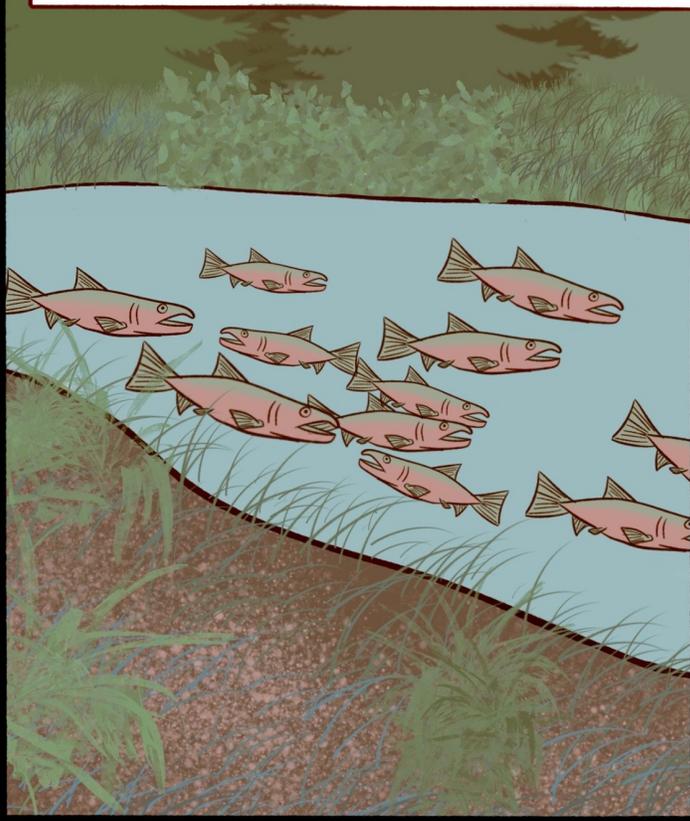


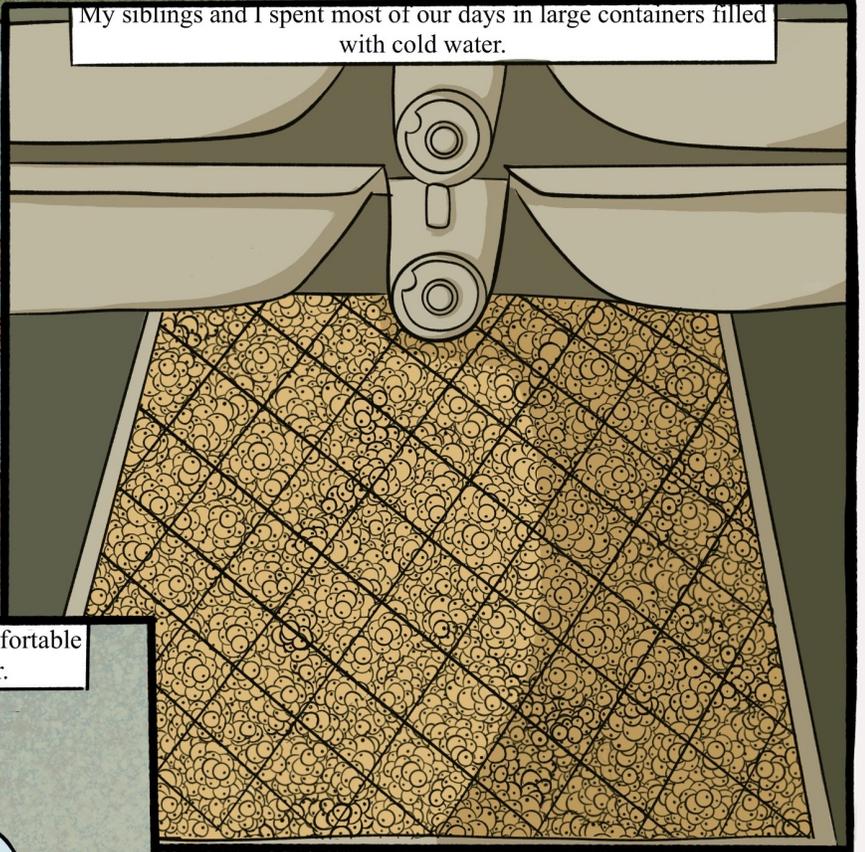
SALMON TALES

BY KENZIE KESLING

Once upon a time, at the Marblemount Hatchery, my salmon tale begins...



