

1 **Diversity in warning coloration: selective paradox or the norm?**

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23

## 24 ABSTRACT

25 Aposematic theory has historically predicted that predators should select for warning signals to  
26 converge on a single form, as a result of frequency-dependent learning. However, widespread  
27 variation in warning signals is observed across closely related species, populations and, most  
28 problematically for evolutionary biologists, among individuals in the same population. Recent  
29 research has yielded an increased awareness of this diversity, challenging the paradigm of signal  
30 monomorphy in aposematic animals. Here we provide a comprehensive synthesis of these  
31 disparate lines of investigation, identifying within them three broad classes of explanation for  
32 variation in aposematic warning signals: genetic mechanisms, differences among predators and  
33 predator behaviour, and alternative selection pressures upon the signal. The mechanisms  
34 producing warning coloration are also important. Detailed studies of the genetic basis of warning  
35 signals in some species, most notably *Heliconius* butterflies, are beginning to shed light on the  
36 genetic architecture facilitating or limiting key processes such as the evolution and maintenance  
37 of polymorphisms, hybridisation, and speciation. Work on predator behaviour is changing our  
38 perception of the predator community as a single homogenous selective agent, emphasising the  
39 dynamic nature of predator–prey interactions. Predator variability in a range of factors (e.g.  
40 perceptual abilities, tolerance to chemical defences, and individual motivation), suggests that the  
41 role of predators is more complicated than previously appreciated. With complex selection  
42 regimes at work, polytypisms and polymorphisms may even occur in Müllerian mimicry  
43 systems. Meanwhile, phenotypes are often multifunctional, and thus subject to additional biotic

44 and abiotic selection pressures. Some of these selective pressures, primarily sexual selection and  
45 thermoregulation, have received considerable attention, while others, such as disease risk and  
46 parental effects, offer promising avenues to explore. As well as reviewing the existing evidence  
47 from both empirical studies and theoretical modelling, we highlight hypotheses that could benefit  
48 from further investigation in aposematic species. Finally by collating known instances of  
49 variation in warning signals, we provide a valuable resource for understanding the taxonomic  
50 spread of diversity in aposematic signalling and with which to direct future research. A greater  
51 appreciation of the extent of variation in aposematic species, and of the selective pressures and  
52 constraints which contribute to this once-paradoxical phenomenon, yields a new perspective for  
53 the field of aposematic signalling.

54

55 *Key words:* aposematism, continuous variation, polymorphism, polytypism.

56

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88

89 **I. INTRODUCTION**

90 Aposematic prey use warning signals to advertise their defences or unprofitability to potential  
91 predators (Poulton, 1890; Cott, 1940). Since Fritz Müller's (1879) first insights into the  
92 dynamics of aposematic species, selection from predators has generally been assumed to favour  
93 convergence in warning signals, as this decreases prey mortality during predator avoidance  
94 learning (Endler & Greenwood, 1988; Ruxton, Sherratt & Speed, 2004; Sherratt, 2008).  
95 Traditional theory holds that aposematic prey benefit from 'strength in numbers', as predators  
96 should learn an association between a signal and an aversive stimulus more rapidly and more  
97 effectively if they encounter it with greater frequency. Conversely, any aberrant forms of the  
98 warning signal, deviating from the 'normative' pattern (the average pattern or most common  
99 morph in the population) should increase mistaken attacks by predators, decreasing the  
100 effectiveness and speed of predator learning. Individuals with the 'normative' pattern thus  
101 benefit from the frequency of that phenotype and incur a reduced predation rate, whereas  
102 aberrant individuals do not have this benefit. Therefore, natural selection is thought to disfavour  
103 variation in aposematic patterns and favour monomorphism in warning signals (Poulton, 1890) –  
104 a hypothesis supported by many examples from the field (e.g. Mallet & Barton, 1989; Borer *et*  
105 *al.*, 2010; Chouteau, Arias & Joron, 2016). As a result, variation in aposematic signals has  
106 historically been considered paradoxical.

107 Nevertheless, variation in warning signals is found at several levels, from individual to  
108 population and species-level differences, and recent research has led to a renewed interest in this  
109 diversity (Arenas & Stevens, 2017). The degree to which any one aposematic pattern enhances

110 fitness is a product of many different selective pressures, ranging from predator–prey  
111 interactions and environmental conditions to trade-offs with other signal functions (Ojala,  
112 Lindström & Mappes, 2007). In this review, we bring together some of the latest findings of  
113 experimental and theoretical work to address the role of these selection pressures, and help  
114 resolve the apparent paradox of variation in aposematic phenotypes. While aposematic signallers  
115 can utilise multiple modalities (e.g. visual displays, odours, sounds, behaviours), simultaneously  
116 or sequentially (Rowe & Halpin, 2013), visual signals have received the most attention, so we  
117 have focused our discussion on variation in colour and pattern in aposematic animals (see  
118 examples of aposematic variation in Fig. 1).

119 Before addressing the processes underpinning variation in warning signals, it is necessary to  
120 understand the levels at which it occurs (Fig. 2). Warning coloration can vary allopatrically  
121 between different populations of the same species [e.g. polytypism (Mayr, 1963)] or  
122 sympatrically within populations [e.g. polymorphism (Ruxton *et al.*, 2004)]. The  
123 conspicuousness of signals, influenced by traits such as luminance and saturation, may also vary  
124 continuously among individuals of the same morph, temporally within a single individual across  
125 seasons or its life cycle, and among populations across a species' distribution range, forming a  
126 cline. Adding further complexity, more than one form of variation can occur simultaneously, and  
127 different components of the warning signal, such as size, pattern and hue, can vary  
128 independently, according to separate proximate mechanisms. Variation can be genetically  
129 determined (i.e. fixed), plastic, or shaped by the interaction of genes and the environment. The  
130 harlequin ladybird (*Harmonia axyridis*) for example, has multiple genetically determined morphs  
131 (Komai, 1956), but the extent of melanism within morphs has been shown to vary with

132 developmental temperature (Knapp & Nedvěd, 2013). Considerable variation in aposematic  
133 signals is most difficult to explain at the intra-population level, when alternative warning signal  
134 phenotypes co-occur in single location (polymorphism, polyphenism, and continuous variation;  
135 Fig. 2). We have therefore focused our review on making sense of this poorly understood yet  
136 remarkably common phenomenon.

137 Here we show how the complex biotic and abiotic environments in which species live give rise  
138 to a myriad of different selection pressures, which in turn lead to diversity in warning signals.  
139 This provides a general conceptual framework to explain when and why variation in aposematic  
140 patterns might exist. We begin by discussing the theory behind warning signal variation, then the  
141 demographic and genetic architecture that underpins it, before moving on to consider how  
142 variability in predation pressures can favour variation in warning signals, as opposed to  
143 monomorphy, even in mimicry systems (see Fig. 3 for mimicry). We then review how the  
144 multifunctionality of colour patterns can shape and favour diversity in aposematic signals.  
145 Finally, we summarise known cases of signal variation in aposematic species and discuss the  
146 taxonomic limitations of our current understanding of the diversity of warning signals. To  
147 showcase where and when warning signal variation occurs, and highlight possible systems in  
148 need of further study, we compiled a table of aposematic species in which variation has been  
149 described in the existing literature (see online Supporting information, Appendix S1 and Table  
150 S1). We find examples of warning signal variation in nearly every taxon in which we find  
151 aposematism (Table S1), suggesting that variation in warning signals is far more widespread than  
152 previously appreciated. Altogether, this review aims to demonstrate that variation in aposematic  
153 signalling should no longer be considered paradoxical, a new perspective that stands to advance

154 our understanding of aposematic signalling.

155

## 156 **II. THEORY**

157 Explaining the existence of phenotypic variation in the face of selection has long challenged  
158 evolutionary biologists and theoreticians (Bull, 1987; Roulin, 2004). The outstanding colour  
159 variation in aposematic species has been viewed as particularly problematic due to the pervasive  
160 view of predators as a ‘purifying’ selective pressure moving warning coloration towards  
161 monomorphism (Mallet & Joron, 1999). The majority of theoretical work investigating the  
162 factors that determine such colour variation focuses on Müllerian mimicry (Sherratt, 2008; Joron  
163 & Mallet, 1998), involving the evolution and maintenance of a shared warning signal in  
164 sympatric, aposematic species (Müller, 1879). While it may seem counterintuitive to discuss the  
165 theory behind the evolution of similarity to understand how variation might arise and be  
166 maintained, the factors responsible for creating or reducing variation in signal form are likely to  
167 be closely linked. That is, selection pressures for or against mimicry and within-species  
168 ‘purifying’ selection may have many features in common.

169 Early models predicted that when there are multiple morphs present (whether they belong to one  
170 species or multiple species), an adaptive landscape characterized by multiple fitness peaks is  
171 generated, and predators should act to push the population as a whole to the highest adaptive  
172 peak by removing morphs defining lower adaptive peaks (generally the less common morph),  
173 particularly when there are numerous prey types (e.g. Sherratt, 2002; Ruxton *et al.*, 2004; Beatty,  
174 Beirinckx & Sherratt, 2004). In a similar fashion, if variation within a population is not discrete,  
175 and the peaks are short with wide tails, then predators should push the population’s adaptive



176 peak up by removing outliers, i.e. those individuals most different from the ‘norm’ (Sherratt,  
177 2006). Furthermore, where discrete variation occurs, the different phenotypes should evolve  
178 towards similarity as long as there is protective overlap between these distinct phenotypes in  
179 peak space, except when the phenotype is determined by a single locus (Turner, 1983). This  
180 occurs because overlapping space in the fitness landscape increases survival, and individuals that  
181 become increasingly more similar have overall higher survival (Mallet & Joron, 1999). This  
182 situation should only arise where there is a sufficient amount of overlap in fitness peaks in the  
183 adaptive landscape – if there is barely any overlap then the selection acting against phenotypes in  
184 the overlap area should be similar to that of a novel, unprotected form. In general, this scenario is  
185 more likely when there is one adaptive peak that is higher than others due to either population  
186 size or higher toxin load, in which case it should ‘capture’ the alternative species/morph (Turner,  
187 1983).

188 These models predict that intraspecific warning signal variation would only persist under certain  
189 conditions. Firstly, variation can be maintained where population sizes are large (Plowright &  
190 Owen, 1980) and there is spatial or temporal variation in local predator communities combined  
191 with simple drift, resulting in a mosaic of different phenotypes (Franks & Noble, 2004; Ruxton  
192 *et al.*, 2004; Sherratt, 2006). Secondly, and slightly more contentiously, new morphs could arise  
193 and reach high local frequency through mechanisms such as bottlenecks, drift, mutation, *via*  
194 fluctuations in local ecological factors, or through relaxed selection due to a decline in predator  
195 abundance, causing peak shifts and the creation of new adaptive peaks (Turner & Mallet, 1996).  
196 Notably, the exact mechanisms by which this occurs are rarely covered in any greater detail than  
197 the above list, and are often treated as a ‘black box’. Herein, we attempt to flesh out both the

198 mechanisms and circumstances that may lead to the creation and maintenance of these new  
199 phenotypes and corresponding adaptive peaks.

