

“Counting Fish” lesson plan

Duration: 30 minutes

Objectives:

- Students will be introduced to five different fish species found in the Ottawa area
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of the natural environment as a place where living and non-living things are interconnected
- Students will learn to match different local fish to their respective habitats
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of numbers and make connections to the way numbers are used in everyday life
- Students will use objects to represent, describe, and solve situations involving counting

Background:

Native freshwater fish in the Ottawa area have specific local habitats that they call home. These natural habitats include different living and non-living factors such as aquatic plants and rocks. Habitat features such as spawning beds made of rock, shaded areas of water, and areas with branches and logs (woody debris, or brush bundles) provide fish with food, shelter, a safe place to lay their eggs, and protection from predators. This activity will help students practice their counting skills while identifying and matching native fish to their local habitat in the Ottawa area.

Materials:

- One “Counting Fish” worksheet per student
- Scissors
- Glue

Procedure:

1. As a class, discuss why it is important for native fish to have specific local habitats that they can call home. What features make a habitat a home? For example, a habitat must provide basic needs such as food, shelter, a safe place to lay eggs, and protection from predators. Different freshwater fish in the Ottawa area have different habitat preferences that meet their specific needs. Be sure to include the following local fish and freshwater habitats in your discussion.
 - a. Walleye live near spawning beds made of rock where they can safely lay eggs in between the rocks.
 - b. Brook Trout prefer areas of cold water that are shaded by tall trees.
 - c. Sunfish enjoy clear shallow waters with lots of aquatic vegetation.
 - d. Yellow Perch and Largemouth Bass like to explore underwater brush bundle ‘tree forts’ made of fallen tree branches and large logs.
2. Give each student a “Counting Fish” worksheet. First, have students cut off the bottom section of the paper along the solid line. Then have students cut out the 20 fish circles on the dotted lines.
3. Sort the fish into five species (i.e., by name and image). Count how many fish are in each species group.

Note: In version two of this worksheet, fish of the same species are colour coded so students can simply group fish by colour.

4. Match the number of fish in each species group with the corresponding habitat number. Then glue each fish in their native habitat. For example, glue the three Walleye on the habitat image of the rock spawning bed labeled with the number 3.

Note: In version two of this worksheet, fish of the same species are colour coded so students can simply match each fish species to their habitat by colour.