



Student Activity

Adaptive Function of Form: The Beauty of Ugly **NATURE Science Education Series**

Vocabulary:

eccentric, effective, programmed, innocent, physical perfection, star-nosed mole, tentacles, super-sensitive, grotesque, snapping turtle, protuberance, vital, camouflaged, oddities, lugubrious, warthogs, disproportionate, muzzle, offal, persecuted, scavengers, preen, gore, vile, hygienic, proboscis, interloper, arthropods, invertebrates, whip scorpion, scintillating, gulper eel, ghoul, viper fish, rudimentary, carrion, horrific, bizarre, nocturnal, echolocation

Pre-Viewing Discussion:

What are some of the most repulsive animals in the world? What characteristics make them repulsive?

What bird elicits the most fear in human beings? Why do we find these birds revolting?

What undersea animal do you find the most repulsive? Why do you find it so repulsive?

Is it possible that the characteristics we find repulsive in animals perform a serious function? Can you think of any examples?

Post-Viewing Discussion:

What is the main purpose of the Northern sea lion's proboscis? How does this use compare with the purpose of the proboscis monkey's nose?

What are the advantages of the naked mole rat's hairless body?

Why is a bat's face shape so important?

What are the filmmakers implying when they say there is a beauty in ugly animals?

Further Activities:

Further investigate other animals to determine the functions behind their so-called "ugly" bodies or body parts.

Further investigate the relationship between sexual dominance and ugly body parts in the animal kingdom.

Use the Internet to investigate the biology of ugly animals.

Find cartoon characters that are based on ugly animals. Determine if the depiction of the cartoon animal has any basis in reality.