

To Do:

Find 2 objects - one that weighs 50 grams and one that weighs 2,500 grams and compare them.

What objects did you find? _____

What do they weigh? _____

She has a long journey ahead of her, maybe to the Faroe Islands, Western Greenland or the Norwegian Sea.

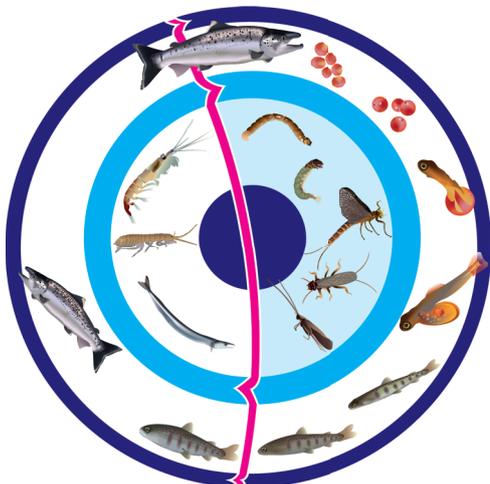
ACTIVITY

Find these places in your atlas. Calculate the distance, using the map scale, from the west coast of Ireland to her chosen destination.

Location in Ireland _____

Destination _____

Distance _____



Bradán's diet is very good out in the ocean. Her daily menu varies from sand eel to sprat to krill. Don't forget she is on the menu for seals and sharks!

A salmon that has spent one winter at sea is called a grilse. If food is plentiful she could spend another year in the ocean. She could even increase her weight to 9 kg.

Think! And then put the different stages of Bradán's life in order.

- | | | |
|--------------|-------|------|
| adult salmon | smolt | fry |
| grilse | spawn | parr |

Activity Card

6B

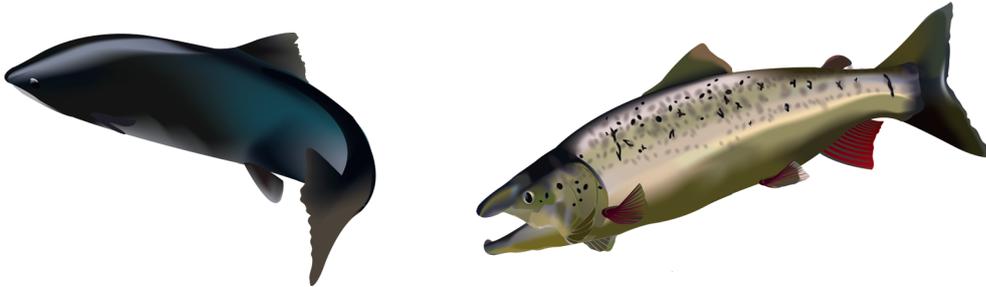


Now that Bradán has built up her body weight, she will turn around and seek out the river where she hatched. In the river she is almost black-blue in colour and swollen with eggs. She has to be an acrobat now to jump weirs and waterfalls and run up rapids to get back upstream to sniff out her spawning bed.

THINK!

What sense does she use to recognise her place of birth?

She is accompanied by her partner, Silver. He has also changed colour for camouflage. He now has a lovely coppery coat with russet, brown-orange and red in it.



From earlier lessons, can you remember how camouflage helps a salmon to survive in different habitats?

When Bradán lays thousands of eggs, back in her own place of birth, Silver will fertilise them. Laying thousands of eggs is tiring work, so she will rest in the stream.

It is comforting for Bradán to know that some of her eggs will develop, grow up and survive all the dangers, in the cycle of a salmon's life.

Can you remember some of the things Bradán saw on her journey?

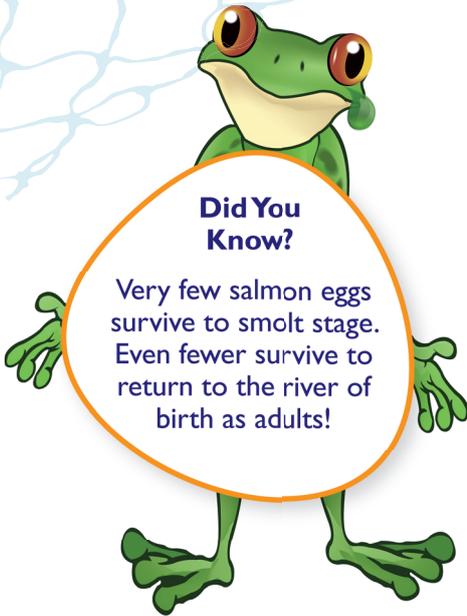
- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____
- 6 _____

AN INTERESTING FACT

Salmon do not eat after they return from sea. Bradán may not have eaten for almost a year and is near the end of her life. But she has had a good life!



