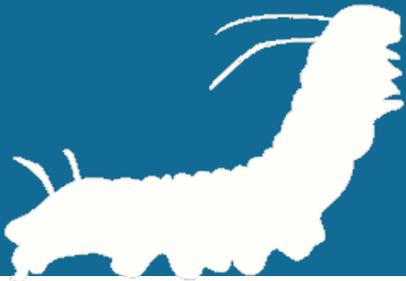


The Wilderness Center Learning Guide

# Animal Camouflage



## Back ard Explorations



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*Looking for Balance* by Taylor Robenalt  
*Sparrows In A Privet Hedge* by Robert Morrow  
*Toad World* by Susan C. Ross



## Animal Camouflage

### Featured Artwork

*Looking for Balance* by Taylor Robenalt  
*Sparrows In A Privet Hedge* by Robert Morrow  
*Toad World* by Susan C. Ross

### Lesson Overview

These three art pieces all feature animals that have excellent camouflage abilities. The activities in this module encourage students to look more closely at the world of camouflage and understand that animals use camouflage to protect themselves from predators.

### Details

- This lesson contains a teacher resource page for each of the three pieces of art. These pages offer some basic questions for classroom discussion and fun facts about the wildlife.
- This module contains two worksheets and instructions for classroom activities to investigate camouflage.
- The four animal camouflage cards (owl, frog, snake, and caterpillar) can be printed out or projected to share with the class.
- A student reading page provides an overview of animal camouflage
- If you need assistance, contact Carrie Elvey – [carrie@wildernesscenter.org](mailto:carrie@wildernesscenter.org)

### Ohio Science Standards

K.LS.2: Living things have physical traits and behaviors, which influence their survival.

1.LS.1 Living things have basic needs, which are met by obtaining materials from the physical environment.

1.LS.2: Living things survive only in environments that meet their needs.

3.LS.3: Plants and animals have life cycles that are part of their adaptations for survival in their natural environments.

4.LS.1: Changes in an organism's environment are sometimes beneficial to its survival and sometimes harmful.



## *Looking for Balance*

By Taylor Robenalt

Would this rabbit/hare be easy to see in your backyard?

What if there was snow on the ground?

Could this hare hide in the classroom?

Snowshoe Hares have large, fuzzy back feet. These work just like human snow shoes, allowing them to move easily across the snow.

Hares are fast – they can run over 25mph. They can leap over 9 feet in one hop.

Hares are different than rabbits. Baby hares are born ready for action – they are able to hop and run just a few hours after birth.

Snowshoe Hares are nocturnal.

Snowshoe Hares were extirpated from Ohio by the early 1900s due to loss of forest cover.

Many attempts have been made to reintroduce them to the state. None of these efforts have been widely successful.

Today, Snowshoe Hares are rare in Ohio, but can occasionally be found in the “snow belt” northern counties.





## *Sparrows in a Privet Hedge*

By Robert Morrow

How many sparrows do you see?

Why do you think they are hiding?

Would this be a good place for a nest?

There are a lot of sparrows in Ohio. 18 different species can be found here every year, and another 10 species are rare visitors.

The common House Sparrow isn't really a sparrow at all. It belongs to a group called weaver finches. House Sparrows were introduced to the United States in the late 1800's.

Song Sparrows have complicated songs. Females choose a mate based on his ability to learn a variety of song components.

The oldest known Song Sparrow was over 11 years old.

Fox Sparrow fossils have been found from the Pleistocene – around 11,000 years ago.

Field Sparrows that nest early in the season build their nest low to the ground to hide in the grasses. Later nests are built higher in shrubs or taller plants to decrease predation.

In the winter, large flocks made up of many different sparrow species move across the landscape.



## *Toad World*

By Susan C. Ross

How many toads do you see?

What do you think this toad is doing?

What other animals might be hiding in the picture?

Toads do not cause warts in humans. They do have a toxin in the large warts on their head that create a foul tasting liquid. This is a great deterrent to predators.

Only male toads vocalize.

A group of toads is called a knot.

Toads will often puff up to make themselves look bigger to a predator.

Toads are frogs. The word “toad” usually refers to those that have dryer warty skin and short back legs.

Frogs have been around for at least 200 million years (at least as long as the dinosaurs).

Toads can live over 20 years in captivity.

