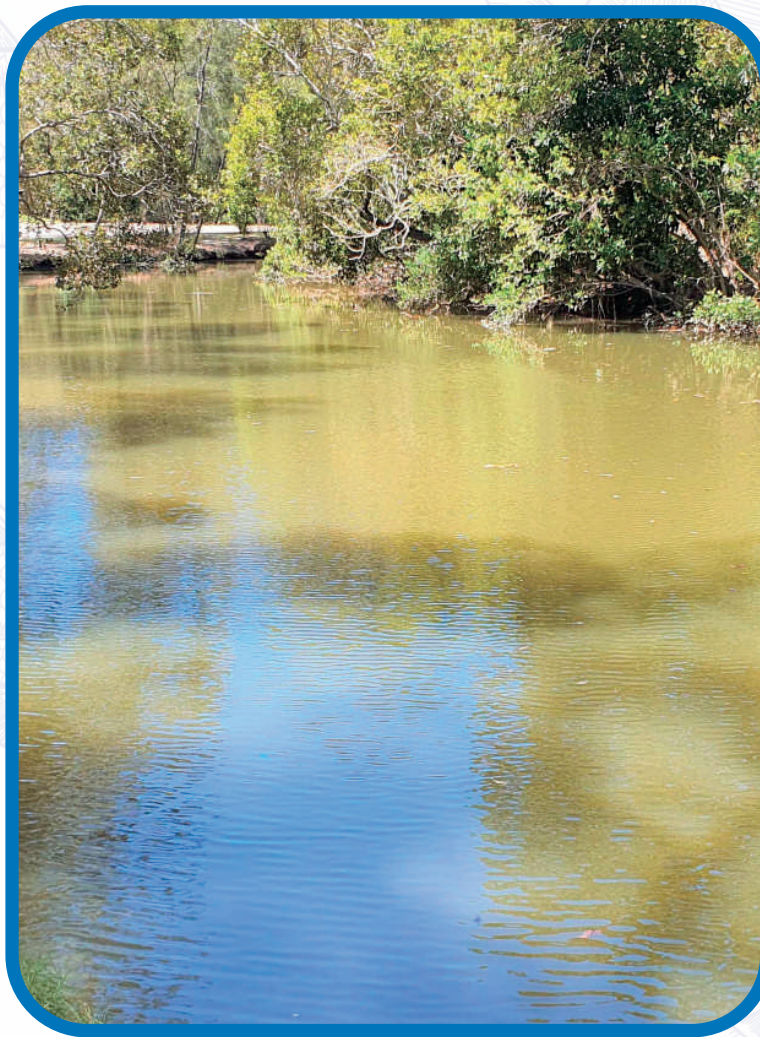


**BIG4 GOLD COAST
HOLIDAY
PARK**

Creek Fish



★ ★
★ ★ ★
MAGIC IN EVERY STAY
★ ★ ★

Diversity and Vitality of Saltwater Fish

Saltwater fish are a diverse group of species that inhabit the brackish or saline waters of coastal creeks and estuaries. These unique environments, influenced by tides and the proximity to the ocean, provide a rich and dynamic habitat for a wide variety of fish. These fish have adapted to the fluctuating salinity levels and complex ecosystems found in these areas, making them well-suited to thrive in these challenging conditions.

They can vary in size, shape, and behavior, offering a fascinating array of characteristics.

Saltwater fish are an integral part of the coastal ecosystem, serving as both predator and prey. They contribute to the ecological balance by controlling populations of smaller fish and invertebrates, while also providing sustenance for larger predators. Additionally, these fish play a crucial role in nutrient cycling and the overall health of the surrounding environment.

Read on to discover the fish, and crabs, we have in Saltwater Creek at the park.

Bream

- Scientific Name: *Acanthopagrus*
- Size: Ranging from 15 to 60 centimeters
- Appearance: Silvery body with a slightly compressed shape. May have vertical bars/spots along their sides.
- Habitat: Various -estuaries, coastal waters, and rivers. Commonly found near rocky or sandy bottoms.
- Diet: Omnivorous and feed on a variety of small invertebrates, crustaceans, algae, and smaller fish.



