



Colorful Critters: Educator Handout

OVERVIEW

The goal of this lesson is to introduce students to the advantages behind the colors and patterns displayed on Wisconsin critters using a collection of photos from Snapshot Wisconsin, a citizen science project utilizing a statewide network of trail cameras. This lesson plan includes an optional outdoor activity.

KEY CONCEPTS

- The coloration of animals can be advantageous for many reasons including: camouflage, warning coloration, and attracting mates
- Certain colors may be advantageous in some habitats, but a disadvantage in other habitats

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- Begin to understand the advantages behind the colors and patterns of animals
- Generate hypotheses about where animals are from, or their life histories based on their coloration

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

| Curriculum | Standards |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Wisconsin's Standards for Science | SCI.CC1.K-2;3-5, SCI.CC4.K-2, SCI.CC7.K-2, SCI.SEP1.A.K-2, SCI.SEP4.A.K-2, SCI.SEP6.A.K-2;3-5, SCI.SEP7.A.K-2;3-5, SCI.LS3.A.1;A.3, SCI.LS3.B.1;B.3, SCI.LS4.B.3 |

KEY TERMS

Coloration, pattern, camouflage, warning coloration, mate, trail camera

TIME REQUIREMENTS

45-60 minutes

SUGGESTED AUDIENCE

This activity is appropriate for students in grades 3-5.

PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

Habitat, reproduction, mate, predation



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MATERIALS

- Projector and computer to display the Colorful Critters Slideshow

TEACHING TIPS

- You can complete this lesson plan in one session, or split it up by different topics across several class days
- Some students may be colorblind, which can make this lesson plan more difficult for them. It may be helpful to sit down and talk with these students, or offer extra help

PROCEDURES

- The Colorful Critters Slideshow is designed to be an interactive presentation with your whole class, and follows the below template:
 - Slide showing several critters with something in common about their color or pattern. Have the students view the photos on this slide and answer the following questions: “What do all of these animals have in common?” and “Why do you think these animals look like this?”
 - An informational slide telling what the animals have in common, and why this color or pattern is advantageous
 - Several slides with examples of Wisconsin critters and questions to generate discussions
 - A quiz for students to use the knowledge they gained to make inferences about the colors and patterns of animals

OPTIONAL ACTIVITY

- Encourage students to wear either brightly colored or neutral clothing for this day
- Have the students play hide and seek outdoors and make observations about which clothing types allow students to be found more or less quickly