



LEARNING LABS CAMOUFLAGING CRITTERS

Bodies that look like leaves, logs, ice floes and seafloors: Camouflage comes in many shapes and colors. With one of the aquarium animals as a model, students see firsthand the role camouflage plays to help animals function in their habitats. The scientific process comes to life as students observe, predict and report results.

GRADE LEVEL: K-2 | **CAPACITY:** 35 students | **DURATION:** 50 minutes

KEY CONCEPTS

Camouflage, adaptations, habitats, predator/prey relationships, behavior

SKILLS

Categorization, predictions, modeling, grouping, observation

IL STATE LEARNING STANDARDS

- 11.A.1a, 11.A.1b, 11.A.1f
- 12.B.1a
- 13.A.1c

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE

- Students explore the components of camouflage
- Students work and collaborate in groups
- Teachers and chaperones may participate
- Multimedia resources encourage further exploration
- Opportunity for live animal encounter
- Students sit on mats in groups



For more information contact
studentprograms@sheddaquarium.org



FURTHER EXPLORATION

Arkive – Images of Life on Earth
<http://www.arkive.org/>

**Shedd Educational Adventures
Animal Imaging, Color Bingo, and
Where are all the Animals?**
<http://sea.sheddaquarium.org/sea/>

**Discovery Education
Animal Colors and Shapes**
<http://school.discoveryeducation.com/lessonplans/>

**PBS.org
Creatures of Darkness**
<http://www.pbs.org/oceanrealm/intheschool>

The Mixed-Up Chameleon
Eric Carle



CONNECTIONS TO THE EXHIBITS

Many animals in the aquarium are hard to find. That's because they are camouflaged! Below are a few animals that use shape, location, color and movement as camouflage.

Seahorses

When your class visits the seahorse exhibit, you will notice that these fish are difficult to find. Ask students to point out a few seahorses. What about their location makes it easy for the seahorses to blend in? Why does a seahorse look like its habitat? Did you notice the way the seahorses move? Are they swaying? How does this help them hide?

Amazon Rising

Amazon Rising is home to two snake species that are located right next to each other: the green anaconda and the emerald tree boa. Have students compare and contrast color and location of each snake. What does the anaconda's habitat look like? Notice how the anaconda's dark colors resemble its river habitat. Now look at the emerald tree boa. Could this boa blend in with the anaconda's habitat? Why or why not? What is the emerald tree boa's ideal habitat?

Wild Reef

Wild Reef is home to many camouflaged animals. Here are just a few to look for. Before the shark exhibit, you will discover the frogfish habitat. Can you find the frogfish? Have the students describe the frogfish's shape and color. Does it look similar to a sponge or coral? Around the frogfish you will find the crocodile fish and some eels. Discuss the features that make these fishes masters of disguise!

CONNECTIONS TO THE CLASSROOM

- Before you visit, have students brainstorm what it would be like to be invisible. Ask students if they know of any animals that can become invisible. This is a great opportunity to discuss how camouflage is similar to invisibility, but be sure to emphasize that animals cannot be invisible. Students can then pick an animal and write a short story or paragraph about how camouflage can help that animal survive.
- In your classroom, ask students what animals are camouflaged in their backyards. Instruct students to go outside at home to do a "Backyard Camouflage Nature Search." Remind students that camouflaged critters can be anywhere. Look under logs, in the grass and in the trees! In the classroom, students can talk about what they found.