200 Once new peaks are created, theory posits that local predators should exert uniform, frequency-  
201 dependent selection for all conspicuous species/morphs towards this new peak (Sheppard *et al.*,  
202 1985). This stabilising selection can then work on surrounding populations via movement of  
203 hybrid clines or individuals migrating into new populations. This idea is known as shifting  
204 balance, and has been implicated in the evolution of geographical mosaic patterns in aposematic  
205 species and mimicry rings (Brown, Sheppard & Turner, 1974; Turner, 1983, Mallet, 2010;  
206 Chouteau & Angers, 2012). A key prediction of the shifting balance idea is that any form of  
207 polymorphism should be strongly selected against, and therefore temporary. Similarly,  
208 continuous variation in the aposematic signal should be generally selected against as stabilising  
209 selection should remove the most-different individuals (i.e. those furthest from the ‘average’  
210 appearance). This, of course, depends on predators being able to discriminate against and  
211 remember subtle differences in aposematic signal over time (see Section IV and Sherratt & Peet-  
212 Pare, 2017).

213 Unfortunately, very little of the warning colour variation observed in wild populations meets the  
214 conditions outlined above. For example, multiple morphs of the same species are frequently  
215 found existing in the same locality (e.g. Brown & Benson, 1974; Borer *et al.*, 2010), often at low  
216 densities and/or low frequencies within a population (Chouteau *et al.*, 2017). Furthermore, the  
217 idea that such polymorphisms are likely to be transient and unstable has also been empirically  
218 challenged; for example, polymorphism in the poison frog *Oophaga pumilio* has been persistent  
219 on Bastimentos Island in Panama (Richards-Zawacki, Yeager & Bart, 2013) and relaxed

220 selection resulting from a decrease in predators produces a vastly reduced predation rate even on  
221 novel or intermediate forms (Chouteau & Angers, 2012). The mismatch between theory and  
222 empirical examples is in part due to the overly simplistic assumptions made about predator  
223 behaviour in earlier models. It is increasingly apparent that predator behaviour is more complex  
224 than early evolutionary models of warning coloration and mimicry allowed (Sherratt, 2008;  
225 Skelhorn, Halpin & Rowe, 2016), such as the early (and incorrect) assumption that predators  
226 sample a fixed number of prey (Rowland *et al.*, 2010a). The incorporation of some of this  
227 complexity in predator behaviour into models, e.g. optimal predator sampling strategies based on  
228 exploration–exploitation trade-offs (Sherratt, 2011), has started to close the gap between theory  
229 and empirical examples resulting in scenarios where warning colour variation is predicted to  
230 arise within and among species (Aubier & Sherratt, 2015; Kikuchi & Sherratt, 2015).

231 As these more recent theoretical models demonstrate, less-paradoxical predictions about the  
232 emergence and maintenance of multiple fitness peaks in warningly coloured species can be  
233 generated by incorporating predictions derived from empirical work on the complexity of  
234 predator behaviour. However, there is still a great deal of nuance in predator behaviour that has  
235 yet to be captured in theoretical models (see Section IV). It is also important to note that genetic  
236 mechanisms may facilitate or constrain variation (McLean & Stuart-Fox, 2014; see Section III)  
237 and that independent fitness peaks can easily be reinforced by alternative biotic and abiotic  
238 selection pressures (other than predation) that may also act upon warning coloration (Calsbeek,  
239 Hasselquist & Clobert, 2010; see Section V). Below we outline these and other factors that future  
240 models could take into consideration, hopefully facilitating convergence of model predictions  
241 with the variation observable in the warning coloration of aposematic species.

242

243 **III. EVOLUTIONARY AND GENETIC CONSTRAINTS ON WARNING-COLOUR**244 **DIVERSITY**

245 Studies of the proximate mechanisms underlying aposematic variation have a limited taxonomic  
246 scope (but see Section VI and Table S1 for more possibilities), focusing primarily on *Heliconius*  
247 butterflies. Thus our review of the genetic and developmental pathways engendering diversity in  
248 warning colours is similarly largely based on insights gained from *Heliconius*.

249

250 **(1) Geographic isolation and range shifts**

251 Many of the well-studied polymorphic/polytypic aposematic species occur in the Neotropics, and  
252 consequently early hypotheses explaining polymorphisms and polytypisms relied on the  
253 Pleistocene refugium theory (Turner, 1965; Brown, 1979). This theory states that high rates of  
254 allopatric speciation/subspeciation resulted from fragmentation of tropical forests during climate  
255 warming, and then when climate cooled, and forests became continuous, species became  
256 sympatric (for discussion see Merrill *et al.*, 2015). The Pleistocene refugium theory has been  
257 invoked to explain the diversity of warning colours observed in poison frogs, neotropical  
258 Lepidoptera, and other tropical species, with refugia in Europe potentially playing a similar role  
259 for temperate species. However, this theory has recently been criticised and, in the case of  
260 *Heliconius*, time-calibrated phylogenies indicate that diversity was present before the Pleistocene  
261 (Nelson *et al.*, 1990; Whinnet *et al.*, 2005; Dasmahapatra *et al.*, 2010; Kozak *et al.*, 2015; Merrill  
262 *et al.*, 2015). The current working hypothesis for how geographic or microhabitat variation has  
263 led to polymorphisms includes several stages. First, polytypisms arise through parapatric

264 populations (populations with a narrow contact zone and low levels of gene flow) *via* a variety of  
265 non-climatic mechanisms, such as genetic drift or adaptation to the local abiotic environment  
266 (Mallet, Jiggins & McMillan, 1998). Then, once populations are established, either gene flow  
267 continues or they eventually become sympatric, producing polymorphisms that may be transient  
268 (Mallet *et al.*, 1998; Joron & Iwasa, 2005). Polymorphisms/polytypisms can similarly arise due  
269 to earlier divergence of one clade, followed by subsequent mimicry by another clade (e.g.  
270 Symula, Schulte & Summers, 2001, 2003; Sanders, Malhotra & Thorpe, 2006).

271

## 272 **(2) Genetic basis of warning coloration**

273 Investigations into both *Heliconius* and *Papilio* (swallowtail butterflies) species have shown that  
274 a handful of specific genetic loci and associated regulatory elements are responsible for the  
275 varied phenotypes these genera present (Kunte *et al.*, 2014; Kronforst & Papa 2015; Nishikawa  
276 *et al.*, 2015). While a limited number of loci controlling colour and pattern would seem to be a  
277 fairly large constraint on the evolution of phenotypes, in both groups it is in fact the basis for  
278 extensive phenotypic diversity, resulting from repeated selection (Nadeau, 2016). For example, a  
279 number of key loci are known to control switches in pattern elements within the mimetic  
280 radiation of *Heliconius* butterflies [e.g. *WntA* (Martin *et al.*, 2012), *optix* (Reed *et al.*, 2011;  
281 Supple *et al.*, 2013) and *cortex* (Nadeau *et al.*, 2016)]. Kronforst & Papa (2015, p.12) suggest  
282 that in *Heliconius* the phenotypic lability resulting from the influence of a small number of loci  
283 under strong selection creates a ‘virtually unlimited number of possible wing-pattern  
284 phenotypes’. Intuitively, this makes sense as a smaller number of loci will increase each locus’  
285 contribution to the phenotype and thus each locus will be under stronger selection (Gavrilets &

286 Vose, 2005). Ultimately a simplified genomic architecture facilitates the diversification of  
287 warning coloration.

288 Hybridisation and adaptive introgression among species has also contributed to the diversity of  
289 warning coloration in *Heliconius* (Mallet *et al.*, 1990; Gilbert, 2003; Pardo-Diaz *et al.*, 2012;  
290 *Heliconius* Genome Consortium, 2012; Wallbank *et al.*, 2016). Although adaptive introgression  
291 and hybrid speciation both involve crossing individuals of different species, there is a difference  
292 that is worth noting as they are evolutionarily different mechanisms (Grant, Grant & Petren,  
293 2005). Adaptive introgression results from gene flow from one species into the gene pool of  
294 another species through backcrossing of a hybrid with one of its parent species and can result in  
295 adaptive genes becoming incorporated back into the parental species (Grant *et al.*, 2005;  
296 Kronforst & Papa, 2015). Examples of adaptive introgression in natural systems are rare  
297 although reported cases do exist. Among *Heliconius* butterflies, *H. cydno* can hybridise with *H.*  
298 *melpomene*, and Pardo-Diaz *et al.* (2012) found repeated introgression of adaptive alleles from  
299 *H. melpomene* in *H. timareta*. Hybrid speciation differs from adaptive introgression in that novel  
300 genomes are created from two parental species, which can lead to novel adaptive peaks in the  
301 landscape (Kronforst & Papa, 2015). Known hybrids include *H. heurriippa*, a hybrid of *H.*  
302 *melpomene* and *H. cydno* in the wild (Salazar *et al.*, 2005, 2008, 2010). Furthermore, *H. elevatus*  
303 was formed during a hybrid speciation event but is thought to have the colour patterns of *H.*  
304 *melpomene* introgressed into its genetic pool (*Heliconius* Genome Consortium, 2012), thus  
305 revealing a fine line between the dichotomy of introgression and hybridisation. There is also  
306 strong evidence that such hybrid-trait speciation in *Heliconius* is promoted by tight genetic  
307 linkage between mate-choice and colour-pattern loci resulting in assortative mating based on

308 wing colour patterns (Kronforst, Kappan & Gilbert, 2006a; Mavárez *et al.*, 2006; Melo *et al.*,  
309 2009; Merrill *et al.*, 2011). For example, *H. cydno* and *H. pachinus* mate preference segregates  
310 with forewing colour in hybrids, indicating that colour preference and wing colour are controlled  
311 by loci that are pleiotropic effects of a single locus (Kronforst *et al.*, 2006b). Although our  
312 knowledge on hybrid speciation and adaptive introgression has come from Müllerian mimics, it  
313 is possible that non-mimetic polymorphic aposematic coloration has resulted from both  
314 mechanisms.

315 Conversely, whilst some level of recombination can facilitate diversity in warning signals, too  
316 high a level has the potential to have a homogenising effect (Mayr, 1963), and hybridisation is  
317 not always adaptive (Arias *et al.*, 2016). In polymorphic populations, there should be tight  
318 linkage between loci to facilitate the coexistence of several combinations of congruous alleles,  
319 thus producing several different phenotypes (Merrill *et al.*, 2015). Genes that are closely linked  
320 (i.e. supergenes) facilitate multiple functional elements to segregate as a single Mendelian locus  
321 despite recombination elsewhere in the genome, and have been found to be associated with  
322 polymorphic mimicry (Brown & Benson, 1974; Charlesworth & Charlesworth, 1975; Turner,  
323 1977b; Joron *et al.*, 2006; Thompson & Jiggins, 2014). *Heliconius numata* has several coexisting  
324 discrete mimetic phenotypes in the same population that are coded for by a single supergene  
325 (Joron *et al.*, 2011; Merrill *et al.*, 2015). Unsurprisingly, similar supergene architecture is not  
326 present in the sister species of *H. numata*, which do not have local polymorphisms (Huber *et al.*,  
327 2015).

