



Why do skunks spray? Why do porcupines have spines? If your answer is to stay alive, you are correct. Skunks and porcupines are examples of **prey**. Prey are animals that are hunted by other animals for food. **Predators** are animals that hunt prey for food. Owls, bobcats, and wolves are examples of predators.

Prey have *adaptations*, or special characteristics, that help them avoid being caught by predators. For example, skunks can give off a bad odor. A predator might stop chasing a skunk after it smells the skunk's foul scent. Porcupines are covered in sharp spines. A predator might decide not to attack a porcupine because of these sharp spines.

An insect called the Io moth has an adaptation to scare away predators. The Io moth has markings on its wings that look like the eyes of a large owl. When predators come near the moth, it shows them its wings. The predators think they see an owl, which is also a predator. This gives the moth time to fly away.



The Io moth has wings that look like the eyes of a large owl.

Plants also have adaptations to keep them from being eaten. Some plants have thorns on their stems or leaves. Rose bushes, blackberry plants, and holly bushes all have thorns. The thorns keep some animals from eating the plants. Some plants are poisonous. Animals that eat the foxglove plant become sick and may even die. Poison ivy and poison oak have oils that give animals a rash if they touch them.



Plants like this cactus also have adaptations to keep predators from eating them.

Just as prey have adaptations to help them avoid being caught, predators have adaptations to help them catch prey. Some predators hide from their prey and then sneak up and attack them. Leopards hunt

## Hide and Seek

in grasses. They have spots on their fur that blend in with the colors in the grasses. This makes it hard for prey to see the leopards.

Many predators have strong muscles. Lions, leopards, and cheetahs are examples of predators that use strength to kill their prey. Predators such as mountain lions and bears have sharp teeth and claws to kill their prey.

Predators blend in with their surroundings to surprise their prey.

