

Arctic Foxes and Camouflage

The Arctic is one of the most extreme places on our planet. It goes through huge changes throughout the year, meaning that anything that lives there has to be extremely tough and adaptable.

Camouflage

Camouflage is used by animals all across the world to sneak up on prey, and to avoid becoming prey themselves!

Camouflage is evolving colours or patterns that help you to blend into your environment and become harder for other animals to spot. This becomes quite tricky if you live in an environment that looks wildly different depending on which month of the year it is.

Animals in the Arctic often have two or more colourations that help them blend into the snow in winter, and the greener landscapes found across the North in the spring and summer months.



*These photos show arctic foxes in their winter and summer colours
Image Credit: Jonatan Pie, Unsplash*

The Arctic Fox

The Arctic fox is a great example of an animal that is perfectly adapted to the changing conditions in the Arctic. In the winter it has a thick fluffy white coat to blend perfectly into the snow and keep it warm, while its summer coat is grey and speckled to blend in with the moss and grass that grows on the ground. Being able to avoid being eaten and sneak up on prey is vital in the Arctic, especially in the winter when food is very hard to come by!



Arctic Run!

Do you know the classic game 'Hide & Seek'? Well we've given it a Dynamic Earth makeover! The game is very similar but, like the arctic fox, you will need to rely on your ability to camouflage.

Imagine you are an arctic fox with hungry cubs. You have to get to your favourite hunting spot with the best prey, but there is a polar bear lurking nearby. Use your expert hiding skills to avoid becoming a polar bear snack!

Round 1

- Nominate someone to be the polar bear – the rest of the players are arctic foxes.
- Polar bear closes their eyes and counts loudly to 20.
- Arctic foxes have until the polar bear gets to 0 to camouflage themselves in the surroundings.
- The polar bear can open their eyes but cannot move from their spot. If they spot you, you're out this time.

Round 2

- Polar bear closes their eyes again, this time counting loudly to 15.
- Arctic foxes must move closer to the polar bear and find somewhere else to camouflage themselves.

Round 3

- Exactly the same as round 2, but foxes only have 10 seconds!

Final round

- If there are still hidden foxes – the polar bear shouts "ready, steady, go!". The first fox to make it past the polar bear is the winner.



Image Credit: Hans Jurgen Mager, Unsplash

Meanwhile, In Scotland....:

Camouflage is used by animals all over the world, not just at the poles. In fact, one of the best examples of camouflage can be found right here in Scotland – the peppered moth!

[Click here](#) to find out the story of the peppered moth, and why it stars in most science textbooks as a great example of how evolution works

These are night flying moths, can you think of any ways you might be able to spot them in your area?