

Fish Printing in the Classroom!

Thank you for your interest in WHOI Sea Grant's "Fish Printing" program. In addition to the rubber fish that are available on a loan basis from Sea Grant, you'll need the following supplies before getting started:

- **Newspapers** to cover tables.
- **Smocks.** We suggest using water-based paint, but it's a good idea to wear smocks or old shirts—just in case!
- **Small paper or plastic plates and spoons** for distributing paint.
- **Paint.** Non-toxic finger paints are available from numerous suppliers including Nasco Arts and Crafts (1-800-558-9595) or Rex Art (1-800-739-2782). Keep in mind that only small amounts are needed—approximately one heaping tablespoon of each color—for each fish printing station (6-8 kids per station).
- **Paper.** Use 8.5" x 11" paper for smaller prints and 8.5" x 14" or 11" x 17" for larger prints. Copier paper works fine but you may want to use rice paper (also available from the art supply companies listed above) for special prints.
- **Paper towels, trash bags, and a sink** for clean-up.

Now that all of the supplies are in place, *let's paint!*

Getting Started

Before inviting students to the tables, you may want to get the basics out of the way. Begin by covering each table with newspaper. Distribute the fish by placing a variety of species at each station. A plate of each paint color should also be placed on the tables.

Painting Technique

Once students are at their places, with smocks on, it's time to demonstrate the painting process. Place a small amount of paint on your fingertip and spread it evenly over a portion of the fish. A thick, heavy coat of paint does not make a clear print. Encourage students to use as many colors as they'd like to cover the entire fish, but remind them that a complete, thin coat of paint will do the trick. Have students select a fish and get started.

Making a Fish Print

After the students are satisfied with their paint coverage, provide a piece of paper to transfer the print. Keeping the fish flat on the table, place the paper directly over it and press gently. Be sure to press the entire fish but not to nudge or move the paper. When done pressing, slowly peel back the paper and presto! Each print will be unique in size, shape, and color. Before setting aside to dry, write the student's name in the corner for easy distribution at the end of the day. There's no need to clean fish between prints, so let's try another...

Time to Clean-Up

Now that all of the prints are made, and there are messy hands and fish everywhere, it's time for clean-up! Paint should wash easily off hands with soap and warm water. The fish are just as easy. Using your hands, gently rub the paint off under warm water. Dry and wrap individually in paper.

Rubber fish (20) are supplied on a **one-week loan** basis from WHOI Sea Grant. Please return to our office in WHOI's Coastal Research Center, Room 207, 193 Oyster Pond Road, Woods Hole. If you have any questions or comments, we can be reached at (508) 289-2398 or seagrant@whoi.edu.