

THE CONCEALING LIZARD

(CONCEALER)

SCIENTIFIC NAME

LACERTA LATET



INTRODUCTION

The Concealer lizard is a vertebrate, in the kingdom Animalia, and is a reptile. It is an active predator, and it lives in the rocky shores of New Zealand, under sheltered rocks in intertidal zones. It was only recently discovered, and it has a variety of interesting adaptations to survive in the harsh environment of the rocky shore.

MRS GREN

A QUICK SUMMARY OF THE CONCEALING LIZARD

- Movement: It moves by crawling on its four legs. It can also swim.
- Reproduction*: The young of the Concealer are born in eggs and hatch 3 months after birth. Females hatch about 5 or less eggs that are 3.5cm high, 2cm wide.


MRS GREN

- Senses: The Concealer has eyes that can see underwater, and also hidden prey. Its smelling is not very good, so it has a snake like tongue to taste chemicals in the air. Its hearing isn't very good either, so it "hears" or feels incoming animals through vibrations in the ground. Its limbs are have very sensitive touch.
- Growth*: The Concealer slowly develops in the egg for 3 months before hatching into a small concealer that is cared for by one or two of its parents(2 parents are more likely) for another 3 months before it is fully grown. The average size of a fully grown concealer is 15-20cm.
- Respiration: The Concealer breathes through its nose.
- Excretion: The Concealer excretes through a small hole at the bottom of its stomach, where the tail starts.
- Nutrition*: The Concealing lizard eats molluscs, such as limpets, mussels, chitons, cats eyes, and the occasional (small)whelk.

We will talk more about the ones with * on them,


HABITAT

Concealers live in the rocky shores of New Zealand and lives concealed under sheltered rocks, hence the name. It lives in the intertidal zone, which means that this area is underwater at high tide and above water at low tide. This area is filled with all kinds of animals, from the tiny zooplankton, to the peaceful seahorse, and the deadly octopus. The weather in the rocky shore is usually very rough, and the cold blooded Concealer has to hibernate during the winter and rainy weather.

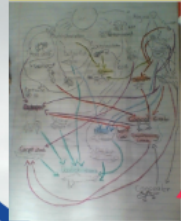


BEHAVIORAL ADAPTATIONS

As indicated before, the Concealer hibernates through rainy weather and all of winter. It has a slow metabolism to help it hibernate for longer periods of time. Since it is a cold blooded reptile, it has to warm up during midday, using its camouflage plates to stay hidden. It then begins to hunt during the afternoon. It goes under water for about 5-10 minutes to hunt, using its large and strong lungs.




UPDATED FOOD WEB WITH THE CONCEALING LIZARD



SUMMARY

The Concealing Lizard is truly one of the most bizarre animals ever discovered, with adaptations that most reptiles don't even have! Fortunately, it is not threatened by any human activity, and its poisonous tail won't do much to you, aside from a bit of swelling. This amazing animal isn't going extinct any time soon.

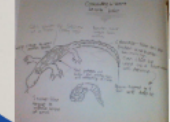

ETHAN MONTANER



STRUCTURAL ADAPTATIONS


The Concealer has a variety of unique adaptations to help it survive in the rocky shore.

- Long claws to open mollusc shells.
- Snake-like tongue to improve its sense of smell.
- Hard plates on its back for camouflage, protection, and attracting a mate.
- Crocodile-like tail for improved swimming and a poison tip for a last resort self defense.
- The ability to curl into a ball for protection and camouflage.
- Strong lungs for longer swimming times.




REPRODUCTION AND LIFE CYCLE

The back plates of a concealer serve more purposes than you would think. They can be used to differentiate males from females, and are used by male concealers to attract a mate. 5 Concealer eggs are laid 3 months after mating, at the start of Spring. They hatch after another 3 months, at the start of Summer. Baby concealers are cared for by both of its parents, and are fed small whelks and cats eye snails. Baby concealers grow very fast, reaching its fully grown size (around 15-20cm) after 3 months. Female concealers have larger and stronger plates to protect her eggs before they are laid, making it very easy to spot the difference between males and females. The average life span of a Concealing Lizard is 5 years.




PREDATORS AND PROTECTION

Concealers are mainly preyed on by cancer crabs, but other types of crabs can also prey on it. Concealers are usually found by crabs when they are warming up in the sun, and also when hunting. However, Concealers are very good at hiding themselves from these predators. First they will find a small space, like under a rock. Then they will curl up into a small ball, the same way echidnas and armadillos do, with its plates on the outside.




