

Shad in the Classroom

What is it?

The Shad in the Classroom program provides a hands-on real-life science learning opportunity that supports many of the science standards. Students learn about and take part in the restoration of a migratory fish, American Shad, in North Carolina (recommended for grades 5 through 12). The main thrust of the program is a week in April during which students raise American Shad from egg to releasable fry. The eggs arrive on Monday and students monitor water quality and egg health through the week until hatching. On Thursday or Friday, teacher and students travel to sites on North Carolina's rivers (determined each year by state regulations and restoration efforts) to release their shad fry.

What the Shad in the Classroom program provides:

- American Shad rearing tank and accessories (approximately 2' wide x 2' deep x 5' tall)
- Water quality monitoring kits
- Teacher training workshop in late February
- Approximately 500 shad eggs on a Monday in late March or early-mid April (varies annually)
- Funds to help cover costs of transportation and substitute teacher coverage to take students to a release site
- Opportunity for teachers to participate in canoe-camping trip on the Roanoke River (late March or April)
- Classroom activities available on the web
- A network of teachers involved in the program

What you need to provide:

- Flexibility – because we are working with a wild, living species, we cannot predict in advance when eggs will arrive. We will work with you to provide eggs at the most convenient time, but your flexibility will be invaluable in making the program a success.
- Enthusiasm and dedication to raise American Shad successfully!
- Availability to attend teacher training (mandatory) and canoe-camping trip (optional)
- Time – minimum 2 weeks involvement in your classroom. At least one week prior to egg arrival, students need to monitor water quality twice per day. During the week you have the shad, monitoring of water quality and eggs must continue.
- A few materials – 2-liter soda bottles (to fill with water and freeze for temperature control), rubber bands, towels, small cooler, large Ziploc bag, microscopes or magnifiers (optional)
- Work with your administration to secure permission and transportation to take students to the release site – again, flexibility is necessary as you will not know what week the eggs will arrive until a week or two beforehand.
- Communication – Good communication is vital to the success of the program. You must be able to communicate well with both the Museum staff and with other teachers in the program.
- More flexibility! Each year, options for release sites may change as regulations and restoration efforts change. Sometimes, egg hatching and fry survival may be less successful.
- Return materials to Museum staff in you decide to discontinue your schools involvement in the program.