

WILD TIMES

FOR
KIDS*Red-tailed hawk*

Surviving in a Wild World

All living things are adapted to the place where they live. Animals are adapted to their environment in order to survive. They may also be adapted to changes in their habitats. Can you think of some of the special adaptations animals have? Remember, animal adaptations can take many forms, shapes, colors and can even include behavior.

How many pieces of popcorn can you stuff in your mouth? It probably isn't close to the number that a chipmunk could fit in its expanding cheek pouches if it were your size. Because a chipmunk can gather food quickly in its pouches, it can go to a safe place to eat it. This means it spends less time in a place where predators could catch it.

What about the many adaptations birds have? Beaks, feet, wings and color have developed so that a bird is best suited to a particular habitat and lifestyle. Think about the long slender legs and extra long toes of the great blue heron that keep it from sinking in the mud while looking for dinner. The hawk uses its curved, hooked beak to tear apart what it eats.

*Chipmunk*

CAMOUFLAGE

If you were an animal eaten by another animal, what are some of the adaptations you might have in order to survive?

Some prey (animals eaten by other animals) have adapted behaviors to help them escape predators (animals who eat other animals). The kind of behavior might depend on how close the predator is.

Each animal has different points at which it takes action. If a predator is far enough away for the prey to feel safe, all it might do is let others know a predator is near by. If the predator is too close and running away isn't an option, the prey may attempt to scurry to a hiding place. The closer the predator comes to the prey animal, the more likely it is that the prey will "freeze" in place. To escape a hawk or a fox, a cotton-

tail rabbit will freeze if it can't run away. The rabbit remains motionless, depending on its color to help it blend into its surroundings.



© US Fish and Wildlife Service Photo

The woodcock (above) and fawn use color patterns to blend with the forest floor while the snowshoe hare changes its coat to match the seasons.



Color or *camouflage* plays a big part in how well animals are able to hide in their surroundings. The color and pattern of the woodcock's feathers look like the forest floor. An eastern grey tree frog is hard to spot against tree bark. Fawns have spotted fur that looks like spots of light on the ground. A salmon can blend in with the rocky surroundings of a stream. Other animals may also be adapted to changes in their environment. For example, snowshoe hare have a white winter coat to match a snowy environment and a brownish summer coat to blend with the ground and plants.

I'll bet you can think of other animals with interesting adaptations. What do you think are the most interesting?



The eastern grey tree frog almost disappears against the backdrop of tree bark. With spots on its slate grey back, the Atlantic salmon (below) is hard to find among rocks and shimmering light.





Eric Aldrich Photo © NHF&G

The oak besma caterpillar mimics the twig of an oak tree. The texture and color of its skin looks just like a small branch. When it feels threatened, it will stiffen like a stick and stay perfectly still.

