

Fish Identification and Regulations

Time Frame: 20-25 minutes

Age: 7 and up

Group Size: Any

Setting: Indoors, outdoors

Staff: 1 + ECO, if possible

Use: Out-of-class

NYS Education Standards:

MST-Section 4: Living Environment

Students will: understand and apply scientific concepts, principles, and theories pertaining to the physical setting and living environment and recognize the historical development of ideas in science.

- *Key Idea 1:* Living things are both similar to and different from each other and nonliving things.
- *Key Idea 4:* The continuity of life is sustained through reproduction and development.
- *Key Idea 7:* Human decisions and activities have had a profound impact on the physical and living environment.

Objectives:

- ✓ Students will be able to describe the basic ideas surrounding fishing regulations
- ✓ Students will be able to identify 3-5 different local fish species

Motivation: Game, fishing

Materials: *Current Freshwater Fishing Regulations Guides* or laminated copies of *current Saltwater Regulations* (enough copies for 1-2 people to share), fish models/pix /dead on ice, tape measure

Lesson Procedures:

Introduction (1-2 minutes)

1. Introduce yourself and the I FISH NY program.
2. Introduce day's activities:
 - a. Fishing rules and regulations
 - b. Fish identification

Fish Identification (7-10 minutes)

1. Introduce 3-4 local fish species:
 - a. Name(s)
 - b. Habitat
 - c. Diet
 - d. Safety concerns for self from the fish; i.e. teeth, dorsal fin
 - e. Safety concerns for fish; i.e. slime
 - f. Optional: Lifecycle

Environmental Conservation Officer Intro (2-6 minutes)

1. Ask students if they know what an Environmental Conservation Officer (ECO) is and what he or she does. If students need assistance, help them examine the words used in the job title: “environmental,” “conservation,” and “police officer.”
2. After students have brainstormed their ideas, explain the responsibilities associated with that of an ECO officer.
3. Introduce concept of “stewardship:”
 - a. Recycle and pick up trash such as fishing line; discuss the concept of “yours” vs. “not yours”
 - b. Cut the line if a fish swallows the hook
 - c. Slime layer; protection, e.g., never handle a fish with a rag or shirt
 - d. Respect those around you, e.g., don’t crowd others space
 - e. Do not intentionally injure a fish, e.g., stepping on fish or crab
4. Invite questions.

Regulations Work (4-8 minutes)

1. Display Regulations Guide/Worksheet. Discuss categories:
 - a. Species
 - b. Size limit
 - c. Bag limit
 - d. Open season
2. Ask why there are regulations.
 - a. Say: Why are there size limits on fish? Would you want to keep a fish that is only 4 inches long? Why or why not?
3. Discuss what will happen if someone is caught breaking one of the regulations.
 - a. Discuss fines
 - b. Show participants how to properly measure a fish
4. Tell participants that if they do not plan on eating their fish then to release it. This is called “catch and release fishing.”
5. Ask if there are any questions.

Fish Identification and Regulation Activity (3-7 minutes)

1. Tell participants you are going to hold up a fish (picture, model or dead on ice), and you will ask them to tell something about the fish that pertains to regulations. Using the *Regulations Guide/Worksheet*, the participants will answer the question.
 - a. Say: What must the minimum size of this fish be to keep? When can you fish for this fish?
2. Ask if there are any questions.

Closing (1-2 minutes)

1. Reminders
 - a. Not required to memorize the regulations but responsible for them.
 - b. Always carry the most current Regulations with you when fishing.
2. Ask if there are any questions.