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FUN FOR KIDS

A COOPERATIVE PROJECT OF THE SANTA BARBARA NEWS-PRESS AND THE EDUCATORS' ROUNDTABLE, PUBLISHED MONTHLY TO PROMOTE LEARNING AMONG YOUNG READERS IN NATURAL SCIENCE, HISTORY, TECHNOLOGY, AND ART

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This Month's Theme:

CAMOUFLAGE

What is Camouflage?

Camouflaged animals use different ways to blend in with their natural habitat. Camouflage is an important adaptation that helps in the survival of many animals

because it can provide protection from predators. It can also be important for animals that are predators, as it may allow them to sneak up on prey before they are seen.

Types of Camouflage: Background Matching, Color Changing, Disruptive Coloration, and Counter-Shading

Which Animals Use Camouflage?

Many wild animals are well camouflaged in their natural habitats. **Great-horned Owls** are masters at hiding right before your eyes. The bark-colored feathers of this bird help it to blend in with trees. You may have looked right past one on your own street! **Alligators** and **crocodiles** blend in to murky waters. Their dark, bumpy backs look just like harmless logs floating in the water. **Arctic Hares** live in the frosty tundra and change color from snowy white in winter to brown in summer. As their color changes with the season, these hares are able to blend in with both the Arctic snow during winter and the dusty landscape of summer. Take a closer look around your own backyard. There may be more animals around you than you think!



Photo: Jessica Allstatt



Photo: Courtesy of the Santa Barbara Zoo

LOOK CLOSELY.
Can you discover the animals in these pictures?

ANSWERS
Left: Scorpionfish
Right: Baby Anteater on adult's back

Camouflage: An Outdoor Game To Play With Your Friends



Photo: Bryan Snyder

Joe Mooy, a sixth grade student from St. Raphael School, uses a tree to blend in while playing Camouflage at The Outdoor School.

At The Outdoor School at Rancho Alegre we understand that the best way to learn about animals is for us to put ourselves in their position. Try this fun outdoor game to do just that by concealing yourself the same way local animals hide from their predators!

1. Pick one person to be a **Deer**. She stands on a rock or in a small area where she stays, closes her eyes and slowly counts to 30.
2. The other players are **Mountain Lions**. They have 30 seconds to camouflage themselves in a nearby area. The **Mountain Lions** must be able to see the **Deer** at all times.
3. The **Deer** opens her eyes and scans for potential **Mountain Lions**. If she sees one, she points and that player is out until the next round. After a few minutes, the **Deer** does a little dance that the remaining predators must be able to see (this prevents players from hiding which makes the game boring). The remaining predators come in and report the dance that they saw. If they do the correct dance (with their eyes closed to prevent anyone looking at other players), they win.

Create Your Own Camouflaged Critter

Decorator Crabs are found along the California coast. These crabs camouflage themselves by attaching pieces of seaweed and small animals from the surrounding area to hooked bristles on their shells.

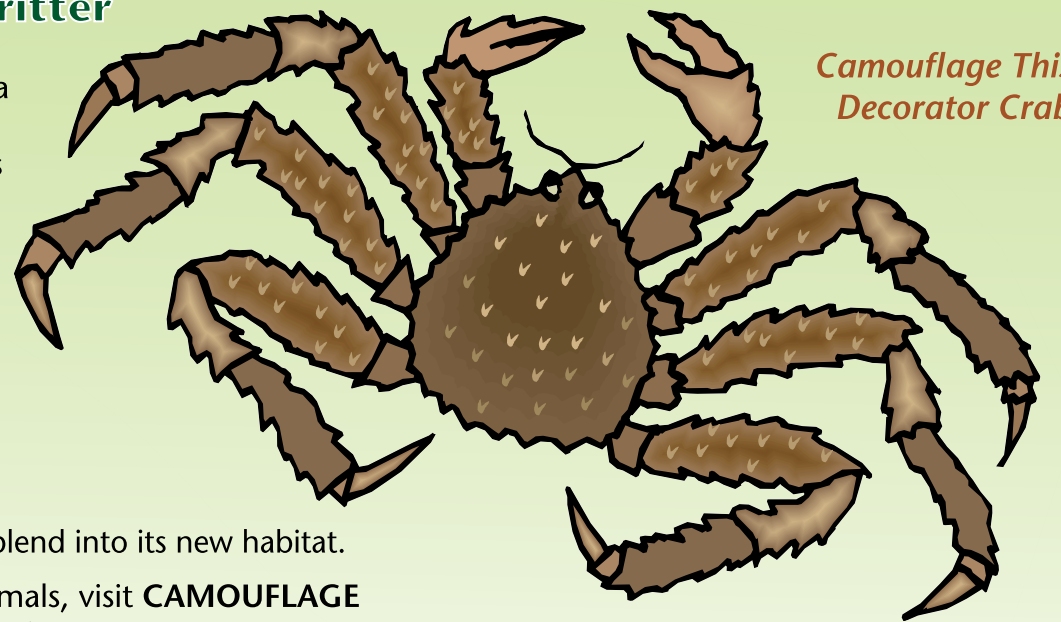
Materials:

Colored Tissue Paper (cut into small squares)
Glue

Instructions:

Cut out the **Decorator Crab**.
Find a good place for it to hide.
Glue colored tissue paper to the crab to help it blend into its new habitat.


To learn more about camouflaging marine animals, visit **CAMOUFLAGE** at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History's Sea Center.



Camouflage This Decorator Crab

This month's page created by Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History's Sea Center, the Santa Barbara Zoo and The Outdoor School at Rancho Alegre.

 **Marine Science Institute, UCSB**
805-893-8765 www.msi.ucsb.edu

 **Kids do Ecology**
National Center for Ecological Analysis and Synthesis
805-892-2500 nceas.ucsb.edu/nceas-web/kids

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