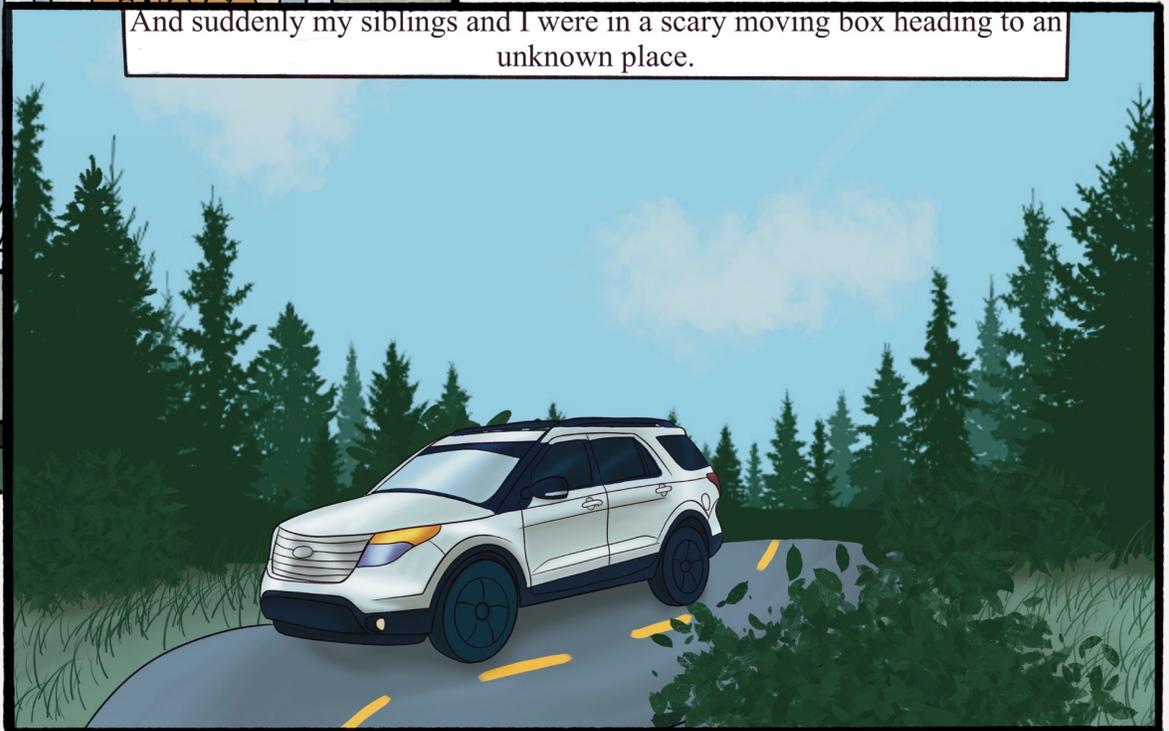
My siblings and I spent most of our days in large containers filled with cold water.



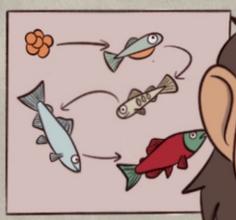
In the blink of a (fish) eye a stranger appeared and our comfortable living space transformed into a small, tight container.