328 Many of the genes identified in *Heliconius* as controlling coloration are conserved across  
329 Lepidoptera (Nadeau, 2016; Nadeau *et al.*, 2016), which comprise a significant proportion of

330 aposematic species and their mimics (Table S1). Whether similar genetic architecture underlies  
331 warning coloration polymorphisms in aposematic species outside this taxon is not yet clear.  
332 Work in ladybirds (Tan & Li, 1934; Komai, 1956; Majerus, 1994), colubrid snakes that are  
333 Batesian mimics (Davis Rabosky, Cox & Rabosky, 2016a), and a poison frog (Vestergaard *et al.*,  
334 2015) indicate that morph variation in these species is also determined by a small number of  
335 gene loci. However, in contrast to the more complex supergene organisation seen in *H. numata*,  
336 mimetic warning coloration in colubrid snakes is the result of a much simpler multilocus system  
337 (Davis Rabosky *et al.*, 2016a). These differences can have important implications for  
338 evolutionary dynamics in mimicry, for example *via* their influence on evolutionary rate or even a  
339 subsequent evolutionary shift from warning coloration to crypsis, a phenomenon common in  
340 snakes but not in *Heliconius* (Davis Rabosky *et al.*, 2016b).

341 Given this evidence, it is clear that in order to understand how the genetic architecture of  
342 warning coloration enables or constrains morphological variation we need more information  
343 about the genes and gene networks at play, as well as a broader taxonomic coverage of the  
344 genetic architecture. Alongside the work already carried out on snakes, promising taxa include  
345 wasps (Perrard *et al.*, 2014) and ladybird beetles (Lee *et al.*, 2011). The latter are particularly  
346 intriguing as, unlike *Heliconius* spp., there is scant evidence of hybridisation, and for two highly  
347 polymorphic species (*H. axyridis* and *A. bipunctata*) multiple morphs have been produced in the  
348 laboratory that are scarce in the field (Majerus, 1994; Hodek, van Emden & Honek, 2012).

349 Furthermore, recent work on the wood tiger moth *Arctia plantaginis* has revealed a negative  
350 genetic correlation between the efficacy of larval and adult warning coloration that likely  
351 contributes to the maintenance of observed variation in aposematic coloration at both life stages



352 (Lindstedt *et al.*, 2016). Investigations into other such genetic correlations outside of *Heliconius*,  
353 for example between different components of the warning signals themselves (e.g. in *Pieris*  
354 butterflies; Kingsolver & Wiernasz, 1991), may therefore also prove fruitful to further our  
355 understanding of warning-signal variations.

356

#### 357 **IV. PREDATION AND SIGNAL VARIATION**

358 Interactions between predators and defended prey lie at the heart of the paradox surrounding  
359 diversity in aposematism. While predation has traditionally been considered to favour  
360 monomorphy in warning signals, a growing appreciation of the differences in physiology,  
361 psychology and habitat use between predator species, populations, and individuals suggests that  
362 predator communities are in fact heterogeneous and dynamic selective agents. This generates  
363 diversity in predation risk and creates a significant opportunity for the maintenance of variation  
364 in aposematic prey.

365

##### 366 **(1) Predators vary spatially, temporally, taxonomically, and individually**

367 A predator's response to warningly coloured prey depends on both the prey's relative  
368 unprofitability and the conspicuousness of their visual signals (Mappes, Marples & Endler,  
369 2005), so aposematic prey must carefully balance their investment in these two strategic  
370 components (Speed & Ruxton, 2007). Yet predators are also highly variable in their response to  
371 both chemical defences and visual cues. Therefore, the most adaptive tactic for defended prey  
372 will largely depend on the specific predator community in their immediate environment.  
373 Variation among predators and predator guilds can occur at several levels: among species,

374 spatially among populations, temporally across seasons or an individual's lifetime, and at a finer  
375 scale among individuals (whether based on a stable behavioural type/syndrome or variable  
376 factors such as motivation), creating a mosaic of different selective pressures. In the following  
377 section, we suggest how variation in multiple predator traits, at different spatial and temporal  
378 scales, can facilitate the maintenance of different patterns of variation in prey signals  
379 (summarised in Fig. 4).

380

381 *(a) Types of variation in predators, and potential consequences*

382 For a given predator (species or individual), defended prey vary in their degree of unprofitability  
383 (Brower *et al.*, 1968), from mere distastefulness to deadly toxin loads. The impact of this  
384 difference is in part dependent on the specific predator and thus will differ among predators  
385 according to their susceptibility to specific toxins (Endler & Mappes, 2004; Mappes *et al.*, 2005),  
386 while the willingness of any individual to attack and consume defended prey will further be  
387 modulated by other factors, such as motivation and experience. Specialist predators, such as  
388 grosbeaks and orioles feeding on defended monarch butterflies, *Danaus plexippus* (Fink &  
389 Brower, 1981; Brower, 1988) or raptors preying on vipers (*Vipera* spp.; Valkonen *et al.*, 2012),  
390 can overcome the defences of aposematic animals, whether through resistance to their defences  
391 or careful handling. As such, attracting their attention with bright aposematic signals would be  
392 detrimental to prey survival. Tolerance of prey defences can vary across species but also among  
393 populations of predators; for example, some populations of garter snakes, *Thamnophis sirtalis*,  
394 have evolved resistance to newt tetrodotoxin (Geffeney, 2002). This may lead to polytypic or  
395 polymorphic variation in the conspicuousness of defended prey, following the distribution of

396 more- or less-tolerant predators across populations and microhabitats.

397 Predator sensory systems, including their perception of visual cues and other cognitive functions  
398 (e.g. ability to learn, remember and generalise between signals), may also facilitate the  
399 maintenance of polytypic and polymorphic variation among aposematic prey. The key sensory  
400 systems used for hunting differ among predator taxa, so, for the same defensive type, prey may  
401 need to employ a diversity of signal forms to maximise their ‘avoid me’ signal efficacy (Guilford  
402 & Dawkins, 1991). Predation experiments with artificial prey demonstrate that only some  
403 predators respond to visual cues; for example, while avian predators avoid warningly coloured  
404 dendrobatid frog models, crabs and lizards do not (Willink *et al.*, 2014). Variation in the  
405 effectiveness of warning coloration when confronted with different predator communities may  
406 lead to conflicting selective pressures on prey signals. In Japan, the relative abundance of avian  
407 predators, which rely on vision when hunting, compared to mammalian predators, for whom  
408 visual properties are less relevant, may be responsible for the variation in the extent of red  
409 coloration in *Cynops pyrrhogaster* newts between island and mainland populations (Mochida,  
410 2011). Among visually oriented predators themselves, there is considerable variation in  
411 perceptual abilities (Osorio & Vorobyev, 2008), suggesting that some predators could perceive  
412 or distinguish visual signals that others may not. In addition, sensory processing in the brain  
413 plays a role in determining key features influencing the effectiveness of warning signals, such as  
414 detectability, discriminability and memorability (Guilford & Dawkins, 1991). Finally,  
415 environmental conditions also affect the visibility and effectiveness of warning colours,  
416 dependent on ambient light and the characteristics of natural backgrounds (Endler, 1990, 1993;  
417 Bond & Kamil, 2006; Rojas, Rautiala & Mappes, 2014*b*); so aposematism overall, or some

418 specific colour morphs, may be more effective in specific habitats.

419 Beyond perception of the signals, higher-level cognitive processes may also influence predator  
420 responses to prey signals, and thus ultimately impact the adaptive value of conspicuousness and  
421 warning coloration. Generalisation between visual signals, whether they cannot be perceptually  
422 distinguished or are grouped together by higher-order cognitive processes, is especially  
423 interesting, as it would effectively allow different colour morphs to co-occur with equal fitness  
424 (Amézquita *et al.*, 2013; Richards-Zawacki *et al.*, 2013; Stuckert, Venegas & Summers, 2014b;  
425 Rönkä *et al.*, 2018). For example, tests with multiple passerine species suggest that they differ in  
426 their ability to generalise prior experience of red firebugs (*Pyrrhocoris apterus*) to yellow  
427 morphs of this species (Exnerová *et al.*, 2006). Although it would not itself select for variation,  
428 generalisation between morphs could facilitate the maintenance of different forms (which could  
429 provide other selective benefits; see alternative selection pressures in Section V) in populations  
430 where predators tend not to distinguish between morphs.

431 Even if predators classify signals as distinct, further differences in their response will arise due to  
432 variation in general neophobia, cautiousness when handling novel prey, and dietary  
433 conservatism. These effects can potentially facilitate the evolution of novel conspicuous morphs  
434 (Marples, Roper & Harper, 1998; Thomas *et al.*, 2003, 2004; Exnerová *et al.*, 2006); although  
435 experimental evidence suggests dietary conservatism may not be sufficient to counteract positive  
436 frequency-dependent selection against novel morphs when these are rare and conspicuous  
437 (Marples & Mappes, 2010). In some cases, innate avoidance of specific patterns plays an  
438 important role, as demonstrated by the aversion of naive turquoise-browed motmots (*Eumomota*  
439 *superciliosa*) and great kiskadees (*Pitangus sulphuratus*) to coral snake (*Micrurus* spp.) patterns

440 (Smith, 1975, 1977). Strong innate responses may allow polymorphisms in warning signals to  
441 evolve if the predators avoid a broad class of visual signals, such as all ringed patterns in the case  
442 of coral snakes. Finally, variability in the learning abilities of predators will affect the benefit of  
443 aposematic signalling for defended prey (Endler & Mappes, 2004; Mappes *et al.*, 2005). Recent  
444 work on domestic chicks showed variation in avoidance learning among different breeds of this  
445 species. Chickens bred for high productivity were initially less wary of aposematic prey, but also  
446 formed weaker associations between signals and defences over time than the other breeds of  
447 chicken, leading to differential prey survival in laboratory experiments (Rowland, Fulford &  
448 Ruxton, 2017). Predators in the wild may also differ in their learning abilities, leading to  
449 variation in predation risk for aposematic prey with different signals, and are also likely to differ  
450 from domestic chickens. Further research on learning in more relevant predators could alter our  
451 expectations of predator capabilities and responses to aposematic prey; for example, evidence  
452 that predators can rapidly memorise many different signal forms would challenge the assumption  
453 of strong selection for aposematic signal monomorphy.

