

Counting camouflage

Note: This activity requires only minimal facilitation because guidance cards are provided for visitors.

Target age range of activity

Five–14 year olds

Equipment required

- Laminated camouflage sheet
- Laminated numbered line drawing sheet
- Instruction sign
- Explanatory card

Preparation guidelines

- Print and laminate camouflage sheet
- Print and laminate line drawing sheet and place underneath or on the reverse of the camouflage sheet
- Print instruction sign and put it above the camouflage sheet
- Print explanatory card

Number of insects to find

Blue = 3

Green = 10

Yellow = 6

Red = 8

Description of activity

This activity is structured round an image of a dense landscape, with numerous different coloured insects against a background of plant life. Visitors will be asked to count the number of blue insects, red insects, yellow insects, green insects, etc.

When they have counted, visitors should look below the sheet to see the same picture as a line drawing underneath. The line drawing, with colours removed, will number the different insects in the image (much like paint by numbers). Visitors may be surprised at the number of green insects, as they were hidden against the leafy background.

The explanatory card explains to the visitors why they could not see some of the insects (i.e. camouflage). It also explains how others were more noticeable but that they had adapted other defences, such as how some butterflies have a nasty taste to butterfly-eating birds, or how bees have stings.

Learning outcomes

This activity will encourage visitors to think about different adaptations that species use to survive within their own habitats. They will learn that some species use camouflage as a defence, while others do not rely on camouflage as they have other methods of defence.