

BIODIVERSITY

Communications Toolkit

Salmon in the Classroom

Lead and partner organisations

- West Galloway Fisheries Trust
- District Salmon Boards
- Scottish National Heritage
- Local Education Authorities
- Clyde River Foundation

Aims and objectives

- To encourage children to become interested in wildlife
- To raise awareness of associated issues such as the environment and science

Target audience

- Schoolchildren P5-P7, but project can be adapted for older or younger children

Background

In 1991, an employee of West Galloway Fisheries Trust came up with an idea to get children who were in P7 interested in wildlife - "Show them a big beautiful wild animal which lives in their own rivers, one which is an icon of Scottish culture, and let them look after it."

Working in partnership with the local council education department and a group of primary school head teachers, they developed the idea, including guidelines and ways to link it to the 5-14 curriculum.

A partnership of interested agencies was established and the project was born.

Summary of activity

Initially, a ranger or local fisheries specialist will deliver presentations to schoolchildren about the life cycle of the salmon or trout. The children then see the fish being stripped and eggs are brought into the classroom for incubation.

The children look after the eggs, check and record their temperature, remove any dead eggs and watch the eggs hatch.

After a few weeks the ranger or fisheries expert returns and takes the children to the local stream where the young fish are released.

This provides an opportunity to talk further to the children about the stream, water temperature, pollution and the children can take part in some hands on measuring of pH levels.

A few months later the children return to do some electro-fishing, find out what's in the stream, and perhaps even catch some of their own fish so they can see how they've grown.

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Outcomes

The flexibility of the project makes it a practical focus for a whole range of educational activities, including responsibility, nurturing, the introduction to practical elements of science and the plotting of trends. In addition, introducing children to nature at a local level offers an opportunity to also introduce them to social, environmental and economic issues linked to salmon migration and its economic importance.

The subject matter of the project has encouraged some healthy debate within families, communities and with the Head of Water and Sewage in one area who received around 150 letters from teachers and children after their school lost all their eggs following the chlorination of water in the area.

The scheme is so successful in schools throughout Scotland that it is currently over subscribed!

Further information

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www.snh.org.uk/salmonintheclassroom