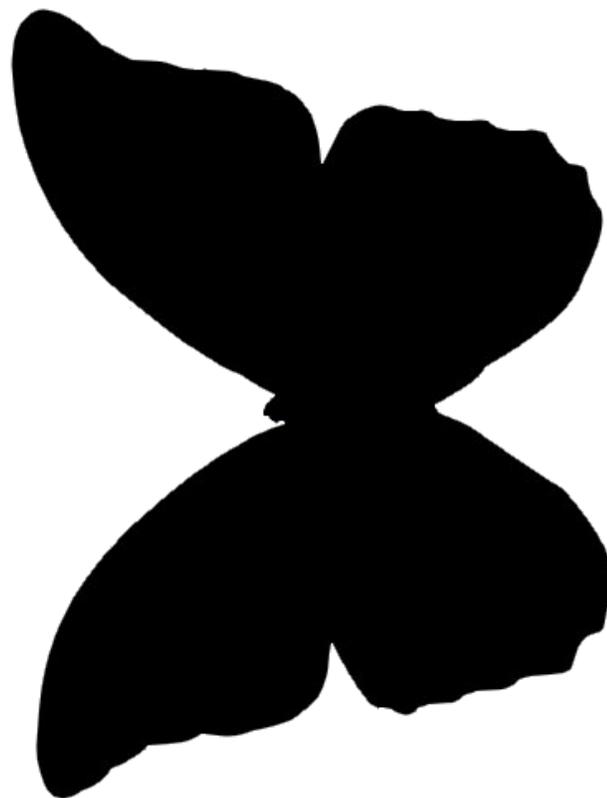
When a toad swallows food, it can pull its eyes down into the roof of the mouth to help push food down its throat.

American Toads can be brown, reddish, or even nearly black.

Toads shed their skin several times a year. As it sheds in one pieces, the toad eats the remains.

## Activity: Caterpillar Coloring

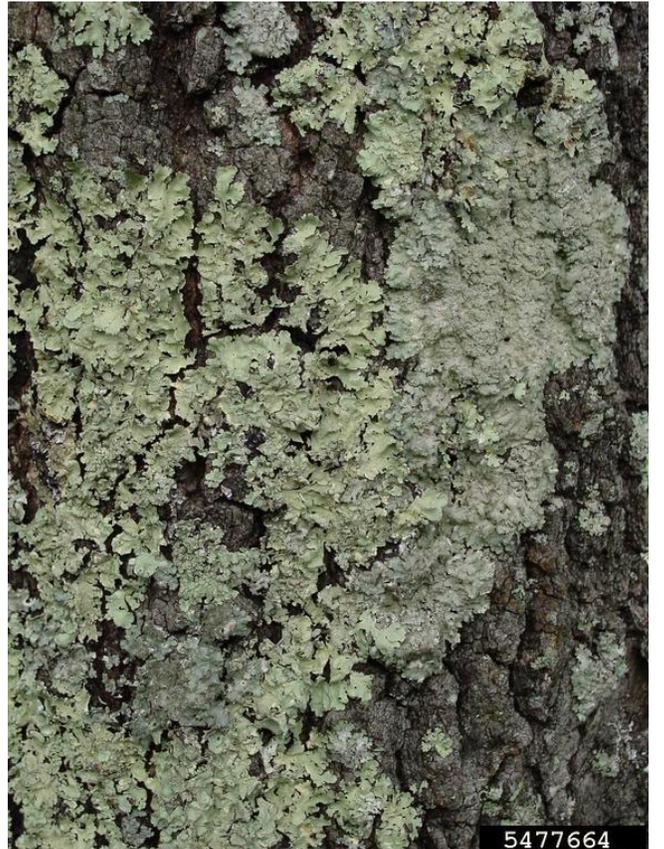
1. Use the butterfly template to cut butterflies from a variety of colors and papers. Hide these around the classroom. Make some easy to find (a red butterfly on the whiteboard) and some very difficult (a newspaper butterfly glued to a newspaper). Remember to count how many butterflies you place around the room! Have students look for the butterflies, first from their seats, then moving around the room.
2. Discuss the activity – focusing on what made each butterfly hard or easy to find.
3. Show students the four camouflage animal pages and have them choose which background habitat would be best for hiding.
4. Have students read the Hide and Seek student page.
5. Use the Caterpillar Camouflage page to have students conduct their own camouflage “experiment”. Have each student color one caterpillar with a bright “don’t eat me” pattern, and one with a color pattern that will blend in with the classroom, hallway, land lab, or playground. Have students place their two caterpillars in the environment. Invite parents, school administrators, or another class to find as many as they can.
6. If you have access to a land lab or local green space, take a walk to look for living examples of camouflage.



