

## Hide and seek for wildlife

In the fall, many people wear camouflage clothing to blend into their surroundings so they can be sneaky when they go hunting. Wildlife depend on camouflage year-round to help them blend into their environment. When wildlife have colors or patterns on their fur or skin that help them blend in with their habitat, it is called camouflage. Blending in with the nature around them helps wildlife to survive in many ways. If an animal does not want to be seen by a predator, camouflage helps them hide. On the flip side, camouflage helps predators not be seen while they sneak up on their prey. A predator is an animal that eats other animals, while prey is an animal that gets eaten by a predator.

### There are four main types of camouflage wildlife use:

- **Concealing or cryptic coloration** - This is when animals match their background to blend in. For example, weasels shed their brown summer coats to grow in a white coat in the winter. In both seasons, they blend in with the background, whether it is brown grass and dirt in the summer or white snow in the winter.
- **Disruptive coloration** - This is when animals have stripes, spots, or other patterns of color to make their body outline not stand out as much against their background. An example of this is spots on a bobcat or a deer fawn.
- **Disguise** - This is when animals blend into their habitat by looking like another object. Some examples of this are walking stick bugs that look like a twig, a grasshopper looking like a leaf, or an american bittern pointing its beak towards the sky and swaying like grass.
- **Mimicry** - This is when harmless animals look similar to poisonous or dangerous animals in order to fool their predators into leaving them alone. The harmless pale milksnake found in Wyoming looks a lot like the dangerous coral snake, which is not found in Wyoming.