Animal Adaptations and Behaviors

Directions: Read each scenario. Identify the adaptation, label it as structural or behavioral and explain how the adaptation increases the animal’s ability to survive.

1. Nocturnal animals are primarily active at night rather than during daylight hours. There are all sorts of reasons why this might be a good idea. In hotter places such as the tropics, it’s cooler at night. If you’re a bat, then your ancestors took to the night skies to avoid competition for resources from birds. And, of course, it’s easier to hide from predators under cover of darkness.

Adaptation:

Circle one: Behavioral Structural

Explain how this adaptation increases the animals’ ability to survive: ________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________

2. Migration is the usually seasonal movement of animals in pursuit of food, suitable breeding sites or to escape bad weather or other environmental conditions. Mass migrations – such as the wildebeest crossing the Mara River, of Pacific salmon heading upstream to mate – create some of the world’s greatest wildlife spectacles.

Adaptation:

Circle one: Behavioral Structural

Explain how this adaptation increases the animals’ ability to survive: ________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________

3. Chemical tolerant describes organisms which can tolerate high concentrations of substances which would be toxic or corrosive to other life. For instance plants that can live in the acidic and low oxygen conditions of peat bogs, flamingos that can tolerate the alkaline waters of soda lakes and brine flies which can live and breed on salt flats.

Adaptation:

Circle one: Behavioral Structural

Explain how this adaptation increases the animals’ ability to survive: ________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________
4. Food storage is a strategy for getting through hard times when resources are low because of seasonal or other factors. Some store food for only a few hours or days, while others may do it on a seasonal timescale. Many carnivores, such as foxes and leopards, are opportunistic hunters so they might stash or bury surplus prey and return to eat it a few days later. Jags and squirrels bury enough nuts to get them through the winter.

Adaptation:

Circle one: Behavioral Structural

Explain how this adaptation increases the animals’ ability to survive: ______________________

___________________________________________________________________________________________

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5. Territorial animals actively defend the area in which they live and more importantly on which they depend for resources. If the animal doesn’t advertise its ownership and defend it from members of its own species, it isn’t territorial. Often, advertising takes the form of scent marking the territory boundaries as a clear marker for others to stay away. Challenges and disputes can be resolved in a number of ways, not always violently. In addition to the “traditional” territories, the males of some non-territorial species – such as wildebeest – establish temporary mini-territories in the mating season to impress the females.

Adaptation:

Circle one: Behavioral Structural

Explain how this adaptation increases the animals’ ability to survive: ______________________

___________________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________________

6. Mimicry is when an animal or plant resembles another creature or inanimate object, either for defense or to gain other advantages. Pebble plants try not to be eaten by resembling stones, praying mantises hope to lure prey close by resembling flowers. The mimicking species may smell, sound or behave like the creature or object it is duplicating, not simply look like it. For example one type of firefly mimics the light flashes and pheromones of another in order to catch and eat it.

Adaptation:

Circle one: Behavioral Structural

Explain how this adaptation increases the animals’ ability to survive: ______________________

___________________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________________
7. What other animal structural adaptations can you think of?

8. What other animal behavioral adaptations can you think of?

For more examples, visit [http://www.bbc.co.uk/nature/adaptations](http://www.bbc.co.uk/nature/adaptations)