

A vibrant blue crayfish is shown on a dark, textured rock. The crayfish is facing left, with its large pincers and legs clearly visible. The background is a natural, outdoor setting with some greenery.

BLUE LOBSTERS

and

PINK DOLPHINS

by Diane Zahler

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Amplify Atlas™

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Blue Lobsters and Pink Dolphins

Level T

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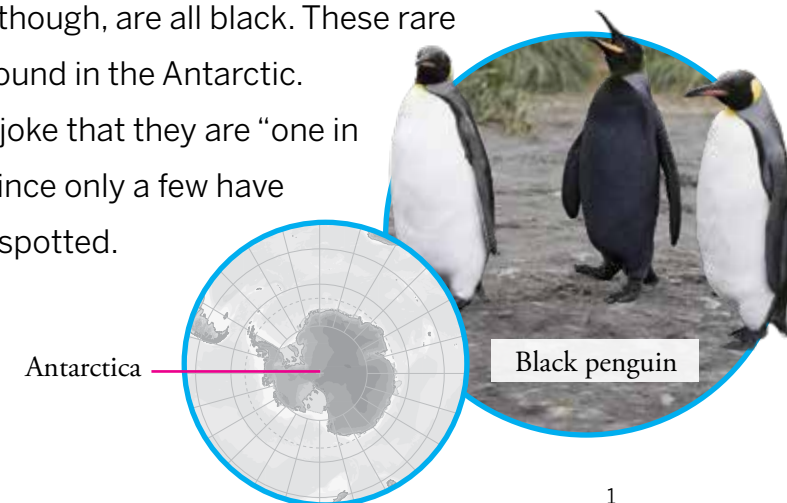
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Everyone knows that penguins are black and white, dolphins are gray, and peacocks are a marvelous mix of jewel-like colors. Right? Actually, the answer is, “Not always.” In fact, you might be very surprised to find out what colors these and other animals can be!

The Black Penguin

Most penguins have black backs and white fronts. These colors make them harder for **predators**, their natural enemies, to see them from above and below when they are swimming. A small number of penguins, though, are all black. These rare birds are found in the Antarctic. Scientists joke that they are “one in a zillion,” since only a few have ever been spotted.



The Blue Lobster

A lobster in the ocean is hard to see. That's because lobsters are a combination of colors, usually green and brown. These colors **camouflage** the lobster, or help it blend in with its surroundings.

One very rare type of lobster, though, is bright blue. Scientists estimate that only one in two million lobsters is this color. The unusual color is the result of too much of a certain **protein**, which turns the shells blue.



A blue lobster



The Pink Dolphin

The Amazon River dolphin looks a bit different from dolphins found in the world's oceans. For instance, it is smaller, and its nose is much longer. What really sets it apart, however, is that it can be pink! Scientists think these dolphins are pink because their blood **vessels** are very close to the surface of their skin. Because we can see those vessels, the dolphins appear to be pink. They almost look as though they're blushing!



Amazon River dolphin



The White Peacock

This beautiful bird is a **variation**, or different type, of Indian blue peafowl. Peafowl are usually many different colors, but that's not always the case. In fact, white peafowl can be found anywhere other peacocks and peahens are raised. So while they may not be as rare as some strangely colored animals, they certainly look like something special.

So the next time you're in the woods, or at a zoo, or on a farm, keep your eyes open. Who knows? There might be an orange squirrel waiting just around the corner.



A white peacock

Glossary

camouflage (v.): to help an animal blend in with its surroundings

predators (n.): animals that hunt and eat other animals

protein (n.): a natural material found in plants and animals

variation (n.): a different type

vessels (n.): tubes through which blood flows

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Informational

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