

Shad in the Classroom

Releasing the Fry

When the shad eggs hatch, the larval fish will retain a yolk sac that it will feed on for up to five days after hatching. However, it is important to release the fish before the yolk sac is depleted in order to avoid mortality. You should plan to release your fry on Thursday or Friday of shad week.

If your shad fry are in the fry chamber, you can just remove the chamber and cap it for transport. However, you should closely examine the upper reservoir for any escaped fry and add them to the fry chamber using the turkey baster. If you are not using a fry chamber, you should fill a Ziploc bag with water from the upper reservoir and carefully move fry from the tank to the bag using the turkey baster, then seal the bag.

The fry chamber or bag full of shad fry should be transported to the release site in a cooler that contains ice water (not solid ice, as that may be too cold – place about half a bag of ice, 2 to 3 pounds, in the cooler and add a few gallons of water).

When you arrive at the release site, you will need to acclimate your fry to their new home in the same way you acclimated them to the tank. Place the bag or fry chamber in the river (while holding onto it!) to let the temperature adjust. Every few minutes, add a cup or two of river water to the bag. When the temperature of the water in the bag is close to the temperature of the river, you are ready to release the fry.

Distribute the fry into cups for the students. **Students need to gently release the fry at the surface of the river. They should not dump the contents of the cup from a height.** Keep in mind that the fry are delicate and need to be handled carefully!

Materials for Release Day:

- Cooler with ice and water
- Fry in capped chamber or sealed Ziploc bag
- Thermometer(s)
- Clear plastic cups for students to release fry