LOOKING FOR ANIMALS

The Effect of Eyes in a Predator/Prey Hunt

Unless they are camouflaged, the eyes of a prey can easily be seen by a predator. But many prey have eyes that have adapted in a way that conceals the prey. Such adaptations camouflage the eyes, making the prey harder to find.

Prepare the following items for this predator/prey hunt in which the eyes of the prey are the characteristic being studied.

Use Figure 1 on this page to cut out 50 fish from a newspaper. Use sections from the paper that do not have photos, ads, or color. Glue black dots (use ¼ in. hole punch and black construction paper) on each fish for eyes, as shown in Figure 2. Be sure to put a dot on each side of the cut-out fish.

Next, use a black marker to put a stripe through the eyes on 25 of the fish, as shown in Figure 3. Be sure to add the stripe on both sides of each fish.

Set up an area where the fish will be placed. Sheets of newspapers on the floor will define the area—about 3-ft. wide and 10-ft. long. Tape or weigh down the outside edges of the newspaper to keep it in place. Shred lots of other newspaper into 1-in. wide strips and spread the pieces evenly (to a depth of about 3 in.) over the entire area. Pat down the area to make as even as possible, then thoroughly mix the two kinds of fish and scatter them evenly over the hunting area.

Several children can act as the predators. Have them catch fish one at a time as quickly as they can, placing each catch aside before looking for another fish.

When about half the total number of fish have been caught, stop the activity and analyze the results. Are fish with a stripe through their eyes harder to find than those without the stripe?

Figure 1

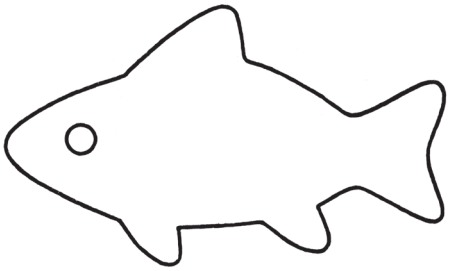

Figure 2

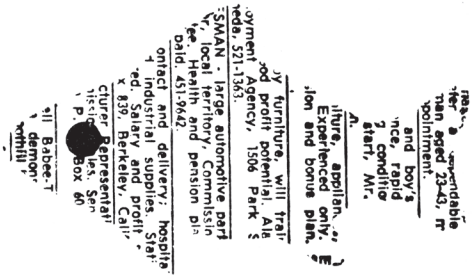

Figure 3