



Tools of the Trade

Electrofishing



Electrofishing uses an electrical current to stun the fish temporarily in the water, allowing the biologists to collect fish easily. This method is commonly used for sampling and causes no harm to the fish.



Trap Nets



A trap net, also called a lead net, is a box-shaped net with a hoop net at one end. After the net has “fished” for a few days, the closed end of the net is brought out of the water and the fish are lifted into the boat. The end is untied and the fish are taken out.



Dip Nets



Dip nets come in all sizes. These sizes are determined by the size of the frame and the mesh of the net. Some nets are used by hatcheries to collect and move fingerlings. Others are used for dipping fish from the water during sampling.

Gill Nets



Gill nets are panels or walls of netting that are very stretchable. These nets have weights on bottom and floats on top and are stretched out to fish.

They are mostly used in waters with little flow such as lakes, bayous, and sloughs.

Since most kinds of fish cannot detect a gill net, they swim into it and their gills, fins, spines, or body gets caught by the net webbing. When fish feel the net, they try to escape from it, but by then, they are usually trapped in the netting. The net is retrieved after fishing and the fish are removed.

Hoop Nets



Hoop nets are anchored at one end to a stump or to a pole.

They are usually fished in flowing water which keeps the net open to fish. A float helps the biologists find the net. Hoops made of fiberglass or metal are connected with netting.

Fish enter at the front or mouth of the net and swim through mesh funnels to the rear of the net. The fish squeeze through the funnel but do not usually swim back out of it so they are trapped inside the net. They are free to swim around within the net. Smaller hoop nets catch smaller fish while larger hoop nets catch larger fish.

Seines



Seines (pronounced “Sanes”) look similar to gill nets and are used to catch smaller fish. These nets have weights on bottom and floats on top with poles on each end. Seine nets are pulled by two people and trap fish as the net is pulled towards the bank.