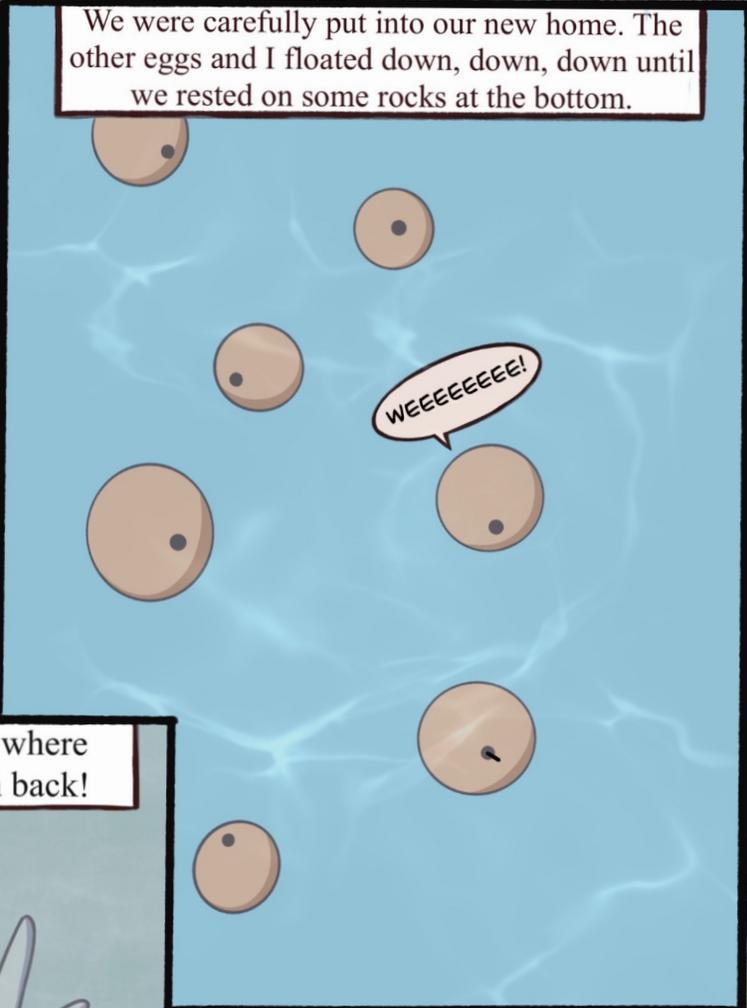
And suddenly my siblings and I were in a scary moving box heading to an unknown place.



Suddenly, we were in the light again and being put in the hands of young humans. It was a brand new experience for me and my sibling!



We were carefully put into our new home. The other eggs and I floated down, down, down until we rested on some rocks at the bottom.



Our new home was nice and big. However, there were always eyes watching us... and we watched them back!



