

**Aims:**

To discover what fish species and how many of them are found in the river.

You will need:

- Trained professionals with electrofishing kit
- To be clothed for an outdoor field excursion – probably with wellies!

What is electrofishing:

Electrofishing is a technique used to assess and monitor the fish in our watercourses. Simply put, it works by passing an electric current through the water which stuns the fish. They can immediately be lifted out of the river and placed into a recovery bucket on the bank.

Fish can be identified, measured, counted and sometimes have a scale removed (to age the specimen) before being safely released back into the river. Fish swiftly recover and this process causes them no harm.

Finding a Professional:

Electrofishing is a survey activity that most local fishery trust organisations undertake to monitor the number of fish in a river. Get in touch with your local fishery trust and see if they can give you an electrofishing demonstration.

A list of fishery trusts/boards in Scotland can be found here; <http://fms.scot/trust-contacts/>

During the demonstration:

1. Make a list of all the species of fish present
2. Take some photos of the fish and/or make some drawings of the catch
3. Ask if you can have some fish scales to take back to school.
Fish scales can be used to age a fish, they contain growth rings much like that of a tree. Take them back to school and examine them under a microscope. Can you work out how old the fish is?
4. Ask the people showing you electrofishing lots of questions about fish and the river. They will be very knowledgeable and happy to help.
5. With supervision you may be able to handle or measure the fish caught. If you do be careful not to harm them and listen to instructions.

Handy notes:

Electrofishing results in no permanent harm to fish, which return to their natural state in as little as two minutes after being caught.

Ensure that group members keep out of the water when electrofishing is taking place. It is a perfectly safe activity, but you can get a small shock if you put your hand in the water too near the equipment.

Many fishery or rivers trusts will allow the group members to handle the fish or make measurements under close supervision. Make sure the participants remember they are handling live animals!

You could also try some invertebrate sampling when at the river to see what your fish might have been eating (see activity 6.1 – River Dipping for instruction on Kick Sampling).

Do more:

Find out what the stages of a salmonid fish (salmon or trout) lifecycle are. Salmon & Trout Conservation have a great Salmon board game to play. [Download here.](#)