

A Place for Fish

Written by Melissa Stewart and
illustrated by Higgins Bond

ISBN: 978-1-56145-562-1 | HC | \$16.95
Ages 6 – 10 | Nonfiction

Book Level Score

Fountas & Pinnell | Level: N | Grade Level: 3

ABOUT THE BOOK

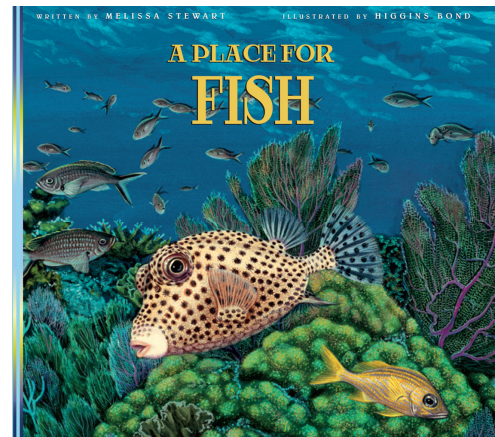
Sometimes people do things that make it hard for other creatures to survive. *A Place for Fish* clearly yet gently explains some of the ways human action and inaction can affect fish populations. This follow-up to the award-winning titles *A Place for Butterflies*, *A Place for Birds*, and *A Place for Frogs* focuses on eleven North American fish species and shows each one in its natural habitat. Simple text describing each fish's struggle to survive is perfect as a read-aloud or for young children reading on their own. Sidebars with additional information extend the usefulness of the book to older children and to young children reading with a teacher or parent. The book also works well in Reading Buddy programs, which are now popular in many schools. Sections at the beginning and end of the book include information about how fish swim, facts about the role of fish in food chains, and simple things readers can do to help protect fish and their habitats. The endpapers feature range maps for all the fish species discussed in the book. *A Place for Fish* introduces readers to a wide range of environmental issues, and its concrete examples of cause and effect show children how the choices we make can have far-reaching consequences for fish and other creatures that share our world.

REVIEWS

"...The information is presented for young readers...the full-color illustrations are very detailed..."—**School Library Journal**

"...clear, concise, and written in short sentences that make it easy for children to understand... with brilliant illustrations that are so realistic, you'll feel as if you can touch the fish with your fingers, or stick your big toe in the cool blue water..."

—**Picture Book Depot**



THEMES

- Fish
- Habitats
- Animal adaptations
- Food chains
- Camouflage
- Predators and prey
- Interdependence of living things
- Plant & animal diversity
- Endangered species
- Human impact on the environment

SKILLS REINFORCED

- ✓ Compare and contrast
- ✓ Sorting and sequencing
- ✓ Cause and effect
- ✓ Size and scale

NATIONAL EDUCATION STANDARDS

SCIENCE [Science Standards provided by the National Academies of Science.]

Grades K–4

NS.K-4.3 LIFE SCIENCE

As a result of activities in grades K-4, all students should develop an understanding of the characteristics and life cycles of organisms and organisms [in relation to] their environments.

NS.K-4.6 PERSONAL AND SOCIAL PERSPECTIVES

As a result of activities in grades K-4, all students should develop understanding of personal health [in relation to] changes in environments.

MATH Grades PreK-12 [Mathematics standards provided by the NCTM.]

NM-PROB.PK-12.3 PROBLEM SOLVING

Apply and adapt a variety of appropriate strategies to solve problems.

LANGUAGE ARTS K-12 [Language Arts standards provided by the NCTE.]

NL-ENG.K-12.1 READING FOR PERSPECTIVE

Students read a wide range of print and non-print texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.

BEFORE YOU READ

Grades K-2

- Work with students to create a Know-Want-Learn (KWL) chart for fish. Begin by asking students what they Know about fish and their habitats. Write their responses on the board. Next, ask students what they Want to learn by reading this book. Record their answers in the chart.
- Provide a list of vocabulary words and discuss their meanings.
- Look at the range maps on the endpapers and have students identify fish that live in your area.

Grades 3-6

- Have the students discuss the following questions in small groups and compile the groups' answers.
 1. What human actions positively affect fish survival? Explain how.
 2. What human actions negatively affect fish survival? Explain how.
 3. List some different habitats where you might find fish.
 4. Does the survival of fish affect the survival of plants and other animals? Explain why or why not.
- Provide a list of vocabulary words. Have students find each word in a dictionary and write a simple definition of their own. This may be done individually or in groups.