DIET/NUTRITION (NUTRITION)

The Concealing Lizard is an active predator. It feeds on molluscs, such as limpets, mussels, chitons, cats eye snails, and it also eats small whelks occasionally. Since most of these animals live underwater, its crocodile-like tail help it swim faster and better, while its strong lungs help it swim for a period of about 5-10 minutes. Once it finds one of these animals, it uses its long claws to pull the mollusc out of its shell.



SELF DEFENSE

Concealing Lizards also have very effective adaptations if they ever get attacked by crabs. Its back plates are very strong; they are able to resist crab pincers long enough for the concealer to escape. If it fails to escape before its back plates break, it still has its tough, muscular tail to use. The tail of a concealer looks exactly like a crocodile's tail, and is used in a similar way as well. It whips it towards its predator violently, attempting to catch it off guard. If it manages to startle the crab, it then stabs it with the poison tip of its tail. The tip has a chemical in it that paralyzes the crab for about 10 seconds, giving the concealer more than enough time to escape. However, the concealer won't always manage to successfully paralyze the crab, and the crab ends up with a hearty meal.



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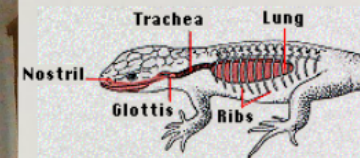
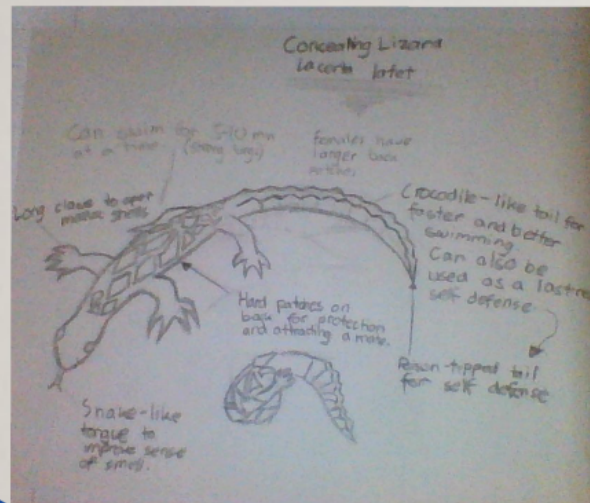
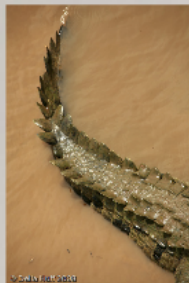
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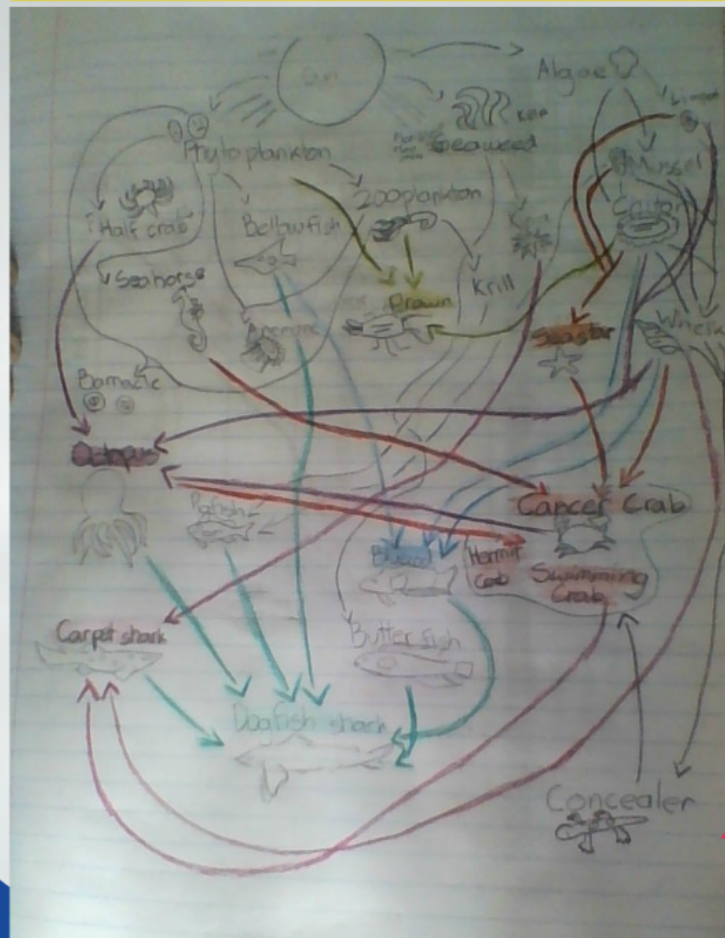


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