

SAWFISH ROSTRUM ENTANGLEMENT ACTIVITY

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

To demonstrate how easily sawfish become entangled in fishing nets.

BACKGROUND

Fishing activities have led to large declines in sawfish globally. Because of their toothy rostrum (or saw), sawfish easily become entangled in fishing nets, recreational fishing lines, discarded fishing gear, and other discarded waste. In this activity, players wear a sawfish saw on their fingers and try to capture fish while avoiding getting tangled in the fishing net. The goal is to capture as many fish as possible without getting stuck in the net.

CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS

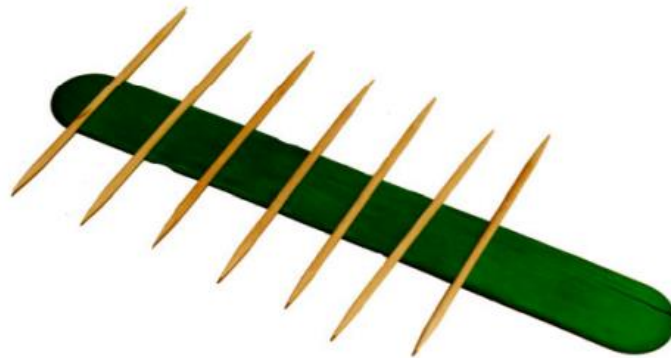
- Container for the 'ocean' (a basket or box)
- String
- Popsicle sticks (2 per saw)
- Toothpicks (3 to 7 per saw)
- Small toy fish
- Quick-drying glue
- Scissors
- Rubber bands (2 per saw)



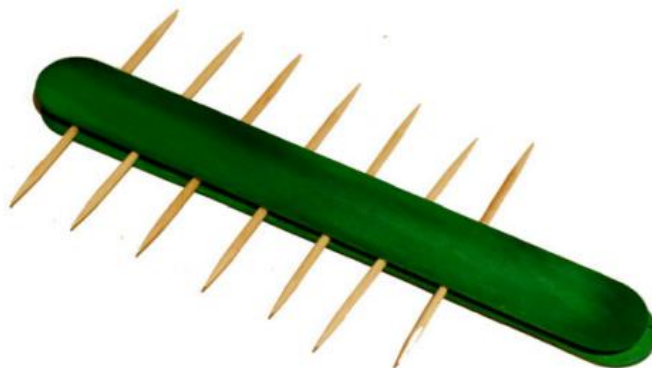
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CONSTRUCTION

1. To make the sawfish saw, you will need two popsicle sticks, toothpicks, and glue. If desired, you can cut the two popsicle sticks to shorten the saw. The ideal length will be a little bit longer than the player's fingers. Optional: If you will have different age groups, you can make a couple saws of different lengths.
2. Lay 3 to 7 toothpicks across one of the popsicles sticks, leaving a space in between each toothpick. The more toothpicks you use, the more difficult it will be to capture prey without getting entangled, better illustrating the point. Once you have the toothpicks spaced evenly, glue them down using quick-drying glue. Wait a couple of minutes for this to dry. Optional: make multiple saws with different number of toothpicks so players can try different levels of difficulty.



3. Add a couple of small dots of glue to the center of each toothpick and then place the second popsicle stick on top of the toothpicks. The toothpicks should be pressed between the popsicle sticks with their ends sticking out on either side, resembling a sawfish saw. Set the saw aside to dry completely.

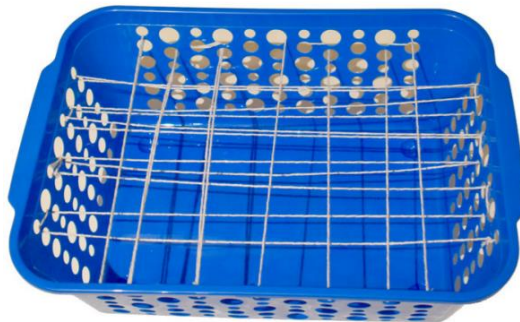


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4. To make the “net” in your “ocean” container, cut the string to appropriate length/s to be strung across the length of the container. Depending on the type of container, you can glue them down or put small holes into the container and weave the string in and out.



5. Cut another piece of string to the appropriate length/s to be strung across the width of the container to create evenly spaced squares with the other string/s. The spacing of this string is important; if the squares are too large, it will be too easy to capture prey!



6. After stringing the “net”, place a couple toy fish in the container.



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7. When the saw is completely dry, put 2 rubber bands around it, which will secure the saw to the player's fingers. You may have to wrap each rubber band twice.



THE LESSON

1. To play the game, place 2 fingers into the rubber bands to wear the saw and then attempt to remove a toy fish from the container without getting caught in the net. Optional: allow the player to choose the level of difficulty by presenting them with multiple saws with different number of toothpicks.
2. As the player tries to get the critter out of the container, explain:
 - Sawfish often get their saws entangled in net, which are hard to see.
 - When caught in a net, sawfish try and free themselves by twisting their body and swinging their saw, which often gets them more entangled.
 - Even fishers have a hard time getting sawfish out of nets, and they sometimes kill the sawfish or cut off their saw to do so, but sawfish need their saw to hunt and protect themselves.
 - Fishers can remove sawfish safely from nets by following the proper release procedures (e.g., cutting the net).
3. Ask players what they thought. Was it easy or hard to get in and out of the net? How would they get a sawfish out of a net?

