

MIGRATION – FISH & EELS

Teachers Notes to accompany the pupil worksheet on FISH and EELS

National Curriculum – Science / Life cycle of living Creatures / Species loss

The River Severn near Bristol is an important place for Eels. It is easy to visit on the train to Severn Beach and walk along its banks to the nature reserves.

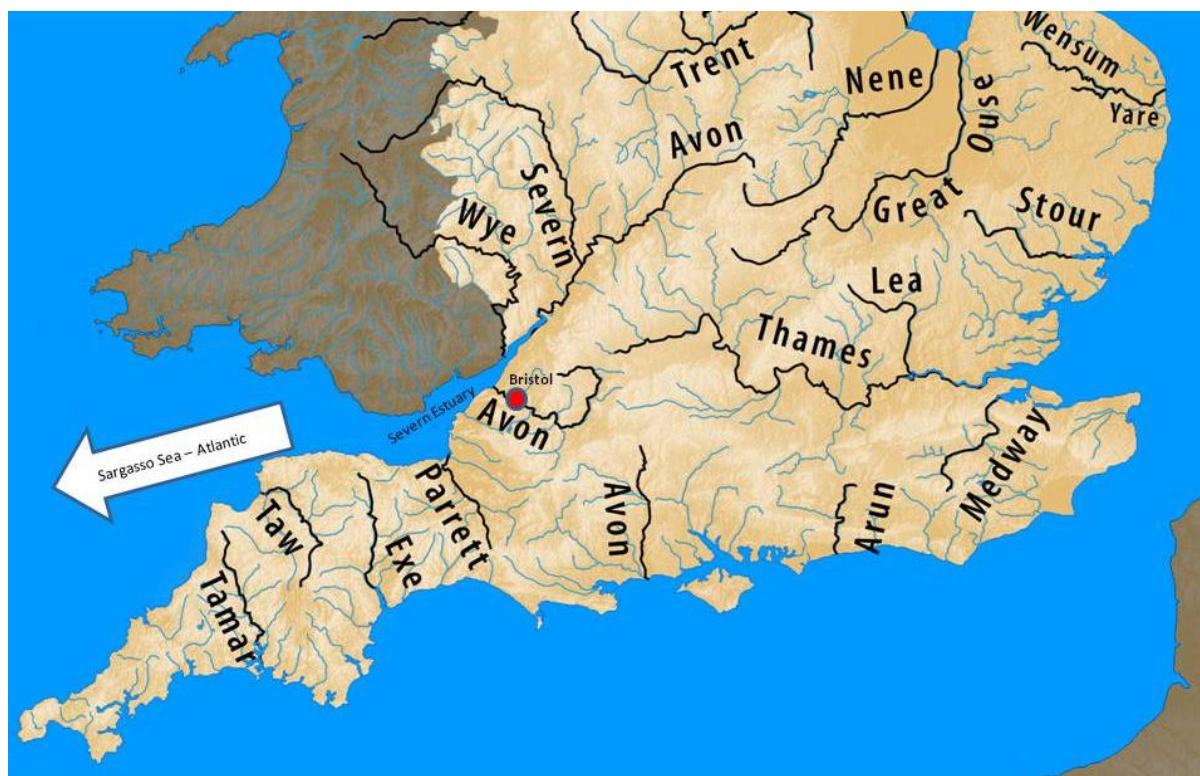
Contact My Future My Choice for details info@myfuturemychoice.co.uk of how to get free rail travel and risk assessment for using the local rail network. The train journey will follow the Avon to Severn Beach Station where a short walk takes you to the Severn Estuary.

There are 4 online links to 3 short films and an online game in this resource.

1. Animation explaining the extraordinary life-cycle of eels. The aim is to give a sense of awe and awareness that for centuries scientists had no idea how they bred. To this day no one has seen how this happens.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WBRnNk_uo9Y

The River Severn is one of the most important places for eels in the UK. Because it faces the currents (Gulf Stream) that bring the tiny eels across the Atlantic from the Sargasso Sea. It also a very long river made up of many tributaries giving many places for eels to live.



- The largest of all the rivers that flow in England and Wales is the River Severn

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2. Short film explaining the work of the Sustainable Eel Group on the River Severn.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KIXHGfzOs70>

The film was shot at places within walking distance of Severn Beach Railway Station.

The film mentions these barriers -weirs, sluices, pollution and hydro electric power plants. They may also want to include loss of habitat as a barrier.

The film also supports the fishing of the elvers (tiny eels) because a proportion of the elvers are transported past the barriers to populate the territories they would not otherwise reach.

Because of their life cycle no one has managed to breed eels in captivity. You may want to pose questions like -

- If people liked to eat eels would we look after them better?
- If we breed them in captivity would this be a good or bad thing for the eel?

Salmon

The Salmon Challenge – This is a simple informative online game in which players answer multiple choice questions in order to help their shoal of fish reach the spawning grounds.

3. <https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360/pnw-history-culture/pnw1-salmon/>

Salmon fishing on the River Severn – Local Heritage / History

4. Short film of traditional fishing methods.

<https://www.aforgottenlandscape.org.uk/projects/remembering-salmon-fishing-severn/>

The film suggests this process for catching fish very old because they don't use any iron or concrete. But they use rocks and wood and ties made from withies.

It is worth explaining to the children that the Water Bailiff was there to make sure they did not catch fish outside the fishing season. This protected the Salmon.

Extension Activity - Design, Make and Present Challenges (Design Technology)

Putcher model building. Children can source their own material or teachers can provide more directed activity by preparing resources.

Dam challenge. The children will come up with ideas like fish cannons, ladders and lifts. If there is time a model will work better than a diagram.

In their presentation they need to be aware of

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- Comparative costs – simple to build and easy to maintain is best
- Likely sources of funding. The dilemma for conservationists is that the fishing industry could be one of the funders.
- They may arrive at returning the river to its natural state as the best option. In which case they need to consider the consequences for the people who benefitting from the dam.

Final question for discussion - Should these fish have rights?

If so the businesses that build the barriers would be breaking the law and they would have to pay for the solutions.

If this happens it will get more expensive to have water and electricity.