

Salmon in the Classroom

Metro-West Steelheaders

Salmon in the classroom, is a seven-month journey where students experience the life stages of the salmon. This life changing science lesson allows children to see the development of a salmon egg from hatchling to being released in a river. Students also learn the importance of water quality in keeping the tank clean and ultimately transferring the salmon to their waterway when released.

The process:

Metro West Steelheaders sponsor several teachers in the Detroit metro area with financial support of an 80-gallon tank, stand, filters, aerators, and a chiller to maintain a 50-degree water temperature, the salmon's ideal habitat temperature. The teachers report back to MWS by providing pictures, videos, and updates.

The teachers setup and start the tank about 4 weeks prior to egg pickup. Around November 15, eggs are picked up from a local DNR location, where they are immediately put into the classroom tank. By Christmas break, most eggs are in the Salmonid stage. They exhibit a bulbus body with eyes and a small sprig for a tail. After Christmas break, they start to eat. DNR provides food for all the stages as the salmon continue to grow. Each stage requires more nutrients, while the food progresses from a fine powder to a robust pellet in size. By Easter break, the salmon are about 3 to 4 inches in length and looking forward to their release in May. When released in the river, most fish are in the 4 to 6 inches in length.

The DNR provides curriculum with lesson plans and vital information to be taught to the children. Students walk away with an appreciation of the Great Lakes and a sense of responsibility to maintain their water quality and preservation. This memorable experience creates a new generation of those who will appreciate and protect our natural resources.

If you go directly to the DNR website, look for the SIC – Salmon in the Classroom link for more information.

https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-350-79135_79220_81136---,00.html

There also is a YouTube channel that has been created by a teacher with multiple videos showing various stages of the salmon development while in the classroom environment.

Munger salmon in the classroom. <https://youtu.be/Kjv9tqfLbb4>

<https://youtu.be/uyWHdHFXtyY>