

Find the Flounder

Animals have special characteristics that help them to survive in their environments. These characteristics are called adaptations. Adaptations include shape, size, color, defensive behaviors and feeding habits. Fish are adapted for life in water.

Flounder live on the bottom of the ocean. When a flounder is first born, it looks like a normal fish with one eye on each side of its head. As it grows up, one eye gradually moves over its head to the other side. That way when the flounder is lying on the bottom, it can see with both eyes. Some flounders face to the right and others face to the left.

The bottom side of the flounder is white while the topside is dark. This is a special adaptation called counter shading. It makes it harder for predators (animals that eat other animals) to see the flounder when it is swimming. Flounder can also change color to match the background. This is called camouflage. Flounder have tiny sacks of pigments (colors) in their skin. These sacks are called chromatophores. Making the sacks smaller and larger allows the flounder to change color. Counter shading and camouflage are adaptations.