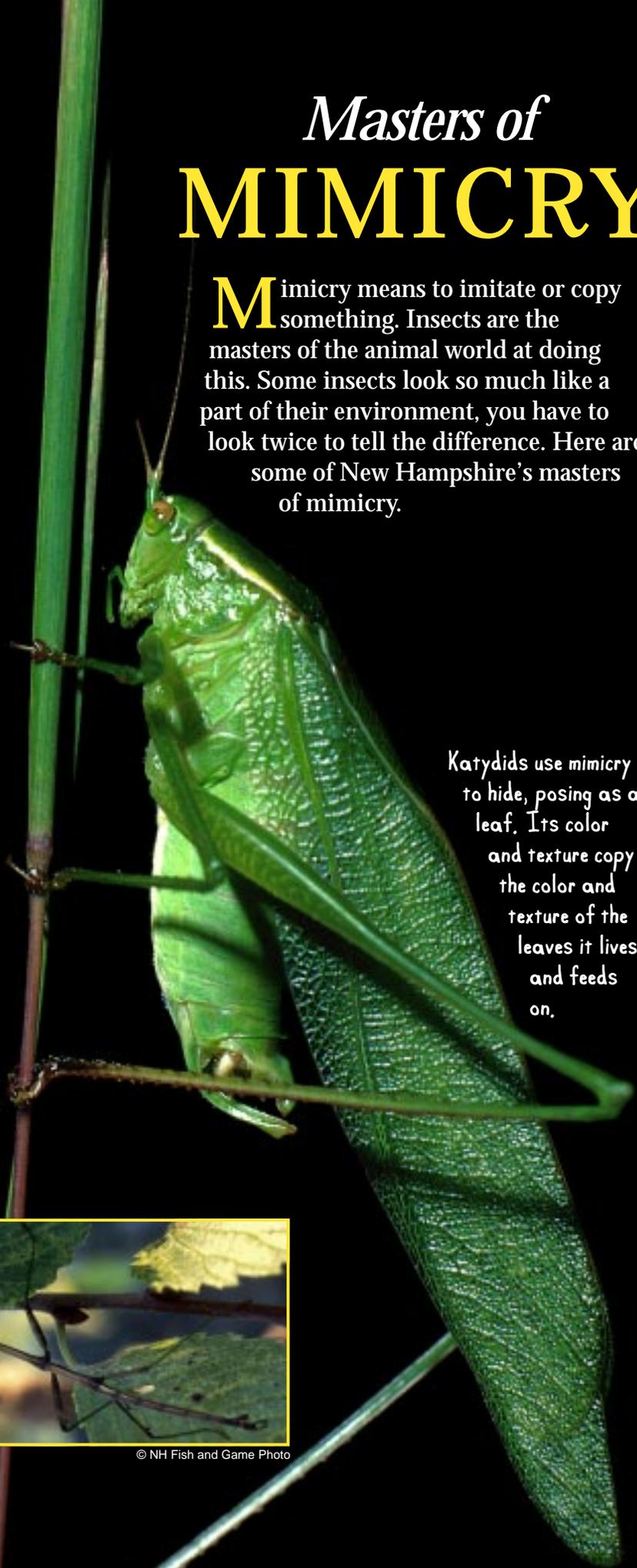


© Alan Briere Photo

Masters of MIMICRY

Mimicry means to imitate or copy something. Insects are the masters of the animal world at doing this. Some insects look so much like a part of their environment, you have to look twice to tell the difference. Here are some of New Hampshire's masters of mimicry.

Katydids use mimicry to hide, posing as a leaf. Its color and texture copy the color and texture of the leaves it lives and feeds on.



This is a walking stick. It's easy to see how it got its name. This one is a male. We can tell because he's brown. The females are green, just like the leaves that they feed on.



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american black bear

Wild
snapshots



Eric Aldrich Photo © NHR&G

luna moth

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snapshots



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oven bird

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least tern

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barned owl

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© Rick Estes Photo

red-spotted newt

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eastern moose

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spotted turtle

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AMERICAN BLACK BEAR

EATS: roots and new plant shoots, insects, carrion, wild fruits and berries, nuts and acorns
HABITAT: mixed forests with a variety of openings

FAST FACTS:

- sexual maturity 3.5 to 5 years
- cubs born late December to February weighing 4 to 7 ounces
- experience winter torpor (a type of semi-hibernation)
- can run up to 35 miles per hour and can climb trees
- females weigh 125-150 pounds, males weigh 200-250 pounds

© Alan Briere Photo



BARRED OWL

EATS: mice and other small mammals, frogs, birds and insects
HABITAT: extensive, mature, moist mixed woodlands

FAST FACTS:

- nocturnal hunter
- “who-who-who cooks for you all” call
- nests in tree cavities
- most common owl in New Hampshire
- roosts in dense stands of hemlock or pine

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LUNA MOTH

EATS: caterpillar eats the foliage of hickory, walnut, birch and sometimes other trees
HABITAT: deciduous forests

FAST FACTS

- two generations per year
- adults do not eat
- found throughout North America
- caterpillar pupates in a short thin cocoon
- giant silkworm moth with eyespots

© Alan Briere Photo



RED-SPOTTED NEWT

EATS: insects, insect larvae, spiders, mites, small crustaceans, small tadpoles and frog eggs
HABITAT: adults found in ponds, terrestrial juveniles (efts) live in moist areas on land, typically under damp leaves