AS YOU READ

Grades K-2

Ask students to listen for answers to the questions listed in the W column of the KWL chart and any other information they'd like to add to the L column.

Grades 3-6

Ask students to think about their answers to the questions above while listening to the book. Are there things they would like to change or add? They may want to make notes on a piece of paper.

AFTER YOU READ

Grades K-2

- Fill in the Learn column of the KWL chart. Review the information in the Know column and change anything that is incorrect.
- Discuss the inset images shown on some double-page spreads. Ask students to guess why they only appear on some pages.

Grades 3-6

- As a whole class or in smaller groups, have students add new information or remove incorrect information from the questions they answered before reading.
- Choose two fish in the book and ask students to compare them. Students should consider each fish's body size, shape, and coloring as well as its range, habitat, and food sources. Explain the usefulness of a Venn diagram (overlapping circles showing similarities and differences) and lead students in creating one.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

SCIENCE

Grades K-2

- Take the class outside to play Shark and Minnows. Minnows stand on one end of the field. The shark stands in the middle of the field. Minnows must run to the other end of the field without getting eaten (tagged) by the shark. Have students keep track of how much prey (minnows) the predator (shark) eats during each round.
- Now give each child a red, yellow, green, or blue scarf. Create four bases in the middle of the field. Minnows are safe if they're on the base with the same color as their scarf. After each round, eliminate one base. Ask minnows with that color scarf how they feel. Explain that this is what happens to tropical fish when a coral reef dies due to pollution and development. Have students keep track of how much prey (minnows) the predator (shark) eats during each round. Did the number of minnows who died increase or decrease as the bases (coral reefs) disappeared?

Grades 3-6

Have each student research one of the fish discussed in the book and write a report. Each report should include unique/important body features, habitat and range, diet, and any fun facts the student discovers.

LANGUAGE ARTS

Grades K-2

- Have students create as many words as possible with the letters in A PLACE FOR FISH. Ask the children to sort the words in the following ways: number of letters in each word, word families, and vowel sounds. They can also alphabetize the words.
- Work with students to create seesaw books about two different fish, such as yellow tangs

and spotted trunkfish. On the first left-hand page, they might write: “Yellow tangs live off the coast of Hawaii.” On the facing right-hand page, they could write: “Spotted trunkfish live off the coast of Florida.” The next page would read: “Both kinds of fish live on coral reefs.” Subsequent pages should continue to compare the two species—size, food, range, etc. Students can use webs to help them organize their thoughts.

Grades 3-6

- Have students write letters to author Melissa Stewart, telling her what they liked best about *A Place for Fish*. Send the letters to Author Fan Mail, Peachtree Publishers, 1700 Chattahoochee Ave., Atlanta, GA, 30318-2112. If you include an e-mail address, Ms. Stewart will send an e-mail to your class. If students send drawings, she will choose a few to post on her website.
- Have students make acrostic poems using the words FISH, OCEAN, LAKE, and/or CORAL REEF. Students can write the word vertically, with one letter on each line. Then they can fill in words to create a poem that’s related to the starter word. They can include fish or habitat names or specific behaviors in their poems.

All Grades

Have students pretend they are fish. Ask younger students to write what it feels like to swim through the sea. Ask older students to describe what they see as they swim through a watery habitat in their town or city.

MATH

Grades K-2

Using the information below, students should create a bar graph that compares fish sizes. Then have students choose three fish and draw them to scale. They can also color the fish using the art in *A Place for Fish* as a guide.

Hammerhead shark: 144 inches
Northern pike: 25 inches
Yellow tang: 7 inches
Smalltooth sawfish: 216 inches
Smallmouth bass: 17 inches
Spotted trunkfish: 4 inches

Grades 3-6

Give each student a copy of Activity Sheet 1 at the end of this guide. Ask them to solve each problem. Answers to questions are the following:

1. 45 miles per hour
2. Answers will vary.
3. Answers will vary.
4. 75%

ART

Grades K-2

- Let students use old socks or lunch-sized paper bags to create their own fish puppets. They can decorate their puppets with yarn, paints, crayons, scrap paper, and egg cartons. Some children may need help using glue or scissors.
- Give each child two precut shapes of a blue shark made from blue paper. Ask students to glue one to a blue piece of paper. Have students draw a forest on a piece of green paper and glue the second shark to it. Explain the concept of camouflage. Can the class name some land animals that would blend into their forest scene?

