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The Secret Life of Larval Fish: A Geocaching Adventure

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Author
Dale, Katherine

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The Secret Life of Larval Fish
A Geocaching Adventure

Katherine E. Dale
Ecology & Evolutionary Biology Dept., University of California, Santa Cruz ~ kdale@ucsc.edu

What is geocaching?
Geocaching is a GPS-based scavenger hunt in which participants find hidden containers ("caches").

Where/what are the caches?
There are five geocaches hidden on the Coastal Science Campus. Each focuses on a different aspect of larval fish biology.

Learning Outcomes
Visitors should be able to:
1. Define the words *plankton* and *larvae*
2. Understand that larval fish do not look and act the same as adults
3. Understand that larval fish have special adaptations for life in the plankton

Project Goals
1. Create an interactive, long-lasting learning opportunity in Santa Cruz
2. Communicate the importance of larval fish to the public
3. Raise awareness of overlooked aspects of California fish species

1. Participants pick up a geocaching “passport” at the Seymour Marine Discovery Center
2. Participants navigate to geocaches through the official Geocaching app, any smartphone mapping app, or using a pre-loaded GPS available at the Seymour Center
3. At each cache, participants stamp their passport and answer the unique question associated with the cache using information within the container.
4. A completed passport qualifies participants to return to the Seymour Center and receive a custom-made wooden coin.

Figure 1. Number of interactions since caches were placed on April 4, 2018. In total, the five caches have been interacted with 77 times.

"This is a great little series. Very thoughtfully done and approachable for all ages."

"I learned a lot about larval fish today, including the uses of spines! I wouldn't have guessed they were used for flotation."

"We hadn't thought about the many different ways fish work to ensure the survival of their genes until today. Thanks for another informative fishy cache!"