

# Fish in the Classroom

Fish in the Classroom is an engaging school project run by River Forth Fisheries Trust for children around Primary 5 age. The aim of the project is to teach children about environmental responsibility in a fun and absorbing way.

The project begins with a presentation about Scottish rivers and fish followed by delivery of trout eggs to the care of the class who must look after them as they hatch and develop. The main task for the children is to keep the water in the aquarium cool enough for the fish to survive by putting fresh ice bottles into the back of the aquarium every day. After about six weeks, we take the baby trout down to the local burn and watch them swim off to their new life. Our volunteers will carry out kick sampling in the river to obtain aquatic insect life to show the children. A colourful workbook is provided at the outset to enable the class to revise the project information. Teachers notes are provided with instructions, answers and ideas for further activities.



## Project requirements

There are not many requirements to take part in the project other than masses of enthusiasm, but it is imperative that freezer space large enough to contain around 10 small (500ml) water bottles is set aside in the school for the duration of the project. The project cannot go ahead without this. Space on a sturdy desk in the classroom is also needed, large enough to hold the aquarium which measures 40cms square around the base. There needs to be a plug socket near the aquarium to power the filter, or if necessary, an extension lead can be used. It is also handy if the tank is not placed next to a window that gets the sun! The project works best if the aquarium is situated with one class that is dedicated to looking after it rather than in a communal area. Schools that request the project during the Autumn term can take part the following January. Due to the timing of trout egg production, the project can only run from January to March each year.

## Project timeline

**Install tank** - After the Christmas holidays we come to set up the tank in the classroom before the project starts. This gives time for the chlorine to evaporate before the trout eggs arrive.

**Presentation and egg delivery** – A presentation is given introducing the kids to Scottish rivers, fish and conservation. The eggs are installed in the tank and the kids are shown how to look after them and keep them cool. We provide colourful workbooks that the kids can fill in, including a trout diary to record their development. Teachers notes are also provided.

**Look after the fish** - The eggs hatch and continue to develop for around 5-8 weeks. The class puts freshly frozen ice bottles in the back of the tank every day. No feeding is necessary as the fry come with their own food supply in the form of a yolk sac.

**Release the fry** - In early or mid-March, the fish become ready to be released into the wild, so we take them down to the local burn for our field trip. We will also look at insect larvae that our volunteers collect from the bottom of the river.

## When?

**First half of  
January**



**Second half of  
January**



**January to mid-  
March**



**March (before  
the Easter  
holidays)**



## Project Cost

The project costs £515 per school the first year. This includes all the equipment required – the aquarium, pumps and tank accessories, workbooks and trout eggs. It also covers a proportion of our staff input and travel costs. In subsequent years, the aquarium equipment can be re-used and the project cost is reduced accordingly to £435. We can help schools to find the funding required for the project, but of course it is very useful if funding or part funding is already in place or applied for.