

## **Fish and C. Communicate**

I have one fish. I am lucky to have that one since the local gang of raccoons ransacked my pond some time back. The 2 fish survived but were terribly spooky after that. I put heavy metal grids on 2 thirds of the pond and heavy plywood that I put on at night and take off in the daytime. I decided to give both fish away to a safer home. I only managed to catch one and took it to a friend. The other fish was uncatchable. So I gave up.

I feed the little character twice a day and it has calmed down substantially. As soon as I remove the plywood in the morning, the fish is there, waiting for breakfast. I drop a few flakes of it on the water and the fish happily nibbles away, never spooking because of me. I feed it in the evening also and then put the plywood over the open part of the water.

This morning there was no fish so I knew the raccoons had been stomping around on the top of the pond covers. I was pretty sure the fish was in the pond because the heavy top of the pond was in place but the fish must have been very afraid. I just put some food on the water and hoped the fish would find it. Usually I put the food right in the fish's mouth. So I found on my game camera that indeed, the raccoons had been on the rampage, 4 of them, 3 of them smaller than one big one that must have been mama.

Later in the day I looked again for the fish and could barely see it hiding on the bottom of the pond. This evening when I went out to feed it and cover it, I still could not find it. I always talk to it so kept asking the fish where it was. No fish. Then I heard a little noise off to my left and under the heavy grid and next to a stack of rocks, well hidden. I focused my attention there and the noise got louder. It was kissy noises, smooch smooch though squeaky. I looked at where the noise was and could see the fish making the kissy noises so I put some food there. The noise stopped as the fish ate the food.

That fish has never made a single sound in all the time I have had it. It is apparent to me that it was trying to draw my attention to its well hidden whereabouts where it intended to stay but wanted dinner brought to it. The fish made the noise by smacking the water with its lips (do fish have lips?). To me, this is remarkable intelligence for a 35 cent feeder fish. I continue to revise my idea of animal intelligence. I felt very flattered that the fish knew who I was and that I was smart enough to figure out what it was doing. Life is so interesting!