

Dennis Allen

Sockeye

There are five species of Pacific salmon: chinook, coho, sockeye, pink, and chum. Chinook, sometimes called king salmon, are the largest and most prized among many native groups. All five species hatch in fresh water, mature in the sea, then return to their freshwater homes to spawn and die. They differ in migratory and feeding habits, length of life cycle, size, appearance and flesh quality.

Salmon are honored and celebrated by all coastal people; the fish serves as a powerful symbol of regeneration, self-sacrifice and perseverance.

Some myths tell of people who were kidnapped by Salmon and eventually returned to their villages with secret knowledge that enabled them to become great shamans. Other myths speak of shamans or chiefs voyaging to the undersea villages of the Salmon People to secure vital knowledge and power necessary for the survival and success of their own people.

Salmon is especially prominent in the art and mythology of the Coast Salish people, who use it as a unifying symbol of their nation. In the art, Salmon is identified by short fins, round eyes, downturned mouth, long body, scales and a modestly large, slightly bifurcated tail. Curly ears indicate the presence of a supernatural salmon.

Some of the material above is taken from *Understanding Northwest Coast Art: A Guide to Crests, Beings, and Symbols* by Cheryl Shearer, University of Washington Press, Seattle, 2000.

Certificate of Authenticity

This print is a limited edition original serigraph. Working from Dennis's original drawings, I cut rubylith stencils for the three colors. The colors are then hand-printed onto archival paper. The inks used were black, blue, and red. This print is one of an edition of 270 hand printed on Arches Cover White paper. In addition, 14 printers proofs and 27 artists proofs were printed. The paper size is 13 inches wide and 11 inches tall. The image size is 13 inches wide and 11 inches tall.

This edition was printed by Paul Nicholson of Bellevue, WA in 2014 with the assistance of the artist, Dennis Allen.

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11217 NE 15th St, Bellevue WA 98004
(425) 454-2363

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