454 Classic experiments on neophobia and dietary conservatism in passerine birds also reveal further  
455 intraspecific variation, which cannot be attributed to factors such as differences in territory,  
456 experience or sex (Marples *et al.*, 1998). These could be linked to personality, known to affect  
457 both initial reactions to aposematic prey and the learning process (Exnerová *et al.*, 2010), or  
458 individual condition. A predator's level of hunger and current condition will determine its  
459 motivation and willingness to attack and consume risky prey, including warningly coloured  
460 individuals, which will impact the relative benefit of aposematic displays. Rather than rejecting  
461 aposematic prey outright, predators consider all available prey types to make adaptive foraging

462 decisions, based on the relative costs of ingesting toxins *versus* the nutritional gain from  
463 consuming the prey (Barnett *et al.*, 2012). Experiments with European starlings (*Sturnus*  
464 *vulgaris*) suggest they can distinguish not only undefended from toxic prey, but also different  
465 levels of chemical defences, *via* taste-rejection (Skelhorn & Rowe, 2006, 2009), as well as  
466 gaining nutritional information about the prey (Skelhorn *et al.*, 2016). This allows them to make  
467 educated decisions while foraging depending on their motivation to feed; accordingly, starlings  
468 are more willing to consume defended prey when their own reserves are experimentally reduced  
469 (Barnett, Bateson & Rowe, 2007), early-life or current conditions are harsher (Chatelain, Halpin  
470 & Rowe, 2013; Bloxham *et al.*, 2014), or the prey have greater nutritional value relative to their  
471 toxicity (Halpin, Skelhorn & Rowe, 2014; Smith, Halpin & Rowe, 2016). While there is a  
472 growing body of evidence, primarily from laboratory experiments, suggesting that varying levels  
473 of motivation affect prey choice by predators, how this may impact the survival of aposematic  
474 prey and selection pressures on signal form in the wild is not yet clear. The physiological  
475 mechanisms and cognitive processes responsible for these adaptive decisions are still relatively  
476 poorly known, but there is scope for mediation of this toxicity–nutrition trade-off to vary among  
477 species, populations and personalities (Skelhorn *et al.*, 2016). Exploring how different predators  
478 deal with the trade-offs associated with foraging in a natural setting, such as balancing the time  
479 required to assess the profitability of warningly coloured prey accurately, while managing their  
480 own exposure to predators and efficient foraging, would be extremely valuable for obtaining a  
481 more well-rounded picture of predation risk for aposematic prey.

482 Motivation is not the only highly variable trait affecting predator responses to aposematic prey.  
483 Prior experience is critical in determining whether a predator will choose to attack and consume

484 a prey item. This can vary widely across species and populations of predators, as traits such as  
485 dietary specialisations (Exnerová *et al.*, 2003; Ihalainen *et al.*, 2012) and territoriality (Endler &  
486 Rojas, 2009) affect which prey assemblages a predator may experience. For example,  
487 omnivorous and more specialised passerine birds respond differently when presented with  
488 aposematic invertebrates (Exnerová *et al.*, 2003). Similarly, great tits (*Parus major*) from  
489 Finland are more reluctant to attack aposematic prey than great tits from Bohemia, possibly due  
490 to a reduced exposure to warningly coloured invertebrates, and a higher proportion of neophobic  
491 and migratory birds in the population (Exnerová *et al.*, 2015). On a finer scale, a predator's level  
492 of experience will depend on the number of encounters with defended prey, so may differ  
493 between age classes (Lindström, Alatalo & Mappes, 1999). Seasonal fluctuations in overall  
494 predator naivety may occur as young predators learn to forage for themselves and sample  
495 aposematic prey for the first time, thereby impacting the relative benefits of conspicuousness and  
496 crypsis for defended prey at different times of the year (Mappes *et al.*, 2014) and potentially  
497 favouring seasonal polyphenism, as seen in striated shieldbugs, *Graphosoma lineatum* (Tullberg  
498 *et al.*, 2008; Johansen *et al.*, 2010).

499 Finally, variation in predator traits interacts with other forms of variation in the whole  
500 community of organisms in a given habitat, such that the characteristics of this community, and  
501 the interactions between all its members, will ultimately shape the selective pressures acting on  
502 warning signal form. From the predators' perspective, the presence, abundance and nutritional  
503 value of alternative prey, as well as the effort required to locate them and the toxin load already  
504 ingested by the predator all impact the net benefits of attack (Turner & Speed, 1999; Sherratt,  
505 2003; Rowland *et al.*, 2010c; Carle & Rowe, 2014; Skelhorn *et al.*, 2016), and the strength of

506 selection for convergence in prey signals (Fig. 4; Kokko, Mappes & Lindström, 2003; Lindström  
507 *et al.*, 2004). The diversity of prey coloration within populations is equally important, not only in  
508 shaping predator experience, but also because of the demands it places on predators' cognitive  
509 skills. Selective pressures for signal uniformity may be relaxed in more complex communities, as  
510 predator learning is limited by their ability to memorise multiple signals and their associated  
511 risks and benefits (Ihalainen *et al.*, 2012). In an even broader ecological context, the predation  
512 risk experienced by the predators of aposematic prey themselves may also contribute to their  
513 response to warning signals (Lima & Dill, 1990), due to variable costs of exposure to predators  
514 incurred by longer prey-handling times, or increased searching behaviour to find alternative prey.  
515 As such, differences in both prey and predator communities among populations, as well as  
516 spatio-temporal heterogeneity within populations, combine to produce variable selection  
517 pressures affecting warning signal form.

518

519 *(b) Predator response to variation in prey toxicity, and its implications for aposematic variation*

520 Just as variation in predator communities was originally underappreciated, the variability of  
521 secondary defences, particularly chemical defences, in natural populations has long been  
522 neglected (Speed *et al.*, 2012). At the extreme end of this spectrum is automimicry, a  
523 phenomenon whereby some individuals within a population of aposematic animals have either  
524 extremely low levels of toxins or none at all (Brower, Brower & Corvino, 1967; Ruxton *et al.*,  
525 2004). This seems to occur primarily in species that acquire either toxins or toxin precursors  
526 from their diet. Automimicry poses a problem for defended individuals because, similar to  
527 Batesian mimicry, it degrades the efficiency of the aposematic signal and thus any given



528 individual in the population is more likely to be attacked (Fig. 3). Further, automimicry poses a  
529 problem for predators that may also experience negative side effects, for example by  
530 unintentionally consuming toxic prey after previous experience with a palatable individual of the  
531 same species (Ruxton *et al.*, 2004). Nevertheless, models indicate that automimicry may persist  
532 when there are two discrete levels of defence within a population and low predation pressures  
533 (Broom, Speed & Ruxton, 2005), or when defence is a continuous trait (and especially when  
534 defence levels trade off with fecundity; Svennungsen & Holen, 2007). Additionally, evidence  
535 indicates that automimicry may in fact not affect overall predation rates in a population when  
536 automimics are below 25% of the population (Skelhorn & Rowe, 2007). With respect to this  
537 review, automimicry is of interest as a potential intermediate step towards polymorphism, if the  
538 population of automimics begins to diverge into two different aposematic strategies. For  
539 example, in insects, females could evolve a preference for different host plants to oviposit on  
540 which produces differential toxicity in the population and potentially different peaks in the  
541 adaptive landscape. Broom *et al.* (2005) have shown this to be a stable strategy and it could  
542 function as an intermediate step towards polymorphism *via* ecological mechanisms. Although  
543 theory would predict that the phenotype in the lower adaptive peak should evolve towards  
544 similarity with the higher peaked phenotype (e.g. Turner, 1983), there are alternative  
545 mechanisms that may maintain this (see Section V). Over time, this behaviour could become  
546 canalised and correlate with the aposematic signal as well. How common this is, or whether it  
547 occurs at all, is unknown. Automimicry may also be capable of creating polymorphisms in  
548 situations in which toxicity/colour are linked *via* some environmental trait. A plausible  
549 mechanism would be something akin to the resource-allocation theory that has been supported

550 by work on ladybird beetles (Blount *et al.*, 2009, 2012; see Section V), wherein some individuals  
551 acquire a chemical defence and others do not.

552 Similar to automimicry within a species, mimetic species are often unequally protected. This  
553 brings about a scenario known as quasi-Batesian mimicry, occasionally referred to as Speedian  
554 mimicry (Speed, 1990; Fig. 3). Although mimicry has often been described as a binary scenario,  
555 i.e. either Batesian or Müllerian, there is evidence that it may be better represented as a spectrum,  
556 much as visual strategies are now perceived as a continuum ranging from crypsis to  
557 aposematism. Mimicry appearing to be Müllerian in nature may in fact be detrimental to one  
558 species and lead to quasi-Batesian mimicry if there is a difference in the level of defence  
559 between the two mimetic species (Speed, 1990). Crucially, it is as yet unclear whether  
560 differences in toxicity and associated unpalatability actually produce quasi-Batesian systems, or  
561 if variation between mimetic species with differing levels of toxins is ecologically irrelevant and  
562 these species are functionally mutualistic relationships (e.g. Rowland *et al.*, 2007; Stuckert *et al.*,  
563 2014a). Similar to Batesian mimicry, local polymorphism may be beneficial to individuals of  
564 species with a low level of defence; if they can mimic different established aposematic species,  
565 they would gain a greater survival advantage, as the costs of mimicry would be spread across  
566 several model species (Speed, 1993; Ruxton *et al.*, 2004). Quasi-Batesian mimicry may also put  
567 selective pressure on the less-defended species to be more similar to the phenotype of the better-  
568 defended species. This in turn may be sufficiently detrimental to the better-defended species that  
569 they may experience selection away from the shared form (similar to Batesian mimicry). This  
570 could, theoretically, lead to an evolutionary chase between the model and the quasi-Batesian  
571 mimics in a red queen chase scenario (Van Valen, 1973), particularly if selective pressures

572 promote similar rates of adaptation in the two species. Furthermore, as discussed above,  
573 predators can make decisions based on both their nutritional level and toxin load, and therefore  
574 the availability of alternative, palatable prey may strongly influence the relationship between  
575 mimetic species, particularly if they differ in toxicity (Rowland *et al.*, 2010*b*). Including  
576 information on predator state in models of mimicry can lead to surprising outcomes, for example  
577 two species that are visually distinct may both still benefit from the other species' presence even  
578 when toxins are not costly for predators to detoxify (Halpin, Skelhorn & Rowe, 2012; Halpin *et*  
579 *al.*, 2017). Additionally, differences in chemical defences (i.e. Batesian or quasi-Batesian  
580 mimicry) could cause populations of a defended species to experience different coevolutionary  
581 trajectories (Laine, 2009), particularly when they are in geographic isolation. This could lead to  
582 polytypism, or polymorphism if the populations eventually become sympatric once more.  
583 In reality, the role that variation in chemical defence has on populations and the evolution and  
584 maintenance of variation in colour phenotypes is largely speculative. This, in part, derives from a  
585 general uncertainty as to whether or not these differences in toxicity actually make ecological  
586 differences to predators. In general, we lack the empirical data to determine what this variation  
587 means to predators, or even why this variation occurs. This is a fairly substantial gap in our  
588 knowledge, one which could lead to a burgeoning subdiscipline.

589

## 590 **(2) Predator diversity contributes to the maintenance of variation in aposematic prey**

### 591 *(a) The distribution of predator diversity shapes patterns of variation in prey*

592 Population-level differences in predation regimes may facilitate the maintenance of continuous  
593 variation between populations of warningly coloured species, as seen in the red coloration of

594 newts on Japanese islands (Mochida, 2011), or polytypisms. Within populations, many studies  
595 demonstrate greater predation risks for rare and novel conspicuous forms relative to locally  
596 abundant ones (Lindström *et al.*, 2001; Borer *et al.*, 2010), particularly in poison frogs (e.g.  
597 Noonan & Comeault, 2009) and *Heliconius* butterflies (e.g. Mallet & Barton, 1989; Chouteau *et*  
598 *al.*, 2016). These local predation pressures can produce a purifying selective force, driving  
599 populations towards distinct local phenotypes (Joron & Iwasa, 2005; Sherratt, 2006). In poison  
600 frogs, artificial predation experiments with models resembling distinct colour morphs of  
601 *Ranitomeya imitator* demonstrate that predation risk for these morphs varies geographically,  
602 favouring polytypisms (Chouteau & Angers, 2011).