Activity Card



Did You Know?

Very few salmon eggs survive to smolt stage. Even fewer survive to return to the river of birth as adults!

Some animals have only a few young and put in a lot of effort to ensure they grow up safely.

Can you name one? _____

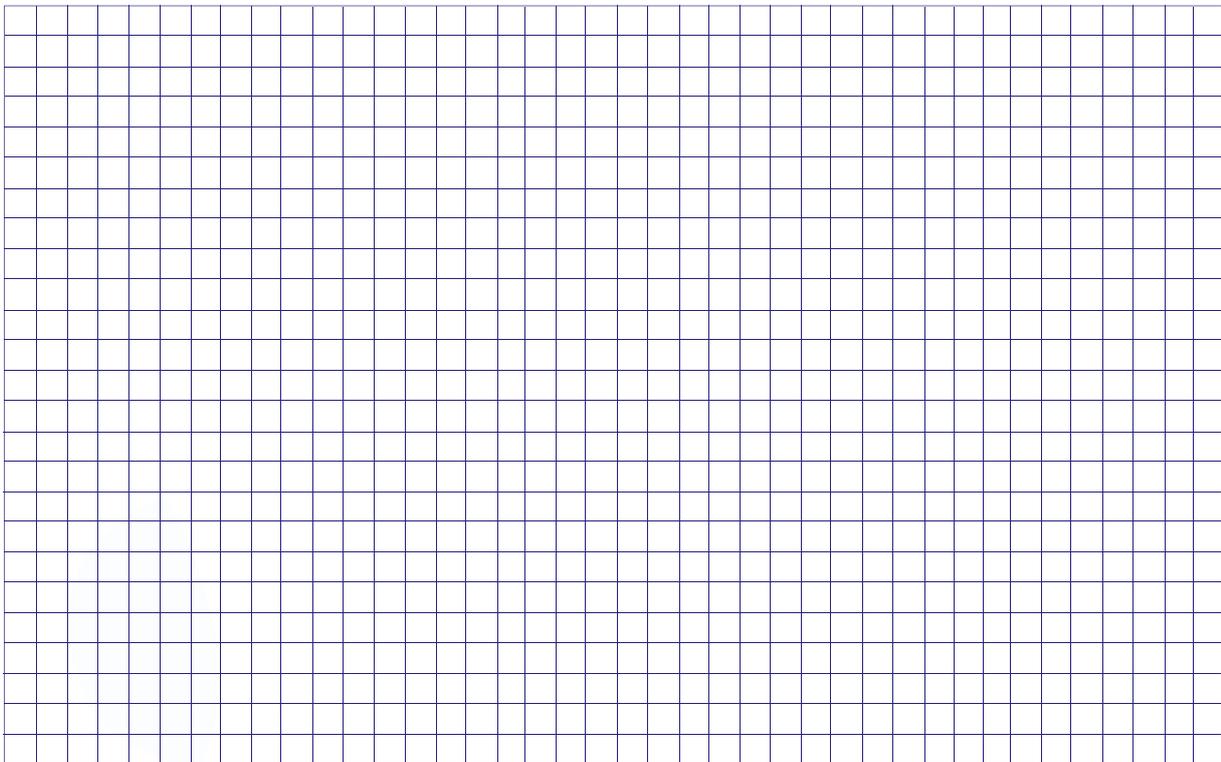
Other creatures such as fish produce 100's of offspring with the hope a few will grow to adults.

The grid will help you to understand how few salmon survive the full cycle of life.

For you to do:

The 1000 squares represent 1000 salmon eggs.

- 1 Colour 1% yellow - this is the number of eggs that survive to smolt stage
- 2 Place a red X in 10% of the yellow squares - this is the number that survive to return to the river of origin to spawn.



That's right - 1 out of every 1000 eggs survives to return as an adult to spawn in the stream of origin!