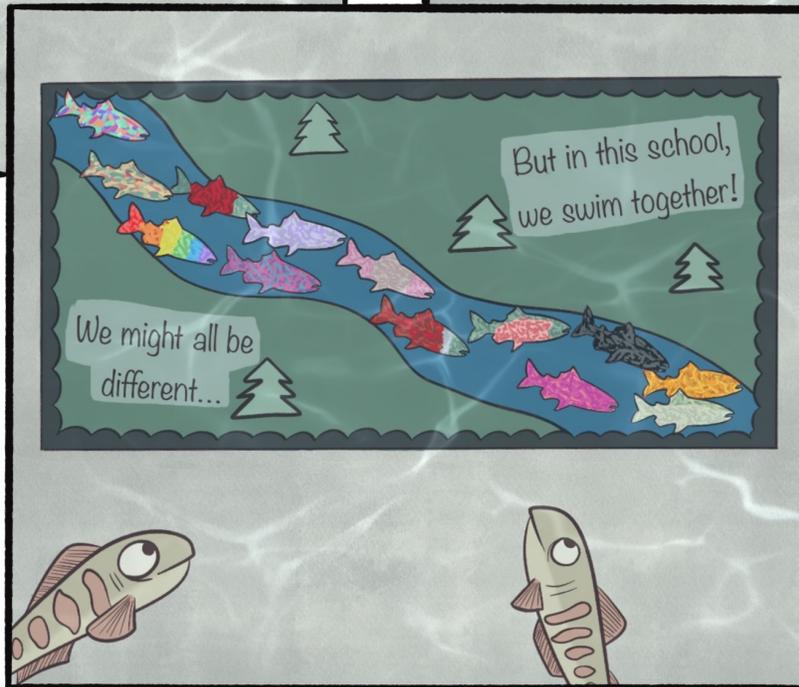
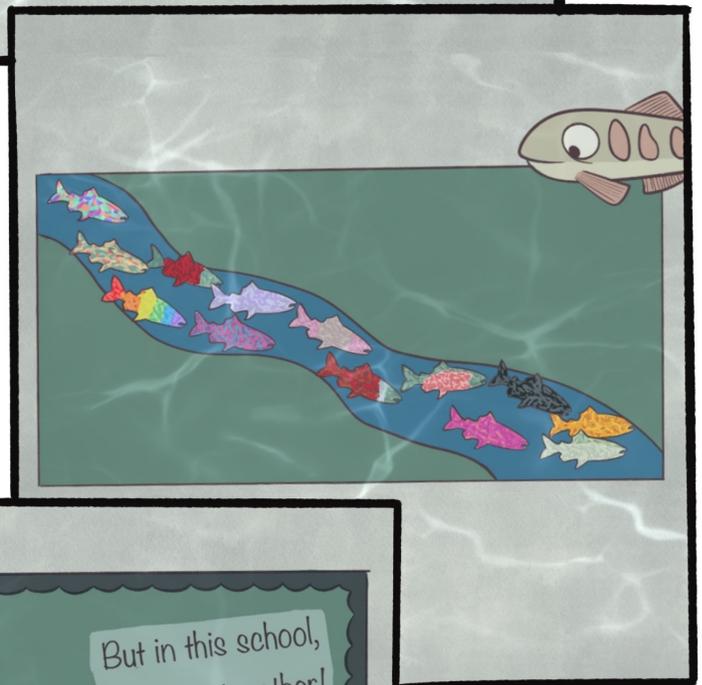
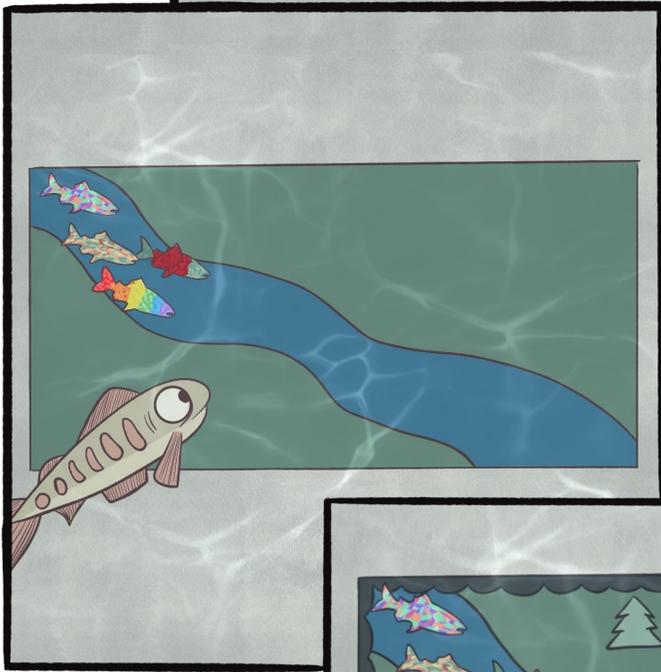
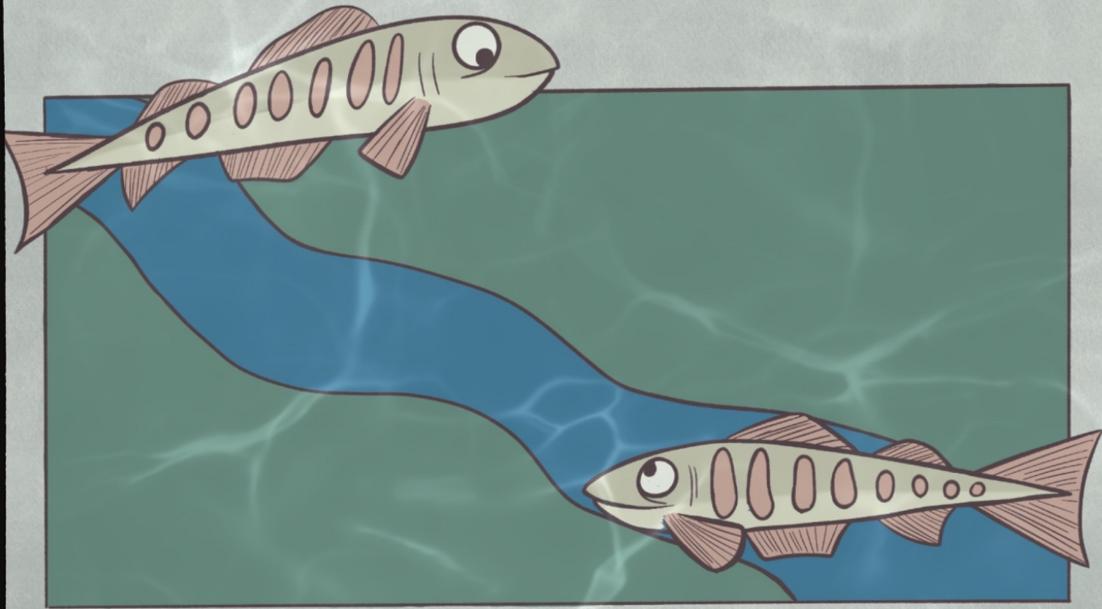
We hatched into alevin as they watched us...



