



Nature | Education

# GET TO KNOW

CONNECT • CREATE • CELEBRATE

## GRAB N' GO ACTIVITY: Fish Habitat Mobile

### OVERVIEW

To explore the habitats of fish species in Canada and reproduce those habitats in the form of a mobile. For this lesson, we've selected Northern Pike and Pumpkinseed as examples.

### MATERIALS:

- Visual images of contest fish in their habitat, and fish habitat
- Components from any source; construction paper of several colours, found materials, scissors, glue, stiff wire or short sticks, 12 – 24 cm (5 – 10 in. long,
- 6 - 8 or more per group.

### OUTCOMES:

Students will be able to manipulate form and shape to create a mobile illustrating the need to balance basic components in an ecosystem.



Submit your work to the Get to Know Contest for a chance to win wild prizes & go to

## GETTOKNOW.CA

to find more free resources and activities

### MORE RESOURCES:

[www.gettoknow.ca/education](http://www.gettoknow.ca/education)

**Ages:** 4 - 8

**Time:** 60 minutes

### RESOURCES:

#### Pumpkinseed Fish

- <http://www.fishweb.com/recreation/fishing/fishfacts/fish/pumpkinseed/>
- <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/species/pumpkinseed.html>

- <http://www.dnr.state.oh.us/tabid/6727/Default.aspx>

#### Northern Pike Fish

- <http://www.fishingwithpiotr.com/fishing-fish/fish-identification-northern-pike/>
- [http://imgs.steps.dragoart.com/how-to-draw-a-pike-step-7\\_1\\_000000019917\\_5.jpg](http://imgs.steps.dragoart.com/how-to-draw-a-pike-step-7_1_000000019917_5.jpg)
- <http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/regions/central/pub/factsheets-feuilletsinfos-ogla-rglo/northernpike-grandbrochet-eng.htm>

### A QUICK LOOK:

Students will research the habitat requirements of your selected fish species, and in groups create a habitat mobile that contains both specific habitat elements and outline drawings of the selected fish species.



Nature | Education

**GET TO KNOW**  
CONNECT • CREATE • CELEBRATE

**GRAB N' GO ACTIVITY:**  
**Fish Habitat Mobile**

## PROCEDURE

- Step 1.** Hold a general discussion with students about mobiles – moving works of art that are created by suspending and balancing shapes. The first mobile was created by an American artist, Alexander Calder, who experimented with combinations of shapes and weights balancing each other. Calder also discovered that the suspended objects move in a rotating fashion due to air currents.
- Step 2.** Explain that students will be creating “fish habitat” mobiles that incorporate important elements of their fish’s habitat. Review the components of habitat – food, water, shelter and space (physical components such as rocks, logs, etc.).
- Step 3.** Divide the class into groups of 4 or 5, making sure that all students in each group have drawn the same fish. Research the habitat of their fish. Determine whether additional research is necessary. If so, allow students time to conduct it (individually or in their groups).
- Step 4.** Point out that it might be difficult to visualize specific fish habitat and how all the parts fit together, since few of us spend much time looking around in it. Provide copies of existing art or photography showing habitat for each fish, or post it on-screen if computers are immediately available. Look for common components that indicate major or important habitat features, and how the preferred habitats of the two fish appear to differ.
- Step 5.** Tell students that they will now create a physically well-balanced mobile to depict the specific habitat of their chosen fish.
- Step 6.** Have each group create a common list of all the habitat components they wish to include in their mobile. Distribute old fishing magazines, scissors, found materials and other drawing or sculpture materials. Have each group use or create images to represent the varied items their fish needs to survive. If necessary, mount items on poster board.
- Step 7.** Students should prepare their fish for the mobile by making a small hole near the dorsal fin. Note that they need to place the hole carefully in order to get the balance right. A second hole and a “triangle” of monofilament may be used to correct major imbalances.
- Step 8.** Pumpkinseed groups need to design their mobile so that their fish are in loose groups (this may require some creativity and innovation in mobile design). Northern Pike should be scattered throughout.
- Step 9.** Have groups begin with the shorter lengths of wire or wood at the bottom of the mobile and progress to the longer lengths at the top. Balance each section as it is assembled. Each length can contain a single object at both ends, or a single object on one end balanced with a shorter balanced wire containing two objects on the other end.
- Step 10.** When mobiles are completed, have students hang them where they can catch air currents.
- Step 11.** Explain that the most important aspect of the habitat mobile is that it is well-balanced, just as healthy ecosystems must be well-balanced. Ask students to describe what they think will happen if one element of the mobile is removed. Ask them to describe how balance or imbalance of their habitat mobile relates to the health of ecosystems.