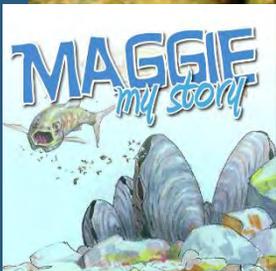




# “Pearls in Peril”

## Pearls in the Classroom

‘Pearls in the Classroom’ (PIC) educational visits are part of the ‘Pearls in Peril’ (PIP) LIFE nature project. This four-year UK-wide project, part-funded by the EU LIFE fund, seeks to secure the future for populations of freshwater pearl mussel *Margaritifera margaritifera* in 21 British rivers designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) for freshwater pearl mussel.



‘Pearls in the Classroom’ teaches children about the amazing lifecycle of the freshwater pearl mussel, the threats it faces through wildlife crime and habitat damage, and the ecology of the rivers where it lives.

**Find out more about the project on Twitter**  
**@MoTheMussel or [www.pearlsinperil.org.uk](http://www.pearlsinperil.org.uk)**



## **Pearls in Peril and the National Curriculum**

During the PIC visit there are opportunities for students to work as individuals (Q&A sessions and discussions), in small groups (activities) and as a whole class. PIC offers short activities that are novel, creative and exciting. The PIC educational package has been designed to meet some of the requirements of the Curriculum for Excellence:

### **- Numeracy**

We will use the PIC session to develop numeric skills. We will ask pupils to measure mussel shells to calculate the ages of the mussels using a graph. Groups will then be asked to add up the ages to see which group has the oldest total age, and to divide that number to calculate the average age. This can be challenging for primary pupils given that these mussels can live to over 100 years old.

### **- Social studies - history**

PIC looks at the history of the pearl mussel in Britain. Many people believe that pearls attracted Julius Caesar and the Romans to invade Britain. We will explain how historically pearl mussels played an important role in the culture of our country, and why they have declined to such an extent today.

### **- Social studies - geography**

The study of geography encourages pupils to become global citizens by exploring the space around them, their values and their responsibilities to other people, to the environment and to the sustainability of the planet. PIC helps to develop the sense of a dynamic and complex world by demonstrating how people and their environment interact, and how the ecosystem is interconnected. PIC teaches children to think critically about issues affecting the world now and in the future.

### **- Science**

One of the main themes of PIC is the interdependence of the whole ecosystem. We look at habitats and biodiversity; ways in which living things interact with their environment; human impacts on the environment; and how we can protect the environment for mussels and other species. Freshwater pearl mussels are filter feeders and therefore have a positive impact on water chemistry and water quality, benefiting other species.

### **- Expressive arts and technologies**

PIC is a good basis for further research, e.g. web research for the history of the pearl mussel in Britain, and can be the subject of art, design and information technology projects.

If you would like Pearls in the Classroom to visit your school or more information about the project please email [pearlsinperil@snh.gov.uk](mailto:pearlsinperil@snh.gov.uk)

