

Salmon (Respect) *Salmon's journey* Salmon feeds the plants, berry song,
protocols and offerings included
by Robert James Challenger

The little creek was bright with fish swimming through the shallows and searching for a place to lay their eggs. It was fall, and Sockeye had returned to the very stretch of creek where she was born. It had been a long journey, full of adventures.

In the first year, Sockeye Salmon emerged from her egg beneath the gravel and made her way to the surface. For the first while she hid in the shallow waters along the stream bank to stay away from the bigger fish and the birds. When she was a few months old, she and all the other newborns began their journey down the river towards the sea. It was spring, and as the sun shone brightly, Sockeye Salmon's color became shining silver. She stayed together with the others in a large school, for she knew that they would be safer if they kept together. Drawn by instinct she began a long journey out into the deep ocean.

At first, she ate the little shrimp and plankton that drifted in the currents. As she grew, she began to feast on the herring and anchovies. Sockeye Salmon became larger and stronger every day. She practised swimming and became one of the fastest in her school. That was a good thing, because she had some close calls. Once she was chased by a Sea Lion and another time by Orca. Both times she just managed to escape their snapping jaws.

One day she felt the urge to turn around and start back towards her birthplace. As she swam closer to the river she started to smell the fresh water. Mixed in was the unmistakable scent of the water that came from her own spawning creek.

The battle up the river was hard. The rushing water battered her against the stones, and the rapids and waterfalls used up much of her energy. Luckily Sockeye Salmon's years of swimming in the ocean had prepared her for this part of the journey.

As the days grew shorter, Sockeye Salmon began to turn red, like the glow of the autumn sunsets. This bright red colour was a sign that her life was now nearing its most important time. She turned off the main river into the small stream where she had been born. She dug her nest and, with her mate by her side, laid her eggs into the gravel. It was the end of her journey. It was time for the next generation to begin their journey through life.