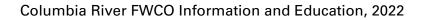
Gyotaku-Fish Printing Activity





Gyotaku – Fish Printing! – An Activity

Key Concepts:

Fish are fun to catch. Fish are good to eat. Fish are fun to print.....Waaaaaait a minute! Print a fish? That's right - you can actually make colorful prints of the fish you catch! And now that the fish are biting, it's a great time to try your hand at fish printing. This process allows you to record your catch in an artistic way. You can make a print with most any fish, but those with larger scales and bodies such as salmon, carp, bass, bluegill, rock fish or flounder, will give the best results.

Objectives:

- 1. Students will be able to classify animals as fish or non-fish.
- 2. Students will name the external features of a fish.
- 3. Students will describe functions and adaptations of the external features of a fish.

Materials:

- Fresh, frozen or rubber fish
- Newspaper
- Modeling clay, straight pins
- 1/2" stuff bristle brush, small paint brush
- Water based ink (linoleum block ink is best; liquid tempera paint also can be used)
- Rice paper, newsprint or other moisture-tolerant paper (since rice paper is expensive, you might prefer to start with newsprint. After you gain experience you might want to try making a print on a tee-shirt.)

Background:

The art of fish printing is called gyotaku (pronounced ghio-ta'-koo) has been used in Japan for more than a century to record catches of sport fish. The Japanese technique is also used by scientists.

Methods:

- 1. Use soap and water to clean the outside of the fish as completely as possible. The cleaner the fish, the better the print. Dry the fish well.
- 2. Place the fish on a table covered with newspapers. Spread the fins out over some clay and pin them in this position. Allow the fish to dry further.
- 3. Brush a thin, even coat of ink or paint over the body and fins. Leave the eye blank.
- 4. Carefully place a piece of rice paper or newsprint over the inked fish. Use your fingers to *gently* press the paper over the surface of the fish. Be careful not to change the position of the paper or a double impression will result. Also, do not press too hard, or it will all blur together. *You will get better detail if you press lightly!*
- 5. Remove the paper from the fish quickly, lifting up one end and peeling it off. Often the second or third print from one inking or painting comes out the best.
- 6. Use a small brush to paint the eye on the finished print.