603 On a smaller scale, differences between predator communities across microhabitats within a  
604 single population may facilitate the maintenance of polymorphisms in aposematic species and  
605 even contribute to speciation, as has been suggested for ithomiine butterflies (Mallet & Gilbert,  
606 1995; Beccaloni, 1997; Elias *et al.*, 2008). In a recent study in Ecuador, butterflies with  
607 particular wing patterns were found at different frequencies among distinct microhabitats in the  
608 canopy (Willmott *et al.*, 2017). The community of avian predators likely to be encountered by  
609 these butterflies also covaried in these microhabitats, and artificial predation experiments  
610 suggested that predation risk experienced by specific wing patterns differed among  
611 microhabitats. Behavioural choices, such as temporal variation in activity or microhabitat  
612 selection, will enable aposematic prey to alter their conspicuousness and improve their chances  
613 of survival (Rojas, Devillechabrolle & Endler, 2014a; Arenas & Stevens, 2017), thus enabling  
614 multiple signal forms to coexist successfully.

615

616 (b) *Dealing with predator diversity within a population*

617 The presence of a diverse community of predators in a single location may favour variability in  
618 warning signals, so as to mitigate overall predation risk. Variation in the extent of  
619 conspicuousness may be employed as a compromise strategy, whereby signals of intermediate  
620 visibility, but still distinct and recognisable, may deter predators that heed the signal without  
621 attracting too much attention from others. For example, the polytypic poison frogs *Oophaga*  
622 *granulifera* and *O. pumilio* include morphs that are green and cryptic, others that are bright and  
623 truly ‘aposematic’, and intermediate phenotypes. This phenomenon seems to be related to  
624 behavioural phenotypes and attack rates by predators, as frogs from brighter populations are  
625 bolder and experience lower attack rates (Maan & Cummings, 2012; Willink *et al.*, 2013, 2014).  
626 Alternatively, a given signal may vary depending on the position of the observer. In distance-  
627 dependent signalling, aposematic species possess pattern elements that make them appear cryptic  
628 from afar, yet conspicuous up close (Barnett & Cuthill, 2014; Barnett, Scott-Samuel & Cuthill,  
629 2016). Examples include *Vipera* snakes (Valkonen *et al.*, 2012), some butterfly larvae (Tullberg,  
630 Merilaita & Wiklund, 2005; Bohlin, Tulberg & Merilaita, 2008) and spotted skunks (*Spilogale*  
631 spp.), which are difficult to detect unless viewed closely (Caro *et al.*, 2013). Thus, prey  
632 coloration is not always exclusively cryptic or aposematic, but rather forms a continuum between  
633 camouflage and warning coloration, which can be manipulated to the prey’s advantage.  
634 Diversity within a population of predators can also maintain fixed variation within an aposematic  
635 prey population, under certain circumstances. Contrary to traditional theories of Müllerian  
636 mimicry, positive frequency-dependent selection is not ubiquitous (Greenwood, Wood &  
637 Batchelor, 1981; Amézquita *et al.*, 2013; Richards-Zawacki *et al.*, 2013). Müller’s more

638 simplistic assumptions about the relations between predators and prey, such as the fixed numbers  
639 of prey encounters required for learning, have since been replaced by a greater understanding of  
640 the complexity of predator communities. Considering the number of variables potentially  
641 affecting the overall outcome of foraging decisions by predators, a broad range of different  
642 selection regimes should be expected (Stevens & Ruxton, 2012; Aubier & Sherratt, 2015)  
643 including spatiotemporal variation in selection even within a single population of prey.  
644 In particular, several processes may lead to negative frequency-dependent selection, facilitating  
645 the maintenance of polymorphisms within populations (Svensson, Abbott & Härdling, 2005;  
646 Olendorf *et al.*, 2006). Foraging predators must constantly balance the costs and benefits of  
647 concentrating on prey they know to be profitable, or sampling unfamiliar prey items, which  
648 could be more valuable or potentially harmful. Optimal-sampling theory predicts that these  
649 adaptive decisions will depend on the likelihood that a prey item is defended, and the probability  
650 that the predator will encounter this type of prey again. In the context of warning coloration, it  
651 suggests that rarer aposematic morphs should be avoided, as predators learn about profitability  
652 from their past experiences of more regularly encountered prey (Sherratt, 2011; Aubier &  
653 Sherratt, 2015). Search-image formation, more-efficient handling of commonly encountered  
654 prey, and the potential costs of gathering information about the profitability of unknown items  
655 will all encourage predation of common forms (Skelhorn *et al.*, 2016). Whether a predator will  
656 decide to attack common defended prey will also depend on prey toxicity within the community;  
657 for example, relatively weak defences or few palatable alternatives will favour predation on  
658 common aposematic forms, thus promoting polymorphism (Greenwood *et al.*, 1981).  
659 The effect of predator community in different populations may even override expectations based

660 on positive frequency-dependent selection. Yellow and white morphs of male wood tiger moths  
661 occur at different frequencies across Europe, but local morph frequency does not always predict  
662 survival in artificial predation experiments. In one study, predation of the two morphs varied  
663 according to the community of bird species present, with yellow morphs being more successful  
664 in communities dominated by Paridae (tits, in Northern Europe), rather than Prunellidae,  
665 represented by the dunnock *Prunella modularis* (Nokelainen *et al.*, 2014). This suggests that  
666 understanding the characteristics of the relevant predator community may be the most important  
667 means of predicting signal evolution. In a general framework, modelling the evolution of a  
668 simple polymorphic prey population, with two morphs differing in conspicuousness and facing a  
669 mix of predators that differ in their tolerance of the prey defences, demonstrates several possible  
670 outcomes (Endler & Mappes, 2004). Depending on the proportion of predators choosing to avoid  
671 the prey, the population may become monomorphic for either the more or less visible morph, or,  
672 if both predator types occur in similar numbers, the polymorphism may be maintained.

673 Experiments with firebugs and wild-caught birds suggests that if a new colour morph of a  
674 defended species appears within a population, neophobia alone is unlikely to overcome purifying  
675 selection and enable the persistence of the new form (Exnerová *et al.*, 2006). However,  
676 evolutionary modelling suggests that a combination of dietary wariness, interacting with overall  
677 predation risk and signal conspicuousness will favour diversity in warning signals within  
678 populations, with or without frequency-dependent selection (Franks & Oxford, 2009). Moreover,  
679 the results of simulations based on selection regimes observed in polymorphic species such as  
680 *Cepaea* land snails, *Oophaga* poison frogs, *Sonora* snakes and *Heliconius* butterflies suggest that  
681 differences in the range of predators, operating in small local populations or across multiple

682 populations at a regional scale, can promote a mosaic of polymorphisms in prey, without  
683 invoking any additional mechanisms favouring diversity (Holmes, Grundler & Davis Rabosky,  
684 2017). Multiple ways in which predators and predator communities may differ can thus  
685 ultimately affect selective pressures leading to diversity in warning coloration.

686

## 687 **V. THE MULTIFUNCTIONALITY OF APOSEMATIC SIGNALS**

688 While predation is – by definition – the selective pressure driving aposematism, warning  
689 coloration is also subject to many other, potentially antagonistic, factors. These can be abiotic or  
690 biotic, the latter including both intraspecific and interspecific interactions. Several, such as  
691 thermoregulation and sexual selection, are already well studied in the context of warning-signal  
692 polymorphism and polytypism, while others, including parental and early-life effects, have only  
693 recently been recognised as potential factors generating and maintaining variation in coloration.  
694 Such selection pressures may be complementary to predation, augmenting its effect on  
695 aposematic phenotype, or alternatively may oppose the effect of the selective pressure of  
696 predation, producing more than one phenotypic optimum and enabling signal variation. These  
697 conflicting selection pressures can influence the abundance of different, genetically determined,  
698 morphs among populations and within a population (polymorphism), specific morph expression  
699 (polyphenism), and also more continuous colour variation within morphs (e.g. variation in  
700 conspicuousness; Figs 1 & 2).

701

### 702 **(1) Abiotic selection pressures**

703 *(a) Temperature and melanism*



704 One clear example of a trait that is important for multiple aspects of an organism's fitness is  
705 melanisation. Melanin creates the black patterns seen in many of the classic aposematic signals  
706 across multiple taxa, from insects to mammals, as well as underlying the structural, iridescent,  
707 colours recently shown to act as aposematic signals in many bugs and beetles (Fabricant *et al.*,  
708 2013; Fabricant *et al.*, 2014). The pigment also increases an organism's ability to absorb  
709 radiation (Clusella-Trullas, van Wyk & Spotila, 2007, Hetem *et al.*, 2009) providing fitness  
710 benefits for individuals in cooler environments through improved thermoregulation (de Jong,  
711 Gussekloo & Brakefield, 1996). However, while increased melanisation provides fitness benefits  
712 for aposematic species in some instances (Clusella-Trullas *et al.*, 2007; Lindstedt *et al.*, 2009b),  
713 it also has associated costs. Melanic pigmentation often forms a key part of aposematic  
714 coloration, yet recent evidence suggests the contrast between a signal and its background  
715 (dictated by the chromatic component of the signal) as opposed to internal contrast, is the more  
716 important determinant of aposematic signal detectability (Arenas, Troscianko & Stevens, 2014).  
717 This may help to explain the much higher level of predation risk associated with melanism in  
718 aposematic species (Hegna *et al.*, 2013; Arenas, Walter & Stevens, 2015).

719 The trade-off between the positive/thermoregulatory benefits and negative/predation-risk costs of  
720 melanisation are well explored in aposematic species in relation to temperature (e.g. *Arctia*  
721 *plantaginis*; Hegna *et al.*, 2013). Variation in temperature is known to contribute to within-  
722 morph plastic adjustment of the levels of melanism in warning signals, for example spot-size in  
723 ladybirds (Michie *et al.*, 2010, 2011), contributing to continuous variation in signal expression  
724 within and among populations. Seasonal fluctuations in temperature and changes in predation  
725 (see Section IV) likely promote melanism-based polymorphism within populations of aposematic

726 species. Even when the predation costs associated with the pigment are high, asymmetrical mate  
727 preferences, such that more-melanic individuals have higher mating success, may contribute to  
728 the persistence of melanic morphs within populations (Saino *et al.*, 2013; Culumber *et al.*, 2014;  
729 Mishra & Omkar, 2014). The relative abundance of these melanic morphs within a population  
730 also increases with the benefits of improved thermoregulation (i.e. decreasing temperature),  
731 leading to both altitudinal and latitudinal clines in morph abundance (Clusella-Trullas *et al.*,  
732 2007). For example, the proportion of melanic morphs in populations of the two-spot ladybird  
733 (*Adalia bipunctata*) is greater in higher, and therefore colder, latitudes (Brakefield, 1984) and  
734 these clines in morph abundance have been shown to alter in response to climate change (de Jong  
735 & Brakefield, 1998).

736 Melanin also has benefits associated with ultraviolet (UV) protection (Ortonne, 2002),  
737 immunocompetence (Dubovskiy *et al.*, 2013), and desiccation (King & Sinclair, 2015) and its  
738 abundance is plastically adjusted in response to increases in these challenges (Wilson *et al.*,  
739 2001; Abram *et al.*, 2015; Välimäki *et al.*, 2015). Variation in these factors may act, like  
740 temperature, to enable the persistence of variation in the abundance of melanic morphs across  
741 spatial (polytypism) and temporal (polymorphism) scales. The selection landscape determining  
742 both the abundance of melanic morphs within aposematic populations and the degree of  
743 melanism within morphs themselves will thus consist of multiple competing selection pressures,  
744 beyond simply temperature and predation risk.