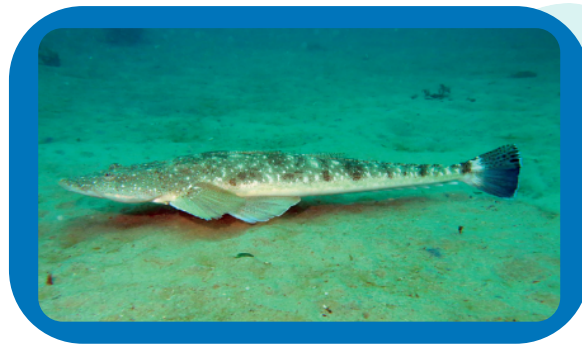
Catfish

- Scientific Name: *Siluriformes*
- Size: various sizes, Grow from a few centimetres, feet and up to several meters in length.
- Appearance: Elongated body shape, with barbels around the mouth. Skin can vary in colour and pattern, but most species have a mottled or dark coloration.
- Habitat: Can be found in a range of aquatic habitats, such as rivers, lakes, and swamps. Often in areas with ample cover, such as submerged logs or vegetation.
- Diet: Primarily bottom-feeders, known for scavenging behaviour. They consume a variety of foods, including insects, worms, small fish, and plant matter.



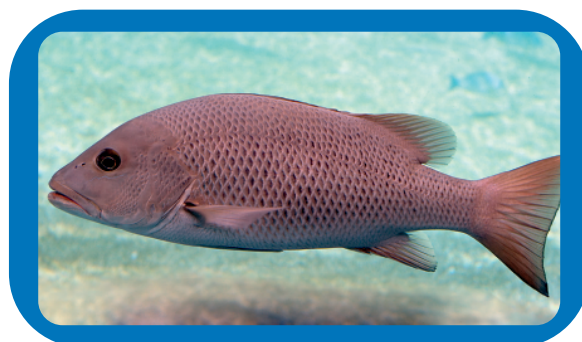
Flathead

- Scientific Name: *Platycephalidae*
- Size: range in size, 30 to 60 centimetres in length.
- Appearance: Have a flattened, broad head with large eyes and a wide mouth. Their bodies are typically brown or mottled in colour, providing camouflage
- Habitat: Bottom-dwelling fish found in estuaries, coastal waters, and sometimes freshwater rivers.
- Diet: voracious predators, feeding primarily on small fish and crustaceans. They ambush their prey from the seafloor.



Mangrove Jack

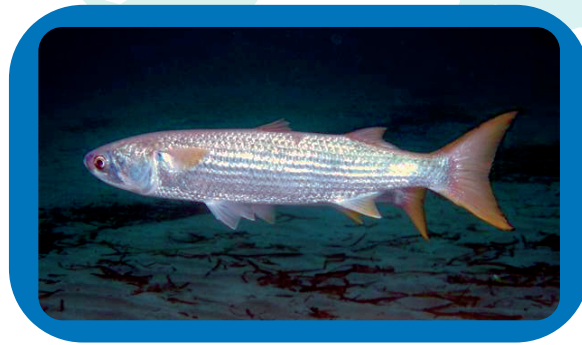
- Scientific Name: *Lutjanus argentimaculatus*
- Size: Can grow up to 70 centimeters in length.
- Appearance: Robust, reddish-brown body with distinctive vertical bars on their sides. As they mature, they become darker, and may develop a prominent black spot on their gill cover.
- Habitat: tropical and subtropical coastal waters, near mangrove forests, coral reefs, and rocky areas.
- Diet: Aggressive predators, feeding on a variety of prey such as fish, crustaceans, and occasionally smaller mollusks.



Mullet

Scientific Name: Mugilidae

- Size: vary in size, some reaching lengths over a meter
- Appearance: Elongated, cylindrical bodies with small scales and a prominent, protruding upper jaw. Usually silvery in colour.
- Habitat: Highly adaptable, variety of environments, ie estuaries, coastal waters, and freshwater rivers.
- Diet: Mainly herbivorous, feed on algae, detritus, and other plant matter. May also consume small invertebrates.



