

# Something Fishy

GRADE LEVEL: K - 3, 4 - 8

## OBJECTIVE:

Students will be able to trace the life cycle of fish and be able to identify common species found in the Ohio River e.g. bass, walleye, catfish, gar, and other forms of life such as crayfish, clams and snails.

## MATERIALS:

Posters of Fish commonly found in fresh water streams

Handout with fish identification points

Overhead of fish identification points

*The Magic School Bus On the Ocean Floor*, by Joanna Cole

Art Paper

Crayons, markers, or watercolors

## PROCEDURE:

1. Explain the markings on several kinds of fish as seen in the poster. (Posters from the fish and wildlife service are excellent.) Some of the common fish that students may recognize are the large mouth bass, walleye, gar and catfish.

2. Use the overhead to show different kinds of shapes, mouths, coloration, and breeding habits.

3. Direct students to work in groups to create their own underwater scene and add other living creatures and plants that are present in fresh water streams and rivers like the Ohio. Students who have gone fishing or investigated ponds and streams on their own will have many contributions. Crayfish, freshwater clams, mussels, and snails are important additions.

4. Students can share their work with the class explaining what they have included and why.

5. Discuss what fish eat and the food chain in the water. Large fish eat smaller fish, insects

and plants. Medium size fish eat smaller fish, insects and plankton (microscopic plant and animal life). Minnows and mussels eat plankton. Crayfish are scavengers. Snails are herbivores and scavengers.

6. Read *The Magic School Bus on the Ocean Floor*, by Joanna Cole to the students. The book explains the life of fish and sea creatures that are common to both salt water and fresh water.

7. Explain the life cycle of fish from egg, to fry, to adult. (Fry are young fish.) Fish continue to grow larger as long as they live and have a good food supply. Ask students if they are familiar with any life cycle pattern of fish. Some students may be familiar with the life cycle of the salmon that swims upstream to lay its eggs as an adult.

8. Add a life cycle to their picture of river life.



*Short-nose Gar in the Ohio River  
aquarium at the Interpretive Center*

## EXTENSIONS/EVALUATIONS:

9. Have students examine a fish model or a real fish to learn its parts.

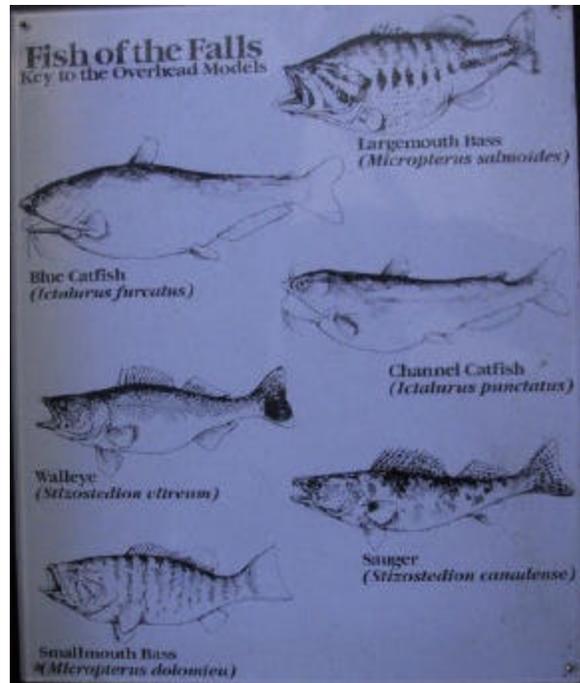
10. On a visit to the Falls of the Ohio ask one of the fishermen what kinds of fish they are catching. Explore the shallow water to see what kind of animal life you can find. (Crayfish and minnows should be common.) Do not keep specimens out of water very long and put them all back in their environment as soon as possible.

11. Take the students on a fishing trip. The Falls of the Ohio is an easily accessible place. Record the number and kinds of fish caught, their length, weight and markings.

12. Go to a pond and have students compare the ecosystems of the pond to the river. Direct them to make charts of the different kinds of living things found in both systems.



*Ohio River Fish in Interpretive Center Lobby*



*Fish identification for the taxidermy mounts in the lobby (shown on the left).*