745

#### 746 (b) Resource availability

747 The production of warning signals requires adequate resources to deal with the associated cost of

748 signal production, both the overall increase in energy expenditure and the associated oxidative  
749 stress burden (McGraw, 2005; Galván & Alonso-Alvarez, 2008; Blount *et al.*, 2009), and in  
750 many cases specific access to dietary pigments such as carotenoids (Blount *et al.*, 2012).  
751 Experiments in red-eyed tree frogs (*Agalychnis callidryas*), a non-aposematic species, have  
752 shown that the amount of carotenoid pigments available at critical times during development  
753 influences the redness of their dorsum (Ogilvy, Preziosi & Fidgett, 2012). Signal expression in  
754 aposematic species is therefore likely to be strongly influenced by the availability and quality of  
755 food, particularly during early development (Monaghan, 2008; Blount *et al.*, 2009). Research  
756 indicates that this most commonly occurs in terms of variation in morph conspicuousness (i.e.  
757 saturation and luminance; Blount *et al.*, 2012) as opposed to the dietary determination of  
758 differently coloured morphs observed in the camouflaged caterpillars of numerous lepidoptera  
759 species (Greene, 1989; Fink, 1995). High-quality diets during development can lead to the  
760 production of larger, brighter, and more colourful warning signals compared to low-quality diets  
761 (Grill & Moore, 1998; Ojala *et al.*, 2007; Lindstedt *et al.*, 2009a). The way that individual  
762 foraging areas and populations map onto the landscape of differing resource availability is likely  
763 to determine the scale at which the consequent variation in conspicuousness occurs, such as  
764 among individuals (continuous within-morph variation) or among populations, for example  
765 along a resource gradient (polytypism). Furthermore, early-life diet does not always affect  
766 warning coloration (Grill & Moore, 1998; Flores *et al.*, 2013), the relationship between the two  
767 is likely complicated by the fact that warning coloration advertises an associated defence  
768 (Poulton, 1890; Summers *et al.*, 2015).  
769

770 (c) *The resource-allocation hypothesis and quantitative honesty*

771 The nature of the relationship between an aposematic signal and defence is complex and likely to  
772 play a role in the way resource availability shapes aposematic signal variation, especially within-  
773 morph variation in conspicuousness. While aposematic species are inherently qualitatively  
774 honest, they may not necessarily be quantitatively honest (i.e. show a positive relationship  
775 between the level of signal and the level of defence). For example, positive relationships between  
776 conspicuousness and toxicity have been identified in a number of species [e.g. ladybird beetles  
777 (Bezzaerides *et al.*, 2007; Blount *et al.*, 2012; Arenas *et al.*, 2015) and paper wasps (Vidal-  
778 Cordero *et al.*, 2012)]. However, the association is not universally positive, with negative  
779 correlations between levels of signal and defence identified across sexes or populations of the  
780 same species (Daly & Myers, 1967; Wang, 2011; Blount *et al.*, 2012). Furthermore, in some  
781 groups it seems that related species can reach approximately equal protection from predators  
782 with multiple different signal–toxin strategies (Darst, Cummings & Cannatella, 2006). A number  
783 of theories have been proposed to explain these differences (comprehensively reviewed by  
784 Summers *et al.*, 2015). Research on the availability of resources, those used for coloration and  
785 preventing autotoxicity (antioxidants), has provided a feasible mechanism: the ‘resource-  
786 allocation hypothesis’ (Blount *et al.*, 2009). In this model, coloration and chemical defence both  
787 utilise antioxidants which are commonly acquired from the diet. Thus, individuals have to  
788 balance investments in the signal and defence, or deal with a trade-off between investing in the  
789 signal or the defence (Blount *et al.*, 2009). The model predicts that when resources are low  
790 individuals will signal honestly, whereas under high resource conditions quantitative honesty  
791 would degrade as individuals would preferentially invest in defence over warning coloration.

792 These predictions indicate that the influence of spatial or temporal variation in resource  
793 availability upon warning-signal conspicuousness is unlikely to be consistently linear.  
794 Empirical tests of the resource-allocation theory are scarce however, and results equivocal in  
795 their support, showing that resource variation can lead to both positive and negative relationships  
796 between signal and defence (Blount *et al.*, 2012). The predictions of theoretical models  
797 investigating how individuals might invest in each component of an aposematic signal when  
798 resources vary also differ, depending on whether the model assumes that individual  
799 conspicuousness is an intrinsic component of the defensive signal or can act as a stand-alone  
800 defensive trait (Blount *et al.*, 2009; Holen & Svennungsen, 2012; Summers *et al.*, 2015). The  
801 latter refers to a scenario where the warning coloration alone elicits wariness or acts as a  
802 deterrent against predators through its conspicuousness or novelty (Guilford, 1994).  
803 Alternatively, other work has suggested that the honesty of aposematic signals is not mediated by  
804 the cost of production, but instead by costs imposed by predators, because predators are able to  
805 determine levels of protection rapidly while sampling potential prey (Guilford & Dawkins, 1995;  
806 Hurd & Enquist, 2005). It is therefore clear that whether individuals respond to increased  
807 resource availability with a concomitant increase in warning-signal conspicuousness will depend  
808 on the mechanisms of honesty enforcement at work. Further work to clarify the mechanisms  
809 determining the honesty of signalling in aposematic species (Summers *et al.*, 2015) will therefore  
810 aid predictions about how spatial and temporal variation in resources will influence within- and  
811 between-population variation in conspicuousness.

812

813 **(2) Biotic selection pressures**

814 (a) *Disease and parasite load*

815 As the influence of resource availability on warning signals demonstrates, animal coloration is  
816 strongly influenced by factors that affect an individual's condition (Griffith, Parker & Olson,  
817 2006). Disease and parasite load both negatively influence condition and consequently can lead  
818 to trade-offs between immune function and signal expression (McGraw & Hill, 2000). For  
819 example, increased parasite load leads to generally duller coloration in fish and birds of both  
820 sexes (Martínez-Padilla *et al.*, 2011; Ciccotto, Dresser & Mendelson, 2014). Currently it is  
821 uncertain how such factors may influence aposematic signals specifically, but based on the  
822 shared physiological basis of aposematic and non-aposematic coloration (e.g. sexual signals), it  
823 is possible that a similar 'condition-dependent' relationship may occur (Blount *et al.*, 2009).

824 How the melanic component of aposematic coloration will be influenced by parasites and disease  
825 is unlikely to be clear cut. In common with coloured parts of warning signals, the production of  
826 melanin has various associated costs which may lead to trade-offs between the production of  
827 melanin for pigmentation and immune responses (Guindre-Parker & Love, 2014). Under such a  
828 scenario, a negative relationship between melanin pigmentation and disease or parasite load can  
829 occur (Cotter *et al.*, 2008; Gangoso *et al.*, 2011) and may result in polytypisms if these loads  
830 vary spatially. However the association between melanisation and resistance to pathogens is not  
831 straightforward; for example, in invertebrates, cuticle melanisation acts directly in the protection  
832 of individuals from pathogens (Dubovskiy *et al.*, 2013). Melanic pigmentation is also highly  
833 heritable in both invertebrates and vertebrates (Roff & Fairbairn, 2013; Roulin & Ducrest, 2013).

834 It has been suggested that in many species the association between melanic coloration and a suite  
835 of disease-resistance characteristics is a consequence of linkage disequilibrium and/or pleiotropy

836 (Roulin, 2016). The result is differential life-history strategies between more- and less-pigmented  
837 individuals of the same species, the associated fitness of which is environmentally dependent  
838 (Emaresi *et al.*, 2014).

839 The preference of parasites, particularly ovipositing parasites such as parasitic wasps, for specific  
840 colour morphs and for within-morph conspicuousness (or traits correlated with within-morph  
841 conspicuousness) may act as alternative selection pressures on warning coloration. Parasites may  
842 prefer one colour morph over another, as is the case for the aphid parasitoid wasp *Aphidius ervi*  
843 which preferentially lays eggs in pea aphids, *Acyrtosiphon pisum*, of a colour morph not  
844 favoured by predators (Losey *et al.*, 1997). As discussed previously, coloration in aposematic  
845 species may be quantitatively linked to chemical defence (Summers *et al.*, 2015), levels of which  
846 have been linked to decreased (Weldon *et al.*, 2006) and increased (Zvereva & Kozlov, 2016)  
847 parasitism risk, the latter being especially prevalent for specialist parasites (Al Abassi *et al.*,  
848 2001). Chemical defences have even been hypothesised to arise as a mechanism of preventing  
849 parasitism, with subsequent predator avoidance a secondary benefit (Weldon *et al.*, 2006). This  
850 relationship between colour and defence may be further complicated by the fact that some  
851 chemical defences can also have antimicrobial properties (Mina *et al.*, 2015). It is therefore  
852 conceivable that in areas with high risk of parasitism, colour morphs or levels of  
853 conspicuousness less attractive to parasitoids may be selected for, either through the parasites'  
854 direct response to colour or their response to levels of the strongly associated chemical defence.  
855 This may be especially important if infection dramatically reduces host survival (e.g.  
856 *Dinocampus coccinellae*; Maure *et al.*, 2014).

857 In summary, disease has the potential to cause continuous variation in the chromatic and

858 achromatic parts of an aposematic signal due to current infection, plastic changes at the  
859 individual level where infection stimulates increase in melanisation, and local adaptation *via*  
860 correlated trait responses if coloration is linked to factors such as immunocompetence and if the  
861 level of infection risk varies spatially. Pathogens may also cause local extinctions, or repeated  
862 bottlenecks, which can disrupt purifying selection and maintain colour variation (Idris & Hassan,  
863 2013; Gordon, 2013). Meanwhile, parasitism is likely to influence both morph abundance and  
864 within-morph conspicuousness in populations of aposematic species. These areas are ripe for  
865 exploration, and have huge potential for contributing to the understanding of diversity in  
866 aposematic coloration and the life-history trade-offs involved in its determination.

867

868 *(b) Interspecific interactions*

869 Although predator–prey relationships dominate the study of interspecies interactions, other forms  
870 can and do occur. One such example is reproductive interference, i.e. sexual interactions between  
871 members of different species (Gröning & Hochkirch, 2008; Burdfield-Steel & Shuker, 2011).  
872 Since this is, by definition, costly, mate discrimination and avoidance of reproductive  
873 interference could constrain warning signals, particularly in cases of mimicry, where effective  
874 mimicry could have consequences for mate discrimination (Estrada & Jiggins, 2008; but see  
875 Llaurens, Joron & Théry, 2014). Thus, the purifying selection on colour and pattern imposed by  
876 predators could be counteracted by the costs of sexual or territorial harassment by  
877 heterospecifics. While this phenomenon has not been investigated in aposematic species, such  
878 harassment has been suggested to play an important role in the maintenance of female colour  
879 polymorphisms in odonates (Fincke, 2004, and references therein). Because avoidance of



880 conspecific harassment has been shown to influence female colour in Batesian mimics (Cook *et*  
881 *al.*, 1994) this phenomenon may be worthy of further research.

