

Animals have special characteristics that help them to survive in the wild. These special characteristics are called adaptations. An example of this would be how an animal survives during the winter. Some animals such as reptiles hibernate, or go into a deep sleep. Other animals like birds will move to another location during the winter. This is called migration. Then there are some animals such as polar bears that will stay where they are during the winter because they have blubber and thick fur to keep them warm. Another example of an adaptation is where an organism will try to look like another organism for protection from prey. When one thing tries to look like something else it is called mimicry.

Animals will use their senses in the wild in order to keep from being eaten by predators. The animal that is being hunted by another animal is the prey. Many times an animal will react to what is happening in the environment. For example, a deer may raise its tail if it hears a twig snap. When the twig snaps, it is the stimulus. When the animal reacts to that stimulus (raising a tail) it is called the response. After raising its tail, the deer will usually run away to avoid danger.

A learned behavior is something that must be learned by trial and error or by copying others like a bird flying or a dog catching a Frisbee. Inherited behaviors are behaviors that an animal is born with like a spider spinning a web or a bird building a nest. Instincts (something you are born knowing to do) like hibernating and migrating and reflexes (simple automatic responses) like scratching an itch are inherited behaviors.