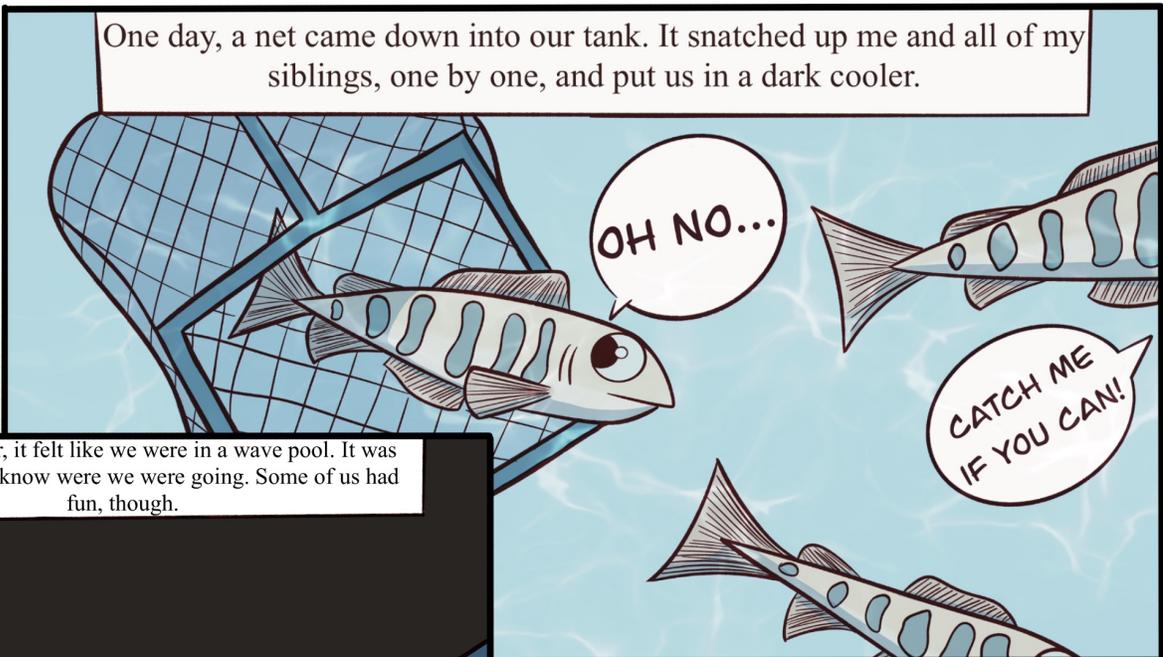
And eventually we grew into fry!