882

883 *(c) Intraspecific interactions*

884 *(i) Mate choice and parental effects*

885 Mate choice can act either to reinforce or to disrupt the selection imposed on warning coloration  
886 by predators. The interaction between warning signals and sexual selection can occur when  
887 aposematic traits play a function in mate choice and recognition, or when there is a trade-off  
888 between traits used in mate acquisition and those involved in predator defence. As anti-predator  
889 defence is a key survival trait, we would expect that natural and sexual selection would work in  
890 tandem, with better protected individuals also gaining advantages during mating and  
891 reproduction, thus enforcing purifying selection on warning coloration. However, when this is  
892 not the case sexual selection may act to counter the effect of selection imposed by predators,  
893 allowing for polymorphism and other forms of warning-signal variation to arise (e.g. Cummings  
894 & Crothers, 2013).

895 Sexual selection could also lead to sex-specific differences in warning coloration. For example,  
896 increased brightness in male poison frogs could be the result of female preference for brighter  
897 males (Maan & Cummings, 2009; but see Meuche *et al.*, 2013). Whether such selection would  
898 lead to true polymorphism in the eyes of predators depends on the strength of the respective  
899 pressures, as well as the sensitivity of the signalling system itself to evolutionary inputs. In the  
900 case of poison frogs, the colour cues selected for by females (i.e. brightness) may be different  
901 from those selected by predators (i.e. hue). Indeed there is evidence that *Heliconius* and

902 *Melinaea* co-mimics show increased interspecies variation in colour combinations that are less  
903 visible to their avian predators, allowing for ‘cryptic’ signalling of species identity (Llaurens *et*  
904 *al.*, 2014) and similar patterns may exist for within-species signalling. Alternatively, if the visual  
905 conspicuousness of both sexes is already very high, any increases as a result of sexual selection  
906 may have no effect on predator learning (Maan & Cummings, 2009; Crothers & Cummings,  
907 2013). Variation in the strength of female preferences among populations (e.g. Maan &  
908 Cummings, 2009) may create divergent evolutionary trajectories in different populations,  
909 causing polytypisms to arise, whilst assortative mating or local morph preference can enable  
910 their persistence and even lead to the exaggeration of morph differences. In such cases, warning  
911 signals may constitute so-called ‘magic’ traits, as they are both subject to ecological pressures  
912 from predators and contribute to non-random mating, as is the case for many *Heliconius* species  
913 (Merrill, Chia & Nadeau, 2014). Assortative mating by morph may also occur if individuals in a  
914 population have different anti-predator strategies. For example, associating with a conspicuous  
915 individual may increase your own risk of attack if you are cryptic (Segami Marzal *et al.*, 2017).  
916 In addition to assortative mating, disassortative mating, where individuals prefer to mate with  
917 colour morphs different from themselves, can also occur. For example, in the polymorphic  
918 *Heliconius numata* females show a strong aversion to mating with males of their own morph,  
919 preferring instead males of a different morph to themselves. Thus, while males of rare morphs  
920 may suffer increased predation risk, they will also have a higher mating success with females of  
921 the common morph (Chouteau *et al.*, 2017). This may be the result of heterozygote advantage,  
922 which has been suggested as a possible mechanism for the maintenance of many polymorphisms  
923 (Hedrick, 2012).

924 However, warning signals may not always be indicators of mate quality. Instead, there may be  
925 trade-offs between traits related to predator defence and those that grant higher mating success.  
926 In addition, while selection on aposematic-signal colour patterns is expected to be positively  
927 frequency dependent (see Section II) it could potentially be opposed if negative frequency-  
928 dependent sexual selection also acts on the signals. Evidence for both phenomena has been found  
929 in the wood tiger moth. In this species white males have less-effective warning signals  
930 (Nokelainen *et al.*, 2012) than the yellow morph they coexist with, but gain higher mating  
931 success in white-biased populations, despite showing no advantage over yellow males in  
932 offspring hatching success (Gordon *et al.*, 2015). This could be due to differences in flying  
933 behaviour and mating effort (Rojas, Gordon & Mappes, 2015). Thus, frequency-dependent  
934 selection could allow yellow and white males to co-exist, as whites compensate for their higher  
935 predation rate through increased mating success. Sexual selection may therefore allow for the  
936 maintenance of polymorphism within populations, in particular if it leads to, or is a consequence  
937 of, a trade-off between anti-predator defence and mating success/fecundity.

938 While we naturally expect mate choice to influence offspring aposematic phenotype *via* genetic  
939 inheritance, transgenerational non-genetic effects are also likely to play a role, especially in  
940 determining continuous within-morph variation in warning coloration (Winters *et al.*, 2014). It is  
941 increasingly clear that offspring phenotype is influenced non-genetically *via* maternal investment  
942 in response to a multitude of abiotic and biotic variables present in the offspring environment  
943 (Wolf & Wade, 2009; Day & Bonduriansky, 2011). Mothers can alter offspring phenotype in  
944 response to mate ‘quality’ (‘differential allocation’; Ratikainen & Kokko, 2010) and reliable cues  
945 of the offspring environment (‘anticipatory maternal effects’; Marshall & Uller, 2007). In terms

946 of mate choice, as mentioned above, male warning coloration has been shown to be influential in  
947 female mate choice in aposematic species (Nokelainen *et al.*, 2012; Mishra & Omkar, 2014).  
948 Theoretical and empirical work suggest two likely responses, that females will either increase  
949 investment in response to the brightness or colour of male warning coloration ('positive  
950 differential allocation'; Sheldon, 2000; Horváthová, Nakagawa & Uller, 2012) or decrease it  
951 ('negative differential allocation'; Saino *et al.*, 2002; Bolund, Schielzeth & Forstmeier, 2009).  
952 Recent work provides the first evidence that such a phenomenon may take place, with female  
953 *Adalia bipunctata* laying brighter eggs when mated with brighter males (Paul *et al.*, 2018). This  
954 is important as offspring aposematic phenotype in early life can persist into adulthood (Winters  
955 *et al.*, 2014) and such differential allocation could therefore facilitate the perpetuation of  
956 variation in male warning coloration through subsequent generations. However, it is worth  
957 noting that work on differential allocation has also shown that a female's reproductive response  
958 to signals of male 'quality' varies with female age and phenotype (Sheppard *et al.*, 2013).  
959 Combined with other effects linked to maternal phenotype, condition, or maternal response to the  
960 offspring environment, this differential maternal investment in response to male phenotype is  
961 likely to lead to a mosaic of continuous colour variation within and among populations of  
962 aposematic species.

963

#### 964 (ii) *Social signals and competition*

965 If warning signals can be used as signals during mate choice, and there is evidence that they can,  
966 they may also play a role in other forms of intraspecific interactions such as male–male  
967 competition, dominance and territorial disputes. While there are many studies that show the

968 importance of visual signals in such interactions [see Shreeve (1987), Setchell & Wickings  
969 (2005), López-Idiáquez *et al.* (2016) for examples], few have considered aposematic species.  
970 One example comes from work on male–male competition in the frog *O. pumilio*; male  
971 brightness affected both their own behaviour and the behaviour of other males towards them.  
972 Brighter focal males were more likely to approach intruders to their territory, and brighter  
973 intruders elicited more calls and approaches than dull ones (Crothers, Gering & Cummings,  
974 2011). This suggests that continuous variation in male brightness may be a conditional signal in  
975 this species, and that male–male aggression may play a role in its maintenance within  
976 populations.

977 Intraspecific warning signals may also occur when conspecifics can benefit from signalling their  
978 presence to others, and by heeding such signals. This may arise when competition between  
979 conspecifics is particularly costly. Possible examples include larval coloration signalling the  
980 presence of existing larvae on potential host plants to ovipositing females in order to reduce  
981 larval cannibalism in the pipevine swallowtail butterfly *Battus philenor* (Papaj & Newsom,  
982 2005) and bright colours in male damselflies signalling their presence to other males in order to  
983 reduce male–male mating attempts during scramble competition (Sherratt & Forbes, 2001).

984 While intriguing, honest communication of this sort seems unlikely to result in signal  
985 polymorphism, as it should also favour a single signal. If however, signals are dishonest, with  
986 signallers attempting to deceive the conspecific receivers, then there is the potential for red  
987 queen/chase away selection dynamics to unfold, similar to those that may occur during Batesian  
988 mimicry. Dishonest intrasexual signalling has been suggested as a potential reason for females  
989 displaying male-like coloration, as this deceives mate-searching males and reduces male

990 harassment in butterflies (Cook *et al.*, 1994) and damselflies (Hammers & Van Gossum, 2008).  
991 As well as increased competition for resources, high conspecific density is linked to increased  
992 detectability by predators (Riipi *et al.*, 2001). In aposematic species such aggregations actually  
993 augment signal strength and thus predator deterrence (Finkbeiner, Briscoe & Reed, 2012;  
994 Rowland, Ruxton & Skelhorn, 2013), changing the costs and benefits of large conspecific  
995 densities. This is reflected in the developmental ‘phase shift’ of the desert locust (*Schistocerca*  
996 *gregaria*). Coloration in these toxic locusts changes from a cryptic phenotype to an aposematic  
997 yellow and black when raised at high conspecific densities (Sword, 1999). This shift in anti-  
998 predator strategy is a response to the increased likelihood of detection by predators when the  
999 cryptic locusts are in large aggregations. Predators learn to associate prey with toxicity more  
1000 quickly when they are conspicuous rather than cryptic (Sword *et al.*, 2000) and the detection  
1001 costs of warning coloration are diminished by gregariousness (Gamberale & Tullberg, 1998;  
1002 Riipi *et al.*, 2001). Conspecifics can therefore influence not only within- but between-morph  
1003 variation in aposematic signalling.

1004

1005 *(d) Age-structured populations and senescence*

1006 Although not an alternative selection pressure *per se*, the conspicuousness of warning signals  
1007 might also be expected to change over the lifetime of an individual, closely tracking major  
1008 physiological changes resulting from processes such as reproduction and senescence (Booth,  
1009 1990b). For example, when warning coloration has a dual role as a predator deterrent and mate  
1010 attractant, there might be an increase in signal strength during the mating season (Örnberg *et al.*,  
1011 2002; Pérez-Rodríguez, 2008). Reproduction is also costly and adult condition is often poorer

1012 post-, relative to pre-breeding (Stearns, 1992; Monaghan, Metcalfe & Torres, 2009). Such a  
1013 decrease in condition may potentially have consequences for the conspicuousness or ‘quality’ of  
1014 an individual’s aposematic signal, especially in longer-lived species with multiple reproductive  
1015 bouts (Velando, Drummond & Torres, 2010). Senescence, on the other hand, is strongly linked  
1016 to a general decline in phenotype (Rose, 1991), and the strength of aposematic signals may  
1017 become less effective with age in the same way as other colour signals, for example the blue feet  
1018 of male blue-footed boobies *Sula nebouxii* (Torres & Velando, 2007), the yellow bibs of the  
1019 common yellowthroat *Geothlypis trichas* (Freeman-Gallant *et al.*, 2011), and the wings of the  
1020 orange sulphur butterfly *Colias eurytheme* (Kemp, 2006).

