Mimicry & Camouflage

Biology

The strategies, and the difference between the two main mimicry types.

Batesian

- Harmless species mimics a harmful one
- Hoverfly resembling a wasp
- Depends on the model being commoner
- Parasitic on the model's reputation
- Frequency dependent

Müllerian

- Several harmful species converge on one signal
- Bees, wasps and hornets share a pattern
- All benefit — shared learning cost
- Mutualistic
- Not frequency dependent in the same way

THE DIFFERENCE THAT MATTERS

Batesian mimicry fails if the mimic becomes too common: predators learn the signal is unreliable.

Camouflage is crypsis — avoiding detection. Mimicry is misidentification after detection. Different problems.