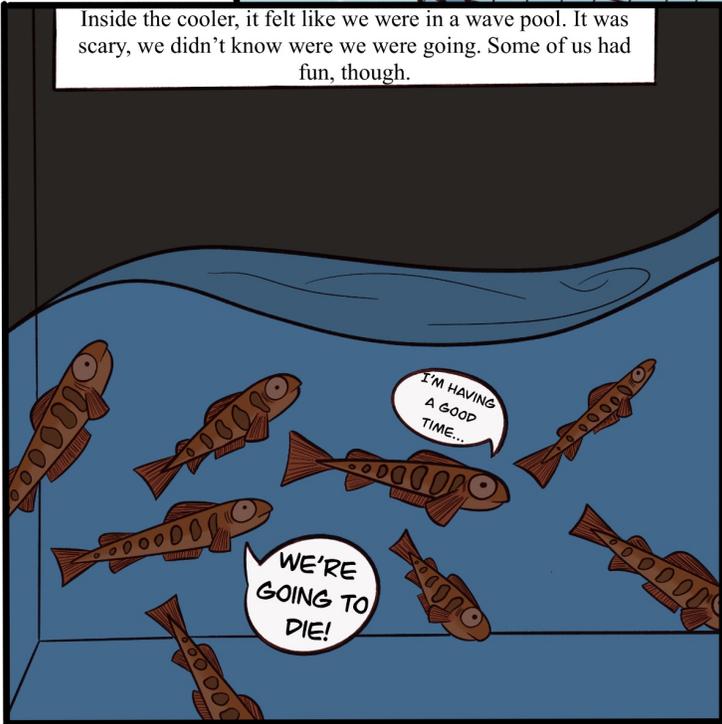
As we grew, so did the artwork on the wall.



One day, a net came down into our tank. It snatched up me and all of my siblings, one by one, and put us in a dark cooler.



Inside the cooler, it felt like we were in a wave pool. It was scary, we didn't know where we were going. Some of us had fun, though.



After being in the dark for what felt like hours, we seemed to arrive at our destination. Each of us was put in a clear plastic cup, the sun shining down on us as we took in our new environment.



We were placed in the hands of our friends who watched us grow. While it was still a bit scary to be in a new place, that did make us feel better.

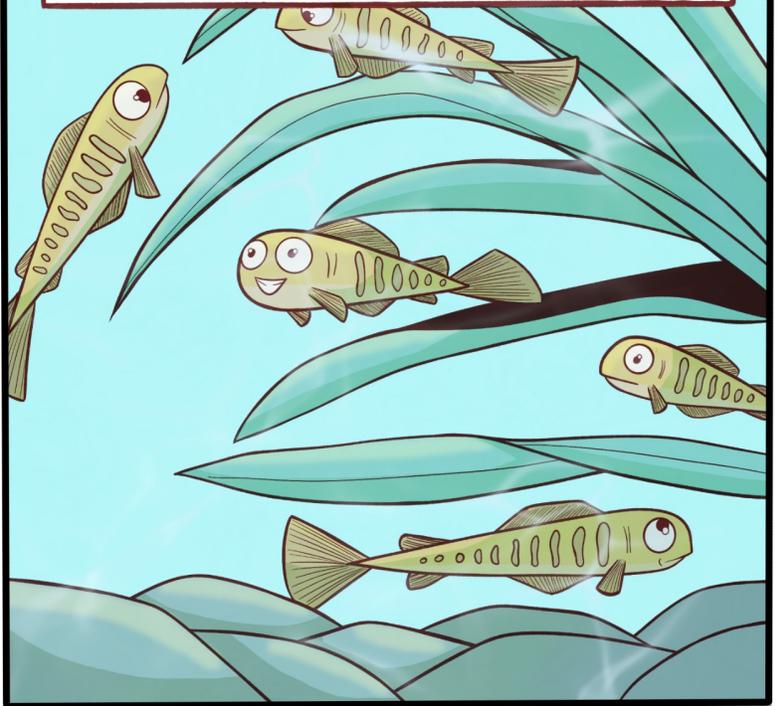


To my surprise, we were set free! Into the stream we went. The cold water felt great on our scales.