Trevally

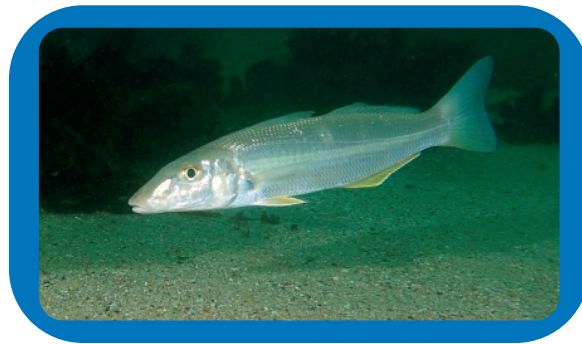
Scientific Name: Carangidae

- Size: Vary, some reaching lengths of over a meter
- Appearance: Streamlined, muscular body with a silvery coloration. They often have a deeply forked tail and a row of scutes along their lateral line.
- Habitat: Found in warm coastal waters, near coral reefs, rocky areas, and seagrass beds.
- Diet: Opportunistic predators, feeding on a variety of prey such as small fish, crustaceans, and cephalopods.



Whiting

- Scientific Name: Sillaginidae
- Size: Vary, reaching lengths of 20 to 40 centimeters
- Appearance: Slender, elongated bodies with a silvery coloration. They have a pointed snout and a single dorsal fin.
- Habitat: Commonly found in sandy or muddy coastal waters, often in estuaries, beaches, and shallow bays.
- Diet: Primarily feed on small invertebrates, including worms, crustaceans, and molluscs.



Mud crabs

- Scientific Name: Scylla
- Size: Vary, with some individuals reaching widths of over 20 centimetres across the carapace.
- Appearance: Robust, flattened body with strong, sturdy claws. Their carapace is typically brown or greenish in colour, providing camouflage
- Habitat: Estuaries, mangrove forests, and tidal flats. Typically found in areas with mud or sandy substrates.
- Diet: Opportunistic omnivores, feeding on a variety of food sources, including detritus, algae, small fish, mollusks, and crustaceans.



Top 10 fun facts

1. Largest fish in the world is the whale shark. Reaching lengths of up to 40 feet and weigh over 20 tons.
2. Fish have been on Earth for more than 500 million years, and one of the oldest animal groups on the planet.
3. Some fish are capable of changing their sex. They can switch from male to female or vice versa, depending on the needs of their population.
4. The electric eel has the ability to generate electric shocks of up to 600 volts.
5. Some fish, are skilled at shooting jets of water from their mouths to knock down insects on overhanging branches.
6. The mudskipper is a unique fish that can survive out of water for extended periods.
7. The anglerfish has a unique adaptation to attract prey. It has a fleshy growth on its head called an illicium, with a bioluminescent tip that acts as a lure. When prey gets close, the anglerfish quickly swallows it.
8. Some fish have the ability to change colour and pattern to blend in with surroundings or communicate with other fish.
9. The fastest fish in the ocean is the sailfish, capable of swimming at speeds up to 110 kilometres per hour.
10. Fish have a variety of methods for communication, including vocalizations, body movements, color changes, and electrical signals. These communication methods help them interact with each other and navigate their underwater environments.

Learn More

Understanding and appreciating saltwater fish is important not only for recreational purposes but also for the conservation and sustainable management of these valuable resources. By respecting fishing regulations, practicing catch-and-release techniques, and supporting conservation efforts, we can help ensure the long-term viability of these remarkable fish populations and the ecosystems they depend on.