## Activity: Toad World Hidden Figures

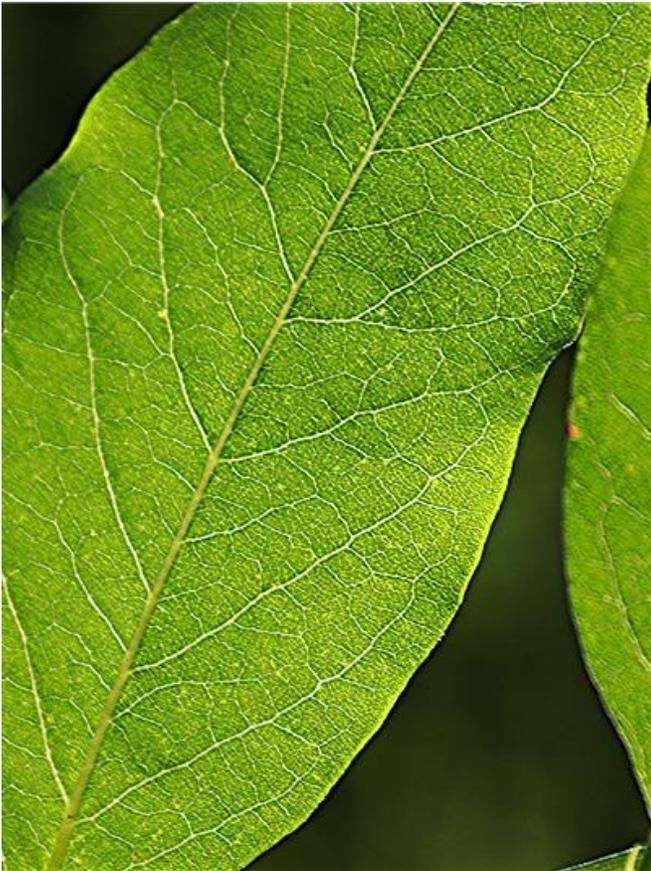
1. Have students look more closely at *Toad World*. Who else might live there? What might the toad be eating?
2. Have students draw a few animals to hide in the picture with the toad. Record how many they have hidden. Talk about what makes an animal hard to find (color, shape, pattern, behavior).
3. Alternately, have students recreate this picture as a bulletin board, adding their own hidden animals.





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## Hide and Seek

Have you ever played hide and seek? Wouldn't it be fun if you could change color to match the wallpaper, a couch, or a tree? You would be very hard to find!

Many animals have the same color or pattern of the places they live. This helps them hide from predators. Using color, shape, or pattern to blend in is called camouflage.

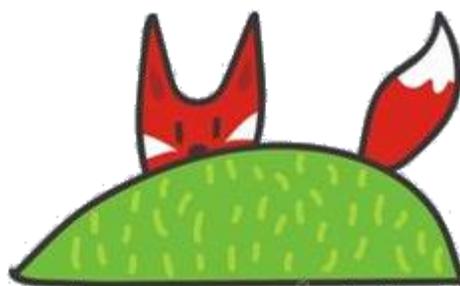
Have you ever seen a tree frog? The color and pattern of their skin looks just like lichen on a tree. When they climb a tree, they blend in. Frogs can even change their color from brown to green to match even more!

Tree frogs also have bright yellow armpits. When they jump, a predator sees the yellow. When they land, the yellow disappears. This confuses predators, making them even harder to find!

Other animals change color too. Snowshoe Hares shed their brown fur in the winter. They grow white fur that helps them blend in with the snow. Then, in the summer, they grow back their brown fur so they can hide in the grass.

Toads have beautiful brown skin. This helps them hide in dead leaves. The bumps on their skin help them blend in, too.