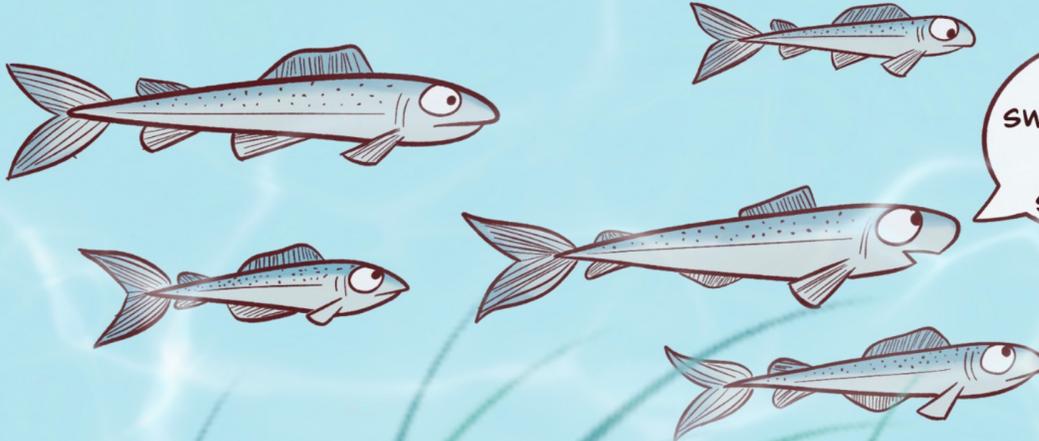


THANKS DUDE!

However, being in the creek was difficult. We were on our own for the first time.

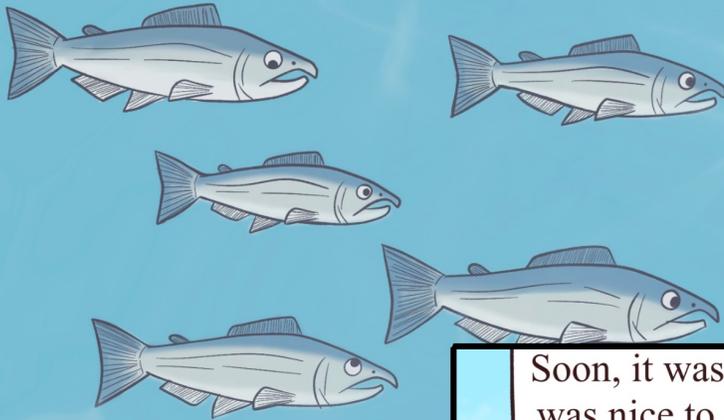


Yet, we still kept growing. Eventually we turned into smolts and reached the estuary where we adapted to the salt water.



JUST KEEP SWIMMING, JUST KEEP SWIMMING...

From the estuary we traveled to the ocean. We grew even more there, eating krill and escaping predators.

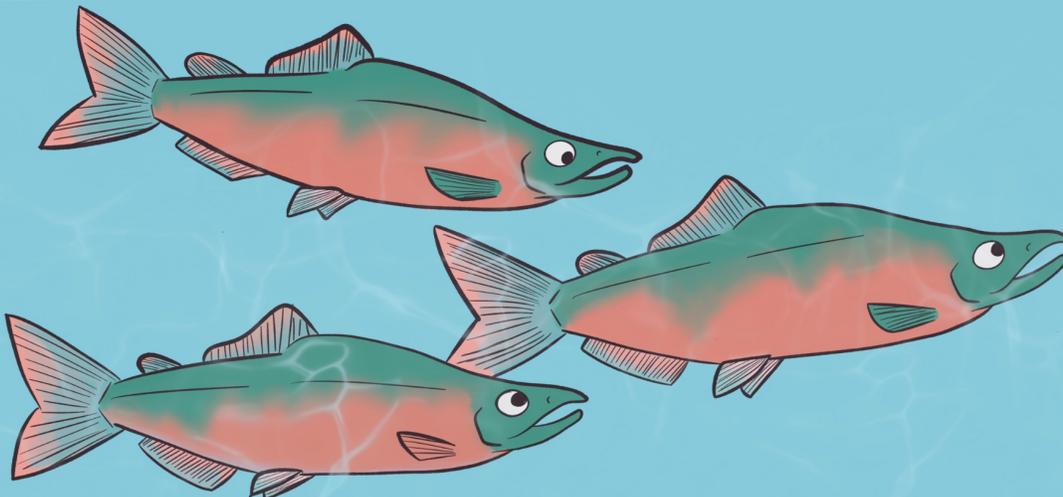


THAT ORCA
ALMOST
GOT US!

Soon, it was time to return to the river to spawn. It was nice to come back to the place we were born.



Our bodies changed into bright colors as we searched for the best place to lay our eggs.



After we laid our eggs, the salmon life cycle was finished. I am very thankful to the students who took care of me when I was a tiny egg. Due to them, I was able to live a happy, healthy life and my children will have a chance to do the same.