Grades 3-6

Have students look carefully at the background art on each two-page spread of *A Place for Fish*. As a class, list all the questions the book’s illustrator, Higgins Bond, had to ask herself and then research to make the habitats realistic and accurate. Possible questions include the following: Where is the habitat? What color is the water? What plants grow there? What time of day is it? What time of year is it? What other animals should be shown? How many fish should be shown? What are the fish doing? Using their list of questions, have students research and create a mural that depicts a natural fish habitat in your community.

SOCIAL STUDIES (Geography)

Grades 3-6

Have students study the range maps shown on the endpapers of the book. Ask them to list all the fish that live in your area. Emphasize that the fish discussed in this book represent only a fraction of the species that live in North America. Have the students do research to find out about additional species in your area.

ADVANCED ACTIVITIES

- Have students research organizations that support the protection of one of the fish habitats mentioned in this book. They should contact one organization and find out about its recent work. Students should write a report and deliver an oral presentation about what they have learned. (communication skills)
- Have students make a list of some of the things people do to harm the fish discussed in this book. Then have them list ways people

could change their behaviors to help fish. Next, ask students to list some things they do every day that could harm the environment or the animals that share our world.

(Possibilities include wasting electricity; wasting water; forgetting to recycle; littering; using straws, Styrofoam cups, and heavily packaged foods, such as drink boxes; and throwing out old clothes, games, toys, or bicycles instead of donating them to charities) Can they think of ways to modify their behavior? (cause and effect)

- Have students write a letter to a school or town official asking them to change a policy that will positively impact a habitat where fish live. (synthesis, communication skills)
- Divide students into teams of three or four and ask each group to pretend it is a news team. Each team should make a video of a mock news report about a local effort to protect fish or other creatures and/or open space. (synthesis, communication skills)

RELATED READING

Surprising Sharks by Nicola Davies, Cambridge, MA: Candlewick, 2005.

Fish by Steve Parker, New York: Knopf, 2005.

Trout Are Made of Trees by April Pulley Sayre, Watertown, MA: Charlesbridge, 2008.

Trout, Trout, Trout: A Fish Chant by April Pulley Sayre, Minnetonka, MN: NorthWord, 2003.

Extreme Coral Reef! by Melissa Stewart, New York: Smithsonian/Collins, 2008.

How Do Fish Breathe Underwater? by Melissa Stewart, Tarrytown, NY: Benchmark Books, 2007.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Melissa Stewart is the award-winning author of more than one hundred books for children. She has a B.S. in biology from Union College in Schenectady, NY, and a M.A. in science journalism

from New York University. Melissa serves on the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators' board of advisors and is a judge for the American Institute of Physics Children's Science Writing Award. Melissa has taught fiction and nonfiction writing classes for children and adults, and is available for school visits. For more information please visit www.melissa-stewart.com. **(Intended audience for school presentations: Grades K-6.)**

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Higgins Bond has illustrated books for children for over twenty-five years. Her titles include *Who Has a Belly Button?*; *Hey Daddy!*; *Animal Fathers and Their Babies*; *A Place for Butterflies*; *A Place for Birds*; and *A Place for Frogs*. Bond attended Phillips University in Oklahoma and received a BFA from the Memphis College of Art. She has also created illustrations for magazines and posters, calendars, ads, brochures, figurines,



dolls, and individual paintings for various companies. She offers a slide show presentation, entitled *Yes, It Is Possible to Make a Living as an Artist*, aimed at aspiring artists and art students of any age. It lasts approximately thirty to forty minutes and concludes with a Q&A session. For more information about Higgins Bond's programs, visit her website at www.higginsbond.com.

(Intended audience for school presentations: Grades 1-12)

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FISH MATH

1. Sailfish may be the fastest animals on Earth. They can cruise through ocean waters at up to 68 miles per hour. The fastest a person has ever run is 23 miles per hour. How much faster is a sailfish than a human?
2. Many small fish swim through the sea in large schools. Some schools may have more than 1,000 fish. To find out how many students are in your school, ask each teacher how many students are in his or her class. Then add together all the answers.
3. Only 1 in 100 salmon eggs will hatch and grow into an adult fish. If only 1 in 100 human babies lived to be 18 years old, how many of the students at your school would become adults?
4. We breathe with lungs, but fish breathe with gills. A person's lungs take in about 25 percent, or one-fourth, of the oxygen in the air. Some fish's gills work three times better. How much oxygen can they remove from the water?