

Scale samples from salmonids

The Norwegian institute for nature research (NINA) has been collecting scale samples from ca. 100 Norwegian salmon rivers since 1989. The growth pattern in the fish scales offers valuable information about the fish. NINA collects scale samples from both salmon and sea trout.



Foto: Bengt Finstad/NINA
Grafisk utforming: Kari Sivertsen/NINA

Would you like information about your fish?

Write your mobile number on the envelope with the scale sample, and you will receive an sms with information about the fish.

Analysis of the growth pattern in the scale:

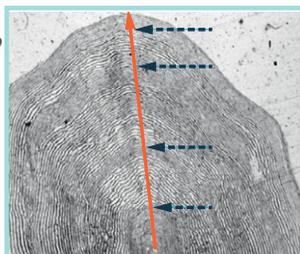
- ▶ Is the salmon a wild salmon or an escaped farmed salmon?
- ▶ How old is the fish (number of years in the sea and in the river)?
- ▶ Has the fish spawned earlier?
- ▶ How fast did the fish grow?

The fish scales can also be used in genetic studies:

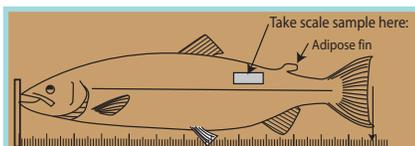
- ▶ Is the salmon a pure wild salmon, farmed salmon or a hybrid?
- ▶ Are there genetic differences between wild salmon populations in different rivers?

Taking scale samples:

- ▶ The sample should be taken from the area behind the dorsal fin and slightly above the sideline
- ▶ Take approximately 30 scales from dead fish with a knife. From living fish remove 5-8 scales (2-4 scales from both sides), with tweezers or a similar tool.
- ▶ The scale sample should be kept in the envelope provided by NINA. Remember to fill in your contact information and the information about the fish
- ▶ NB! Do not store the sample in plastic bags



Scale from a wild salmon that spent three winters in the sea before capture. Farmed salmon have a more steady supply of food year round, and consequently a more even growth pattern than the wild salmon, which have slower growth and therefore less space between each growth ring during the winter.



The scale sample should be taken behind the dorsal fin and slightly above the lateral line.