



THE MIMIC OCTOPUS

by Lanny and Marilyn Johnson

Octopuses are some of the most fascinating creatures in the seas. You can recognize them by their bulb-shaped head, large eyes, and eight legs or tentacles, covered in sticky suction cups. They help the octopus grab onto the animals it eats. The octopus belongs to a group of creatures called the **cephalopods**. This word, meaning “head to foot” points out that the tentacles of an octopus are literally attached to its head.^{1,2}

Octopuses are boneless and extremely flexible, allowing them to squeeze in and out of incredibly small spaces. Their beak (or beak-like jaw) is the only hard structure in their body. In addition to their flexibility, several studies have shown that octopuses have very large brains and are among the most intelligent creatures on earth. They can learn how to solve problems like mazes, remember what they learn and even play games when bored.³

Not only can octopuses change the shape and texture of their skin, but can also change its color (with special **chromatophore cells**).



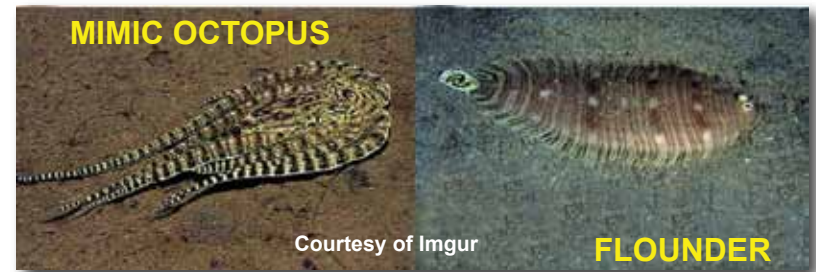
This allows them to hide from predators by matching the patterns and textures of the rocks, plants, or coral around them. The octopus moves by forcing water out of its body through a tube. If in danger, the octopus will use a great deal of force - almost as if it had jet propulsion. Most octopuses can also protect themselves by squirting an inky substance at an enemy, temporarily blinding it. This ink cloud also interferes with predators’ sense of smell.^{4,5}

In 1998, in shallow waters off the coast of Indonesia, a kind of octopus was discovered that has abilities even more fascinating than the others. Rather than just blending into the surrounding environment, the **Mimic Octopus** is the first living creature observed to imitate the shape, color, texture, posture, and behavior of other kinds of animals - even without being near them.⁶

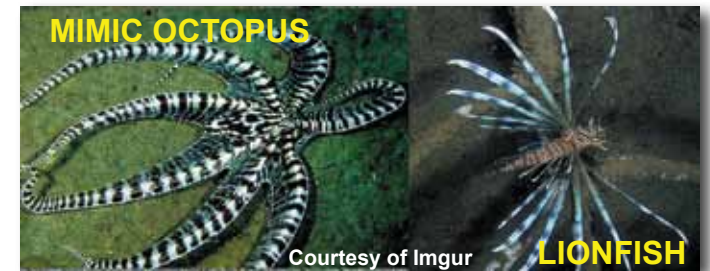
The mimic octopus is small, growing to a total length of about 2 ft (60 cm).

This includes the legs which are about the diameter of a pencil. It is naturally light brown or beige, but will change to more striking colors and textures in order to scare off predators. The mimic octopus specializes in imitating up to 15 kinds of local marine animals, most of which are poisonous.⁷

One mimic octopus was seen flattening its body, pointing its legs in one direction along one side and swimming with a wavy pattern



over the bottom, just like a **flounder** (flatfish). It also can change its colors, legs, and movements to appear like the poisonous, barbed **lionfish**. When attacked by **damsel fish**, the mimic octopus adopts the black and light stripes of the **banded sea snake** – a known predator of damselfish. It even buries its body and six of its legs in a



hole, waving the two exposed legs in the same manner as the poisonous snake. Once danger passes, the mimic octopus can rise to the surface and slowly sink in pulsing movements, its legs trailing like a **jellyfish**.^{8,9}

If an attacker is not fooled, the mimic octopus



will try other disguises. These copycats have also been seen to mimic **banded sole, starfish, giant crabs, seahorses, anemones, stingrays**, and even **mantis shrimp**.¹⁰

Can the trial and error method of evolution ever explain the astounding abilities and behaviors of the mimic octopus? As a former evolutionist, my answer is **NO!** The mimic octopus is just one more example of God's unlimited creativity, power, and wisdom - not chance and accident!



References

- ¹ <https://kidskonnnect.com/animals/octopus/>
- ² <https://animals.howstuffworks.com/marine-life/octopus-camouflage1.htm>
- ³ <https://creationmoments.com/sermons/screen-actor-octopus-3/>
- ⁴ <https://creation.com/mimic-octopus>
- ⁵ <https://kidskonnnect.com/animals/octopus/>
- ⁶ <https://creation.com/mimic-octopus>
- ⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mimic_octopus
- ⁸ <https://creationmoments.com/sermons/screen-actor-octopus-3/>
- ⁹ <https://creation.com/mimic-octopus>
- ¹⁰ <https://creationmoments.com/sermons/screen-actor-octopus-3/>

*Unto thee, O God, do we give thanks,
unto thee do we give thanks: for that
thy name is near thy wondrous works
declare.*

Psalm 75:1

FOR ANSWERS GO TO: <http://www.discovercreation.org/kids/NewsletterAnswers.htm>

Puzzles by Lanny Johnson © AOI 2020

OOPS! In the last issue of Kids Think & Believe Too (Jan-Feb 2020), on the puzzles page the Answers were printed by mistake instead of the Puzzles! We will reprint the intended puzzles in a future issue. Sorry for the inconvenience.

WORDSEARCH

Look for the words from the WORD LIST below. The hidden word might be up, down, sideways or slanted, but not backwards. There are 2 puzzles - 1 HARD & 1 EASY

HARD WORD LIST

ANEMONE CEPHALOPOD CRAB FLATFISH FLOUNDER
JELLYFISH LIONFISH MIMIC OCTOPUS SEAHORSE
SEASNAKE SHRIMP SOLE STARFISH STINGRAY



MIMICING a MANTIS SHRIMP



EASY WORD LIST

ARMS BEAK COLOR INK LEGS
MIMIC OCTOPUS SHAPE