

Fish of the reef: lesson 2 of 3

Tricks for survival

Hiding, teaming up and warning others



A frogfish hiding in plain sight. Photo: MCP



Hide

Camouflage helps fish hide from predators, or sneak up on prey.



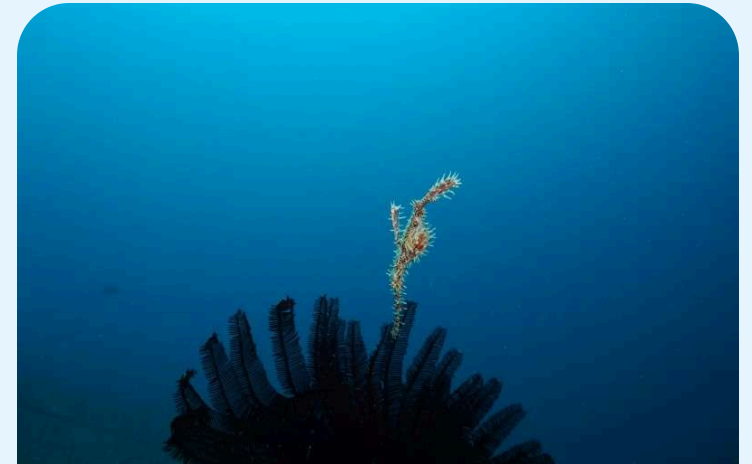
Frogfish

Looks just like a sponge or a lump of coral.



Lizardfish

Matches the sand and waits, perfectly still.



Pipefish

Long and thin like a blade of seagrass.



Team up



Schools

Fusiliers swim in huge schools. It is hard for a predator to pick out one fish.



Cleaning stations

Cleaner wrasses eat parasites off bigger fish, which queue up to be cleaned.



Clownfish and anemones

The anemone protects the clownfish, and the clownfish helps keep the anemone clean.



Warn



Bright colours

Some sea slugs are brightly coloured to warn that they taste bad or are toxic.



Puffing up

Pufferfish swallow water to blow themselves up into a spiky ball.



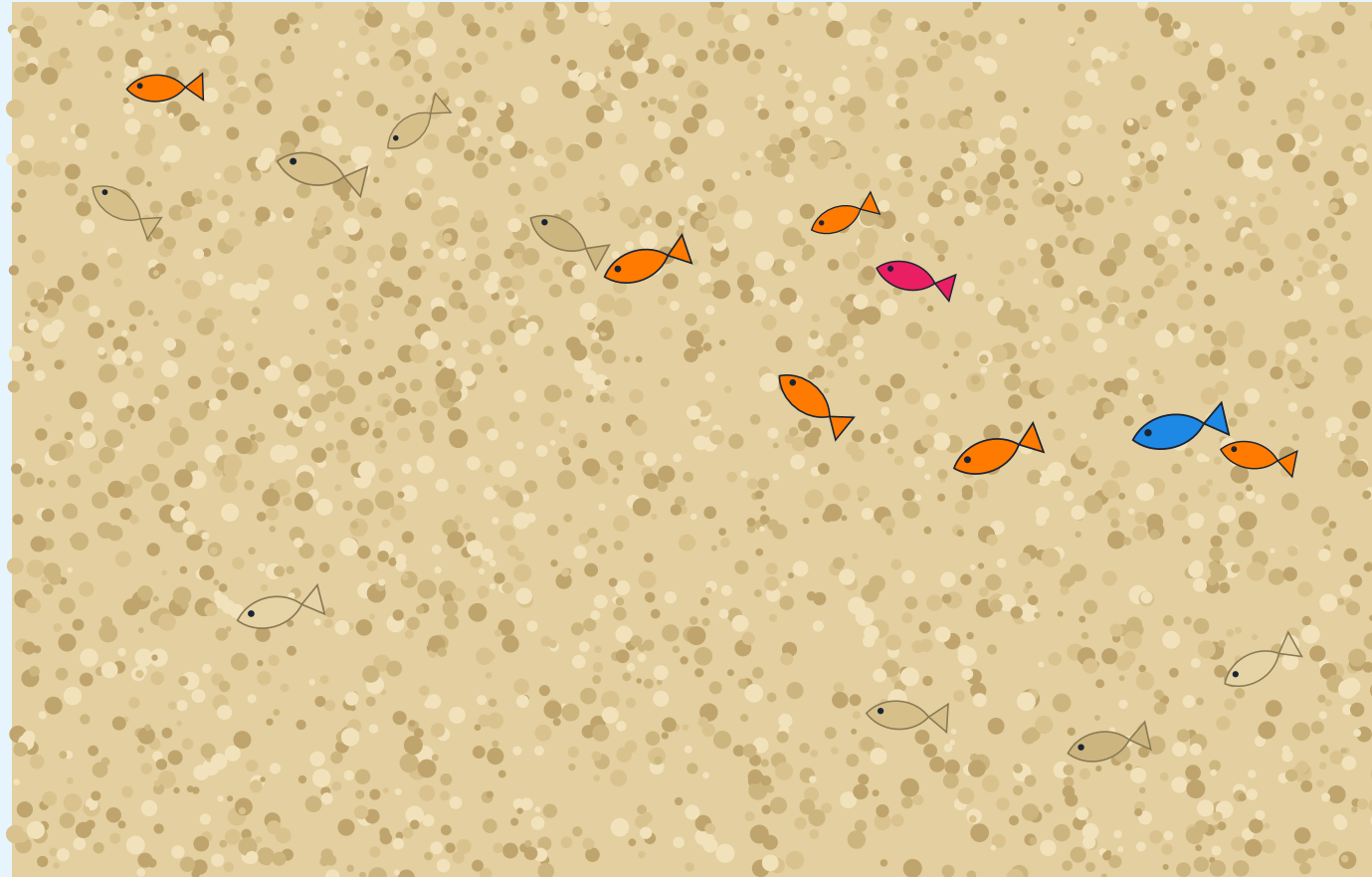
Colour changing

Cuttlefish can change colour in an instant to hide, warn or show off.



The camouflage hunt

You have 30 seconds. How many fish can you find? Which ones were hardest to spot?



Run the hunt

1. Each pair gets a hunt page and a pencil.
2. When your teacher says go, circle every fish you can find in 30 seconds.
3. Count how many sand-coloured fish and how many bright fish you found.
4. Add your results to the class chart. Which colour was found more often?



Talk about it

Which trick would you choose if you were a small reef fish?

Why is it safer to swim in a school?

Why would a fish choose to be brightly coloured?

Next time: counting fish like MCP divers



Photos and sources

Photos: frogfish, lizardfish, pipefish, clownfish, sea slug and cuttlefish by MCP, Negros Oriental. Hunt pages drawn for this lesson. All illustrations drawn for this lesson by Marine Conservation Philippines.

Sources:

- Marine Conservation Philippines.

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