FAST FACTS

- juvenile land stage is bright orange in color and called red eft
- efts remain on land for 2 to 7 years
- second most widely distributed salamander in North America
- toxic skin secretions repel predators
- eggs laid in permanent water bodies in the spring

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OVENBIRD

EATS: insects, slugs, snails and earthworms living on the forest floor
HABITAT: summer- deciduous forest with little understory and an abundance of fallen leaves and logs

FAST FACTS:

- 3-6 eggs
- call – *teacher-teacher-teacher* – starting slow and then speeding up
- migrates to and from the tropics where it spends the winter
- nests on the ground in a natural or excavated depression, made of grass and leaves resembling a clay oven

© NHF&G Photo



SPOTTED TURTLE

EATS: aquatic insects, tadpoles, vegetable matter, amphibian eggs, mollusks, earthworms
HABITAT: unpolluted, small, shallow bodies of water such as brooks, marshes, wet sedge meadows, ditches, and forested wetlands

FAST FACTS:

- maximum shell size 5 inches
- eggs laid in sandy or gravelly areas in the open
- active during the day
- alternate basking in the sun with feeding
- burrow into underwater vegetation and under mud to winter over

© Alan Briere Photo



LEAST TERN

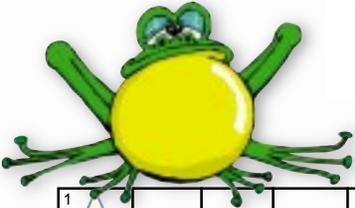
EATS: small fish
HABITAT: uses a variety of open, slightly vegetated habitats near water such as rocky islands and sandy beaches, ocean

FAST FACTS:

- winters in the ocean south of the United States
- graceful water bird
- hovers and plunges headfirst for fish
- one of smallest terns
- pale yellow bill and feet

SURVIVOR

Crossword

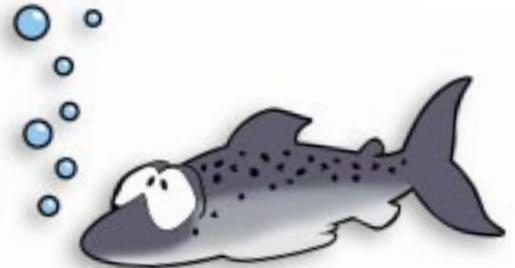


After reading the stories in this issue, complete the crossword puzzle. Then, write down the letters that are in the boxes with stars. Unscramble the letters to discover what the animal is in the center.



Down

- (1.) The snowshoe hare has a brownish ____ in the summer.
- (3.) A ____ has spotted fur that looks like spots of light.
- (7.) The color and texture of the _____ mimics a leaf.
- (8.) Female walking sticks are green, just like the leaves they ____ on.
- (9.) The eastern grey tree ____ is hard to see against tree bark.
- (13.) Katydid use mimicry to hide, posing as a _____.
- (17.) Predators are animals that ____ other animals.



Across

- (1.) A _____ can gather food quickly in its pouches.
- (2.) After gathering its food, the chipmunk can go to a ____ place to eat.
- (4.) The walking stick is a master of _____.
- (5.) All living things are _____ to the place where they live.
- (6.) The ____ uses its curved, hooked beak to tear apart what it eats.
- (10.) Camouflage enables animals to ____ in their surroundings.
- (11.) Animals eaten by other animals are called ____.
- (12.) The coat of the snowshoe ____ turns white in winter.
- (14.) The oak besma caterpillar mimics the ____ of a tree.
- (15.) A cottontail rabbit will freeze if it can't ____ away from a predator.
- (16.) Long toes keep a great blue _____ from sinking in the mud.
- (18.) Some prey have adapted behaviors to help them escape _____.
- (19.) An animal uses _____ to blend with its surroundings.

Unscramble the letters and write the answer here



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Wild Times for Kids is published twice a year by the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department, Public Affairs Division, 2 Hazen Drive, Concord, NH 03301. Multiple copies are available for schools and youth groups upon request.
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www.wildlife.state.nh.us

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