

FIGHTING

with poop and pee

DID YOU KNOW . . .
some animals attack each other
or defend themselves with poop
and pee?

A FOX catches hedgehogs by peeing on them.

In case of danger, a hedgehog curls up into a ball. Because of its spiny coat, it's well protected from enemies. But the fox knows better: he pushes the hedgehog on its back and pees all over it. The hedgehog is so surprised that he comes out of his ball to see what's happening. That's when the fox strikes. Clever, right?

The skipper CATERPILLAR
throws poop.

When the skipper caterpillar (a species of butterfly) feels threatened, it throws poop. It's a real powerhouse, because it can catapult the poop about 3 feet away. This caterpillar's droppings are serious stink bombs that attract the attacker's attention. The attacker goes after the poop instead of the caterpillar, which allows the caterpillar to escape.

KESTRELS can see
mouse pee.

Kestrels think mice are tasty snacks. Since mice are good at hiding, it's not easy to track them down. The kestrel has a handy trick for that: they can see mouse pee. That's because mouse pee emits a type of ultraviolet light that's visible to kestrels. In addition, mice urinate frequently, and they follow fixed routes in the field. This way, the kestrels know exactly where the mice are and where they're going, and they can easily hunt them.

A SKUNK . . . stinks!

A skunk's terrible smell keeps its enemies at bay. If it feels threatened, it sprays a strong-smelling liquid over its attacker to scare them. Run as fast and far as you can, because a skunk's scent travels over 3,000 feet (10 soccer fields) away!



Scientists spot PENGUIN POOP from space.

In Antarctica, there are places where no human has ever been. Since it's extremely cold and there's hardly any food to be found, scientists used to think that no animals lived there. To investigate the area, satellite pictures were taken from space. And what did they reveal? The pictures showed huge amounts of penguin poop. If there's excrement, there are animals.

* The ECOSYSTEM includes all of the animals and plants in an area where they live and mutually cooperate to survive.

The DWARF SPERM WHALE swims in a cloud of poop to scare off attackers.

A dwarf sperm whale is "only" about ten feet long and sometimes feels threatened by orcas. To scare the orcas, it releases a smelly and thick liquid from its poop hole. Then it swims in the cloud of whale poop. Its attackers will think twice before swimming through all that gunk. If the orcas are determined to try again, the sperm whale simply releases a new load of poop.

ADÉLIE PENGUINS defend themselves with diarrhea.

Adélie penguins aren't large birds. They build a nest of stones on the ground. This makes their chicks very vulnerable. When the parents leave their chicks alone to hunt for fish, there's always a predator lurking. But the little fluffballs are smarter than they look: they've found a cunning (and nasty) way to defend themselves. When the enemy is close enough, they push out diarrhea. The attacker isn't just startled; it's also covered in stickiness. It quickly flees.

ELEPHANT SEAL POOP makes the land fertile.

Elephant seal poop is very good for the ecosystem*. Because of the freezing cold and the thick layer of snow, it's hard for plants to grow on the bare rocks and the land. Thanks to the droppings of elephant seals and penguins, mosses can still grow there. Yay!