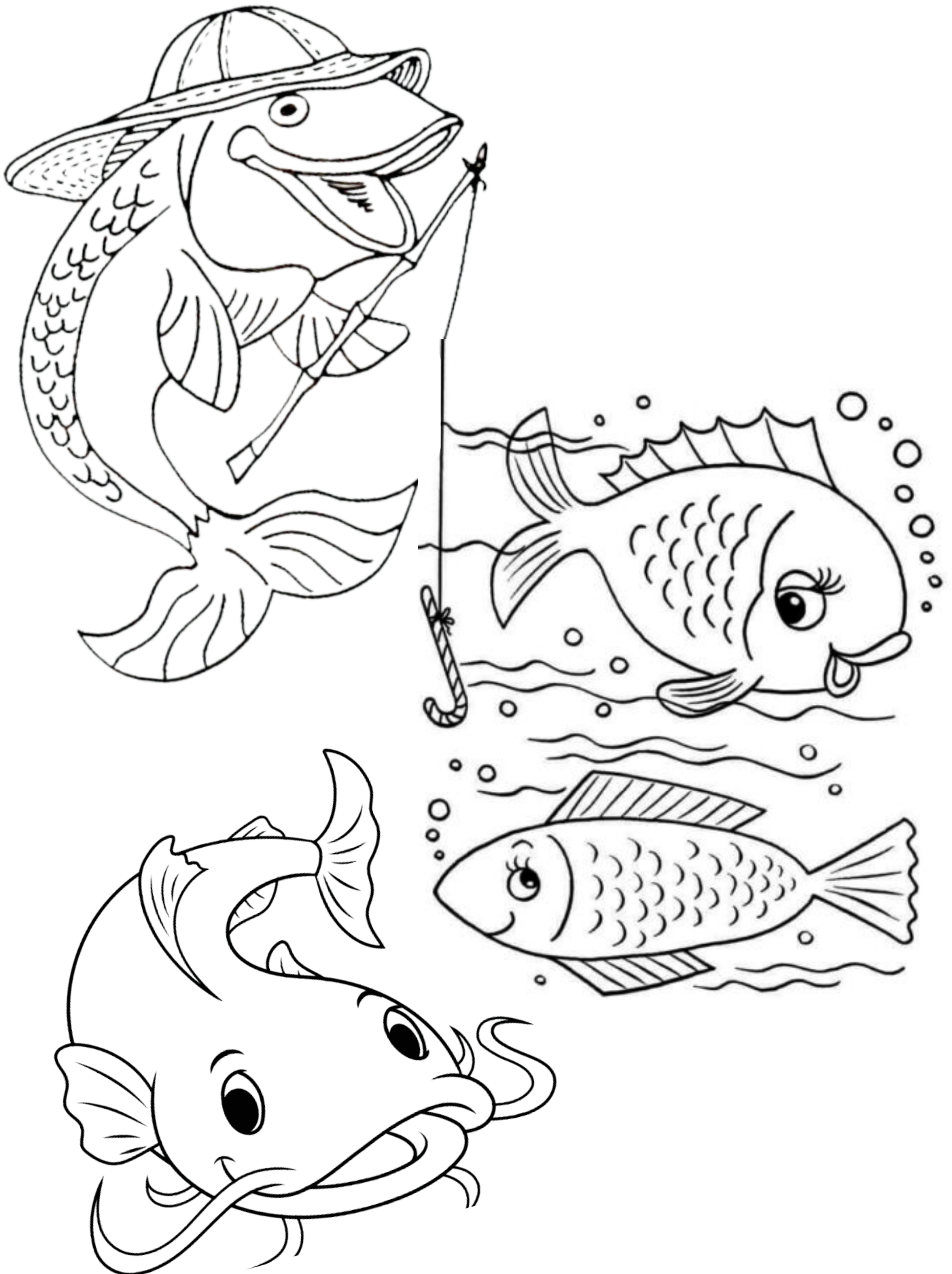


<https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/animals/fish>

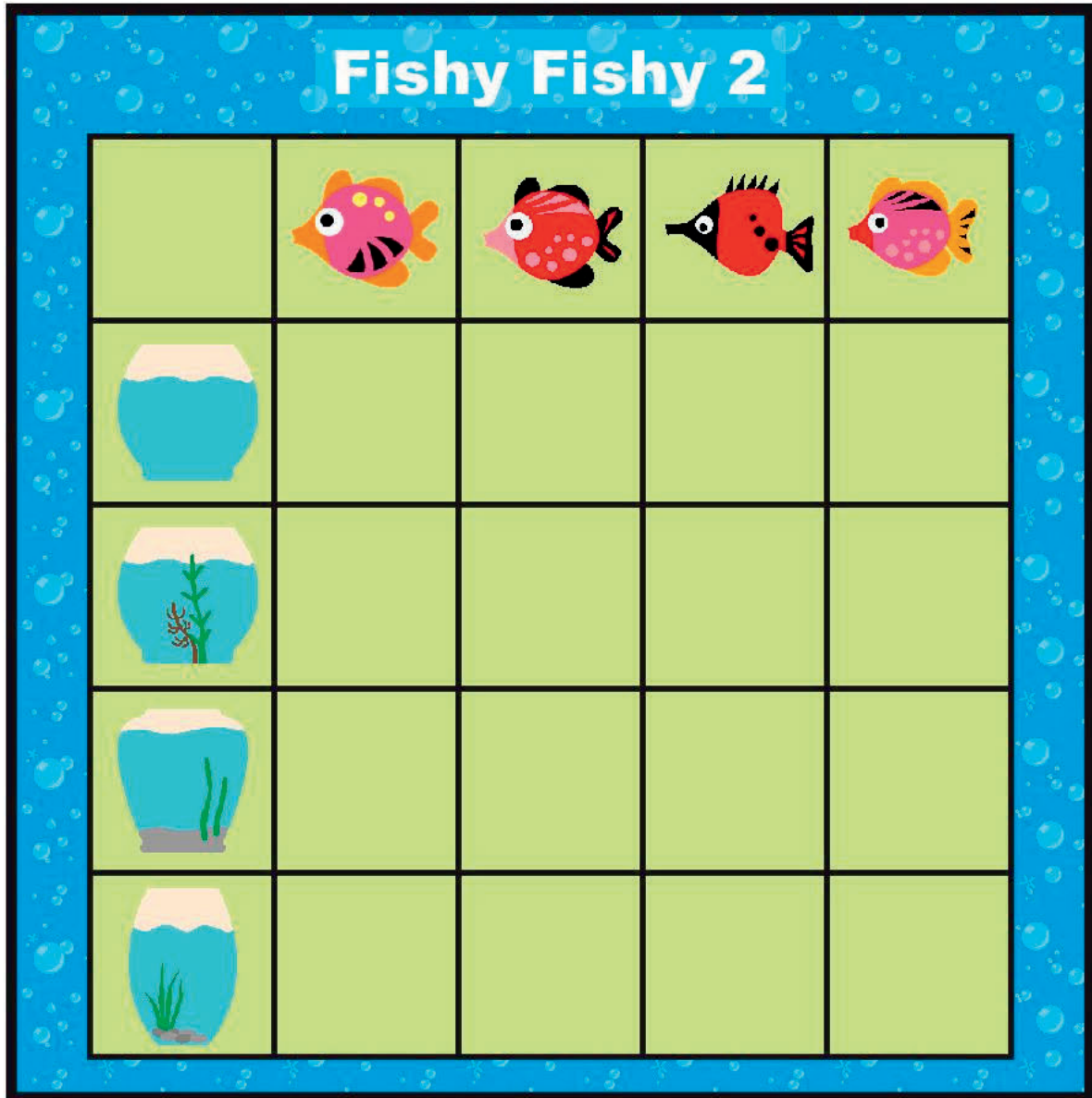


<https://kids.britannica.com/kids/article/fish/353130>

Colouring in



Match the Fish



Directions: Print out the page. Cut out the small cards on the bottom. Turn the cards over in a pile face down. Turn one card over at a time and place it in the matching column and row. Fill your whole board.

If you don't want to cut them out, try doing it as a puzzle. Draw a line connecting the picture from the bottom to the matching graph area.

