

Camouflage is a very important defensive mechanism for many animals. The ability to blend into the environment to avoid detection by predators is crucial for the survival of many species.

In this game, children will be able to discover what it is like to camouflage themselves into the vegetation to avoid detection from predators!

### **Instructions**

1. Choose one volunteer to be the predator
2. The predator will have to stand in one place, close their eyes and count to 20
3. Whilst the predator is counting, everyone else (the prey) has to run and hide
4. After counting to 20, the predator opens their eyes, and can call out the name, description of clothing or description of location of any prey they can see
5. If the prey is called out they are out of the game
6. Once the predator cannot see any more prey, they have to close their eyes and count to 20 again
7. This time the remaining prey have to hide closer than their previous hiding place
8. The predator opens their eyes after counting to 20 and tries again to call out any prey they see
9. Repeat one more time
10. In the last game, the prey which has managed to get the closest to the predator without being seen is the winner

### **Important points**

- Make sure that the predator doesn't move at all, you could mark the area where they are standing for clarity
- You may have to be the first predator to avoid any confusion whilst the group are learning how the game works
- With younger groups make sure you set boundaries about where they can hide, so you don't have children disappearing off into the distance
- Most children will want to tell you all the locations of the hiding prey if they are caught out. Avoid this by clear instructions at the start and designating an area of prey who are caught
- Have 2 leaders supervising this game, one to make sure the rules are being followed and the other to hide with the children to make sure they stick to the boundaries.
- Works best in places where there is some vegetation so there are plenty of hiding places

## Animal Tracks and Signs

It can be very difficult to work out what animals are living in an area because they are often shy and difficult to find. So one method that scientists use to work out what animals are present is to monitor the tracks and signs.

Tracks and signs could be footprints, food leftovers, droppings, hairs or scents. There are several different games and activities related to tracks and signs depending on the location and the resources you have available.

### **Scent Trail\***

1. Use some old rags and soak them in vinegar- or any other strong smelling substance
2. Split your group into two teams
3. One team lays out the rags along a trail whilst the other team waits
4. After an agreed amount of time (5-10 minutes), the second group follows the scent of vinegar to try and find the second team
5. Once all the rags are used, the team can hide and give the following team a surprise!

\*You can use sticks to shape into arrows, instead of a scent trail

### **Resources**

- Vinegar/Any other strong smelling substance
- Old rags

### **Footprints**

\*This game only works on a beach or a muddy area

1. Everyone stands in a circle
2. Choose one volunteer
3. Everyone turns their back to the centre of the circle and closes their eyes
4. The volunteer jumps into the centre and creates some footprints and marks on the ground before stepping back out
5. When they are ready everyone turns round and looks at the marks in the centre of the circle
6. The group have to work out the series of movements which created the marks in the sand/mud

Many scientists who follow the tracks and signs of animals are able to work out the way the animal was moving, whether there was an interaction with another animal, the direction and speed at which the animal was moving just from the footprints and marks left behind

Predators creeping up on their prey need to be as silent as possible. The slightest sound could alert the prey to their presence and ruin their chance of catching a meal!

In this game children will learn about how predators move stealthily without creating a sound.

### **Instructions**

1. Stand children in a straight line and choose one volunteer
2. The volunteer will have a blindfold and sit or stand in a central point in front of the line
3. Place a set of keys or any noisy object next to the volunteer
4. Choose 2-3 children at a time to silently creep forward and try to steal the keys
5. If the volunteer hears any sounds they point in the direction of the noise
6. If they point directly at a child trying to steal the keys the child has to go back to the line
7. Once a child has successfully stolen the keys and got back to the line without being pointed at they have won the game.
8. Another version of this game for summer is the volunteer using a water pistol instead of their finger

### **Resources**

- Blindfold X1
- Keys/Alternative noisy object X1

Some predators use special techniques to find and catch their prey. Bats use a system called echolocation. This is when they send out high frequency sounds which bounce off objects, return to the bats and allows them to create a picture of what is around them. This is how they can find their prey. Bats eat many different species of insects however for the purpose of this game their main prey is moths.

In this game children will learn about how echolocation works and how specialized predators have to be to catch their prey!

### **Instructions**

1. Stand all children in a large circle so they can stretch out their arms
2. Choose two volunteers, one volunteer is a bat and the other is the moth
3. The rest of the children in the circle will be trees. They can wave their arms about and stop the bat and moth escaping but they have to be as quiet as possible.
4. The bat is blindfolded
5. The bat has to repeat saying 'bat' continuously, every time the bat says 'bat', the moth has to reply 'moth'
6. Following the sounds of the moth, the bat has to try and catch the moth.
7. Once the bat has caught the moth the game is finished
8. Repeat with various numbers of bats and moths depending on your group.

### **Resources**

- Blindfolds