

# Lonesome Larry: Salmon in Idaho



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Explore the challenging lifecycle of salmon in Idaho, from a mountain lake to the Pacific Ocean and back again. Will you survive the journey?

Salmon are a **keystone species** that many other types of animals depend on. Their health determines the health of an entire **ecosystem**. Many species eat salmon including birds, bears, and otters. The Idaho State Museum shares many stories of Idaho salmon, from environmental tracking by tribes and government partners, to the poignant tale of Lonesome Larry, the only sockeye salmon to complete the journey back to Redfish Lake in 1992.



Lonesome Larry



Photo by Neil Ever Osborne

Salmon face many challenges in their life because they are **anadromous**. This means they are born in fresh water and then migrate to the ocean. After getting big and strong in the salt water of the ocean, salmon return to the lake where they were born in order to **spawn**.

The United States made sockeye salmon an **endangered species** in 1991. Since then, the Shoshone-Bannock tribe has worked to preserve fish runs for several threatened species.

# Salmon Obstacle Course



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Use materials from around the house to create an obstacle course. Play the part of the salmon who need to complete the journey in order to start the next generation.

## Obstacles

**Predators:** Pillows

**Waterfall:** Favorite dance moves

**Fast Currents:** Grapevine

**Dam:** A stack of books

## Instructions

1. Gather materials and mark out the area of your obstacle course. You will need to mark the lake and the ocean at opposite ends of the area. The course will be a loop, with the same start and finish.

2. Start at Redfish Lake like Lonesome Larry. Complete the obstacles along the way to the Pacific Ocean. Think about what a salmon encounters in the wild:

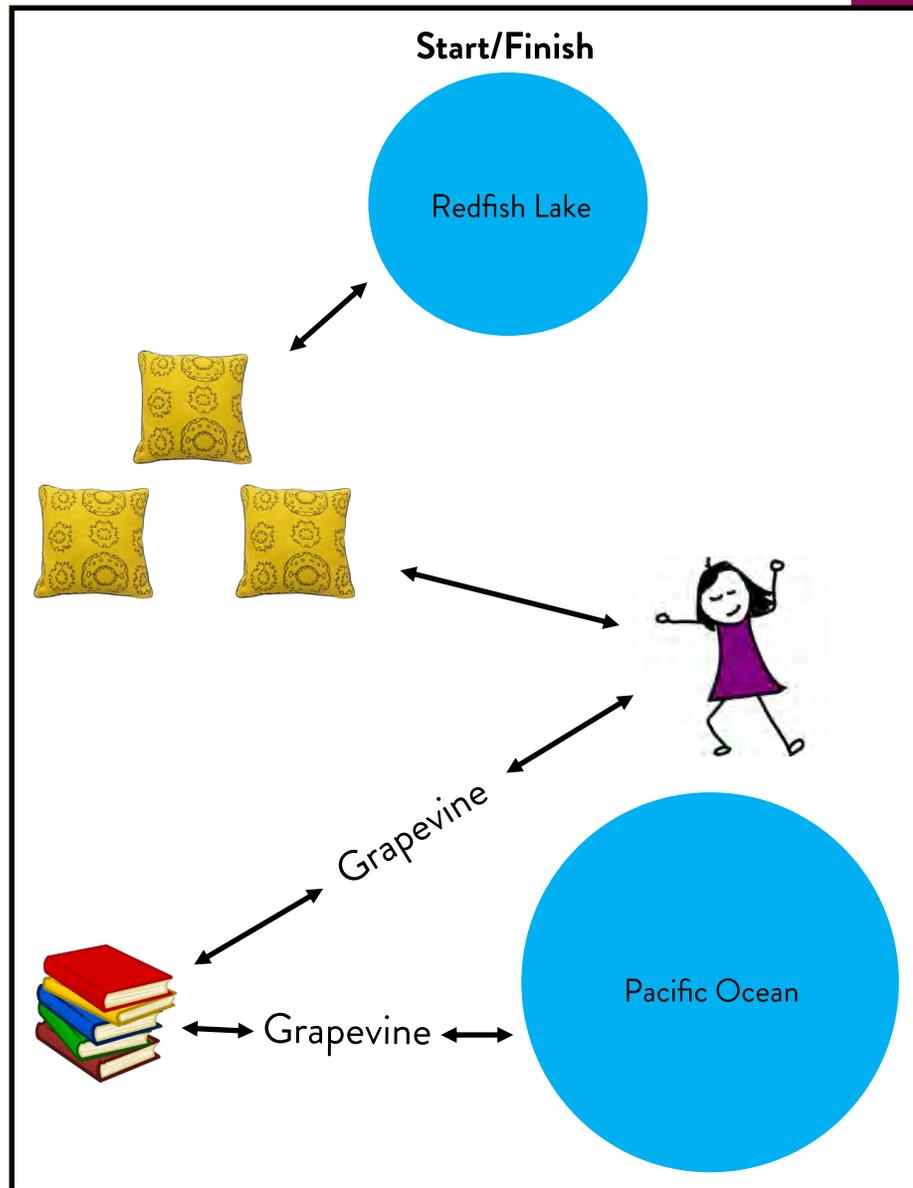
**Predators:** Set up pillows in a zig-zag line on the floor. Run through and touch each pillow before moving to the next obstacle.

**Fast currents:** Grapevine to the next obstacle

**Waterfalls:** Complete your favorite dance moves for at least 30 seconds.

**Dams:** Jump over a stack of books without knocking them over.

3. See who can complete the course with the fastest time



**Challenge:** Setup additional obstacles! A pile of cushions to crawl over, a hula hoop or a looped jump rope on the floor to jump into and out of, ribbons taped across a doorway to "swim" through. Be creative!

# Activity Vocabulary



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- Anadromous** A fish species that is born in fresh water, migrates to the ocean to mature, and then returns to fresh water to reproduce.
- Dam** A manmade barrier built across a waterway to prevent or slow the flow of water.
- Ecosystem** A biological community of interacting organisms and their physical environment.
- Endangered Species** A species of animal or plant that is seriously at risk of extinction.
- Keystone Species** An animal species that is important to lots of other animal species and an entire ecosystem.
- Predator** An animal that naturally preys on others.
- Spawn** When adult female salmon deposit eggs in the lake where they were born, and adult male salmon fertilize the eggs; spawning marks the end of the salmon lifecycle.