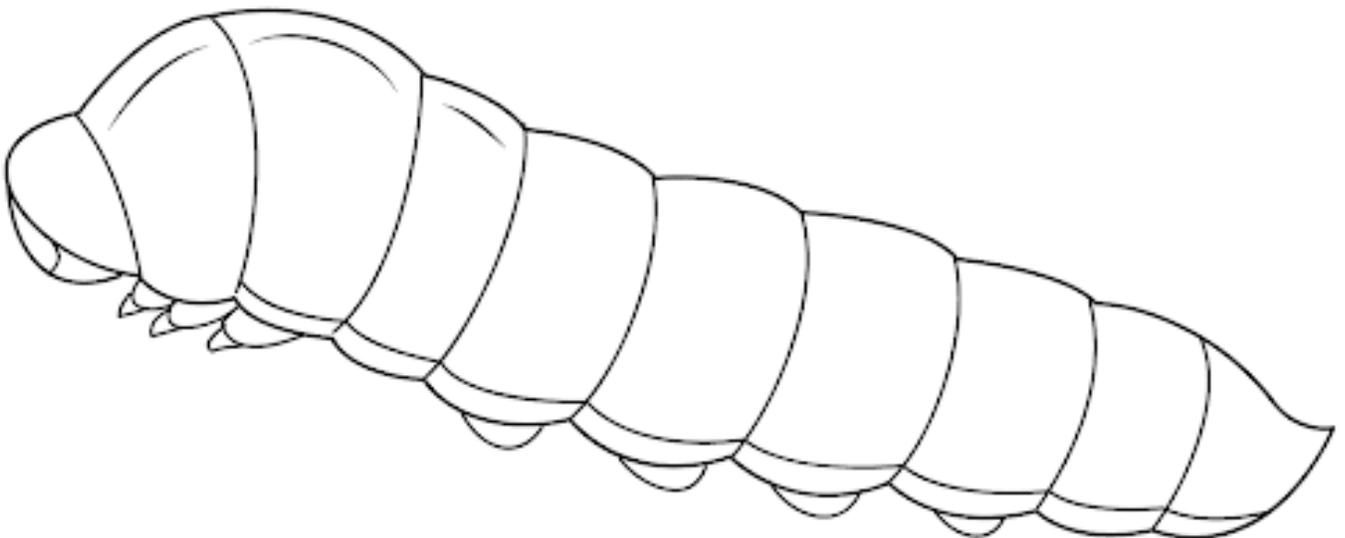
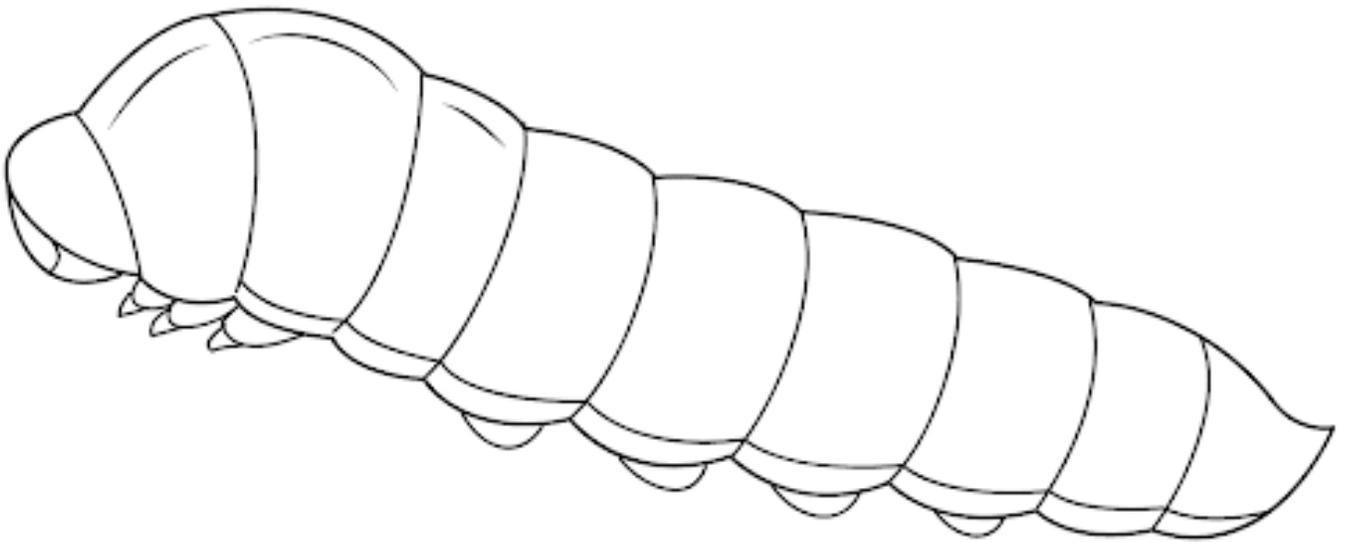
Sometimes animals don't try to hide. Sometimes they are bright colors. These bright colors tell other animals that they do not taste good. It warns predators not to eat them.



# Caterpillar Camouflage

Some animals have excellent camouflage – they might look like the bark of a tree or a bunch of leaves. Others use bright colors to signal that they are dangerous or taste bad.

Color one caterpillar to blend in with your yard or classroom. Color the other set with bright colors. Hide both the brightly colored and camouflaged animals. Which is easier to find?



# Hidden Figures

Who else might be hiding in this picture? Draw or color a few hidden animals to keep the toad company. Write the number of animals you have added to the sentence below. See if your friends can find your hidden animals.

There are \_\_\_\_ hidden animals in this picture.

Name \_\_\_\_\_



*Toad World* by Susan C. Ross