1021 The effects of reproduction on coloration also vary according to an individual’s age and sex,  
1022 leading to a mosaic of colour expression within a population resulting from individual variation  
1023 in sex, age class, and reproductive status (Evans, Gustafsson & Sheldon, 2011; Grunst,  
1024 Rotenberry & Grunst, 2014). Furthermore, holometabolous insects such as Lepidoptera naturally  
1025 show dramatic changes in form as well as coloration throughout their lifetime (Booth, 1990*b*),  
1026 and more subtle changes in coloration are common in hemimetabolous insects, such as true bugs,  
1027 between different nymphs and adult forms. Incorporate the aforementioned genetic correlations  
1028 between warning signals at different life stages, or warning signals and other life-history traits,  
1029 and the picture becomes even more complex (Lindstedt *et al.*, 2016). An explicit test of the  
1030 effects of reproduction and senescence on warning coloration variation and efficiency, also  
1031 taking into consideration possible genetic correlations, is therefore needed. This would then  
1032 enable us to ascertain whether similar patterns occur in populations of aposematic species and  
1033 therefore if variation in age class within a population contributes to individual variation in

1034 conspicuousness.

1035 It is clear therefore that there are myriad different selective pressures with the potential to  
1036 influence the warning signals of aposematic species, some of which have already been  
1037 empirically demonstrated to be important, and others worthy of further research. These sources  
1038 of influence may act in ways that can be diametrically opposed to, or act synergistically with,  
1039 predation pressure (Table 1). These ‘alternative’ selection pressures are most likely to produce  
1040 and maintain warning signal diversity if they: (1) produce negative frequency-dependent  
1041 selection favouring rare morphs (for example those described in *Heliconius* by Chouteau *et al.*,  
1042 2017), or (2) act in combination with heterogeneous selection imposed by predators (as described  
1043 in Section IV) to produce different optimal phenotypes either within or among populations. In  
1044 the latter case, the resulting selection landscape and associated phenotypic optima are also likely  
1045 to vary over space and time, further slowing phenotypic convergence and allowing within-  
1046 population signal diversity to persist for longer. For example, temperatures will vary not only  
1047 among habitats but also depending on climatic and seasonal timescales, and selection pressures  
1048 associated with mate choice will vary in intensity throughout the year, especially in those species  
1049 with distinct breeding seasons. It is vitally important that future work investigating the role of  
1050 these selection pressures in producing warning-signal variation incorporates their potential  
1051 interaction, both with each other and with predators (e.g. temperature and either predator  
1052 motivation or intraspecific aggression). It seems only rational to predict that such a movement  
1053 away from the consideration of selection pressures on warning coloration in isolation is likely to  
1054 result in a better understanding of the complex patterns of signal variation seen in nature.

1055



## 1056 VI. TAXONOMIC OCCURRENCE OF WARNING-SIGNAL POLYMORPHISM

1057 In our search for variation in the aposematic signal, we found examples in nearly every taxon in  
1058 which we find aposematism (Table S1), suggesting that variation in warning signals is far more  
1059 widespread than previously appreciated. Despite this taxonomic diversity, a disproportionate  
1060 amount of research effort has focused on a limited number of taxa, most notably Lepidoptera  
1061 (especially the Neotropical *Heliconius*) and, to a lesser extent, the dendrobatid poison frogs.  
1062 While this has enabled researchers to delve deeply into the various mechanisms producing  
1063 patterns of variation within these species, it is unclear whether their findings generalise to other  
1064 taxonomic groups.

1065 Aposematic research has, for the past century, focused predominantly on terrestrial insects and  
1066 their avian predators, possibly due to the tractability of these systems. However, examples of  
1067 aposematic colour and pattern variation in other taxa such as birds (Dumbacher *et al.*, 1992,  
1068 2008) and mammals (Hunter, 2009; Stankowich, Caro & Caro, 2011; Caro *et al.*, 2013) have  
1069 more recently been revealed. Warning-signal variation in several marine species has also begun  
1070 to be investigated (Hanlon & Messenger, 1998; Cortesi & Cheney, 2010; Winters *et al.*, 2017),  
1071 although the aposematic function of conspicuous coloration in aquatic environments has been  
1072 questioned. This is due to limited light availability, poorly known predator visual systems and  
1073 predator–prey interactions, and the lack of known defence mechanisms for many brightly  
1074 coloured organisms in the marine environment (Pawlik, 2012). It is probably in the non-animal  
1075 kingdoms where aposematism has received the least attention, despite reported examples in  
1076 plants (e.g. Cahn & Harper, 1976; Karageorgou, Buschmann & Manetas, 2008; Lev-Yadun,  
1077 2009) and even fungi (Sherratt, Wilkinson & Bain, 2005). There is therefore a need for more

1078 comparative studies on different taxa with robust phylogenies and detailed ecological  
1079 information in order to address the ultimate causes of signal variation across taxa. Furthermore,  
1080 utilising other systems parallel to the traditional terrestrial avian–insect interactions, for example,  
1081 terrestrial plant–herbivore or marine food webs, may well provide new insights into the selective  
1082 pressures and commonalities creating aposematic variation.

1083

## 1084 **VII. CONCLUSIONS**

1085 (1) While predator-enforced selection on aposematic species appears to favour signal  
1086 monomorphy in some cases, a growing appreciation of animal sensory systems and of the  
1087 complexity of predator psychology in particular is challenging the concept of the predator  
1088 community as a single invariant selective agent.

1089 (2) Investigations of continuous variation or polymorphisms in aposematic species should first  
1090 assess whether and to what extent the differences between individual signals actually impact  
1091 predation risk. The perceptual abilities and responses of relevant predators, natural conditions  
1092 and the microhabitat structure shaping encounter rates between predators and prey are especially  
1093 important considerations.

1094 (3) Equally as important, a variety of biotic and abiotic selection pressures experienced by  
1095 aposematic species can contribute to warning signal variation within and among populations, and  
1096 may potentially act antagonistically or synergistically with predator selection (summary in Table  
1097 1). Testing the relevance of visual signals to other behaviours, such as mate choice or  
1098 thermoregulation, as informed by the natural history of the study species, will help piece together  
1099 a more complex picture of the selective landscape driving signal variation.

1100 (4) Moving forward, the field of aposematism should step away from the paradigm that warning  
1101 signals are entirely determined by a uniform class of predators (generally birds), and instead  
1102 consider both the strength of selection imposed by predators and alternative selective forces.  
1103 Future work on aposematic species should adopt a more holistic approach to understanding  
1104 colour and pattern, applying the tools of behavioural ecology, physiology and genetics to assess  
1105 the relative power of predation *versus* other selective pressures in producing specific phenotypes.

1106 (5) Broadening the taxonomic spread of research on warning signals and focusing on less well-  
1107 studied systems, encompassing different types of predators, would also help build a more  
1108 comprehensive picture of the selective pressures determining variation in aposematism.

1109 (6) Despite an overwhelmingly narrow research focus on predation pressures as the primary  
1110 determinant of warning coloration, aposematism is affected by a range of forces, of which  
1111 predation may not necessarily always be the most important. At the outset of this review we  
1112 asked whether variation in warning coloration is a paradox or if it is the norm. It appears to be  
1113 both; it is a paradox from the historical perspective that defines aposematic pressures *via*  
1114 purifying selection enforced by predators, and the norm if we consider the empirical data and  
1115 alternative selective pressures facing these species.

1116

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## 1124 **IX. REFERENCES**

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2644 **X. SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

2645 Additional supporting information may be found in the online version of this article.

2646 **Appendix S1.** Methods for compiling Table S1.

2647 **Table S1.** Examples of warning-colour variation described in existing literature.

2648

2649 Table 1. Summary of key factors facilitating the maintenance of different levels of variation  
 2650 within and among aposematic species.

<b>Factor</b>	<b>Effect</b>	<b>Predicted form of signal variation</b>
Variation among predators	(1) Broad-scale differences in physiology (differences in sensory capacities, toxin tolerance and cognition) and behaviour among species and populations of predators	Polytypism; polymorphism if predators are structured across microhabitats; continuous variation; seasonal variation
	(2) Differences in predator experience among species, populations, and temporally within populations	Polytypism; polymorphism if predators are structured across microhabitats; seasonal variation
	(3) Small-scale differences in physiology and behaviour among individuals, linked to motivation or individual experience	Would relax purifying selection, potentially allowing polymorphism or continuous variation
Temperature	Lower temperatures favour melanic components of warning signals, whereas predation selects against melanic morphs	Polytypism; polymorphism; continuous variation across populations along altitudinal or latitudinal gradients; continuous variation within populations (linked to microclimate during development); polyphenism/seasonal variation
UV damage	Increased UV risk favours melanic components of warning signals, whereas predation selects against melanic morphs	Polytypism; polymorphism; continuous variation across populations along altitudinal or latitudinal gradients; continuous variation within populations (linked to microclimate during development); polyphenism/seasonal variation
Desiccation	Increased desiccation risk favours melanic components of warning signals, whereas predation selects against melanic morphs	Polytypism; polymorphism; continuous variation across populations along altitudinal or latitudinal gradients; continuous variation within populations (linked to microclimate during development); polyphenism/seasonal variation
Resource availability	Availability of resources influences	Continuous variation within or among

	investment in warning coloration, often <i>via</i> effect on signalling honesty	populations; polytypism
Disease and parasite load	(1) Effect of infection on individual condition	Continuous variation within or among populations
	(2) Stimulation of melanisation by infection or trade-offs between use of melanin for pigmentation or infection resistance	Continuous variation within or among populations
	(3) Correlated trait responses if coloration is linked to factors such as immunocompetence or parasitism risk	Polytypism; polymorphism; polyphenism
	(4) Pathogen-driven local extinctions, or repeated bottlenecks, which disrupt purifying selection and maintain colour variation	Polytypism; polymorphism
Intraspecific signalling	Warning colours may also serve as social cues, for example of quality or social status	Polymorphism; sexual dichromatism; continuous variation within populations
Density and aggregation	Density of aposematic species can alter selective landscapes, particularly the influence of frequency-dependent selection imposed by predators. Aggregation of aposematic species can have a similar effect (and play into predator psychology to decrease the likelihood of an attack).	Polytypism; polymorphism; polyphenism

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2654 Figure legends

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2656 **Fig. 1.** (A) White, yellow, and yellow/red morphs of the wood tiger moth

2657 (*Arctia plantaginis*) each vary in the extent of their melanisation. (B) The two-spot ladybird

2658 (*Adalia bipunctata*) has numerous morphs including the typical melanic and non-melanic forms

2659 shown here. (C) Morphs of the polytypic poison frog *Ranitomeya imitator*. (D) Continuous

2660 variation in stripe length and width in the North American striped skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*).

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2662 **Fig. 2.** The levels of diversity in warning coloration discussed herein and associated terminology,

2663 with a hypothetical example using a single species of ladybird beetle.

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2665 **Fig. 3.** Definitions of the forms of mimicry discussed in this review.

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2667 **Fig. 4.** Types of variation in predators and the forms of warning-signal variation they may

2668 promote: 1, temporal variation (for example seasonal polyphenism); 2, polytypism; 3,

2669 polymorphism within a metapopulation; 4, polymorphism; 5, continuous variation.

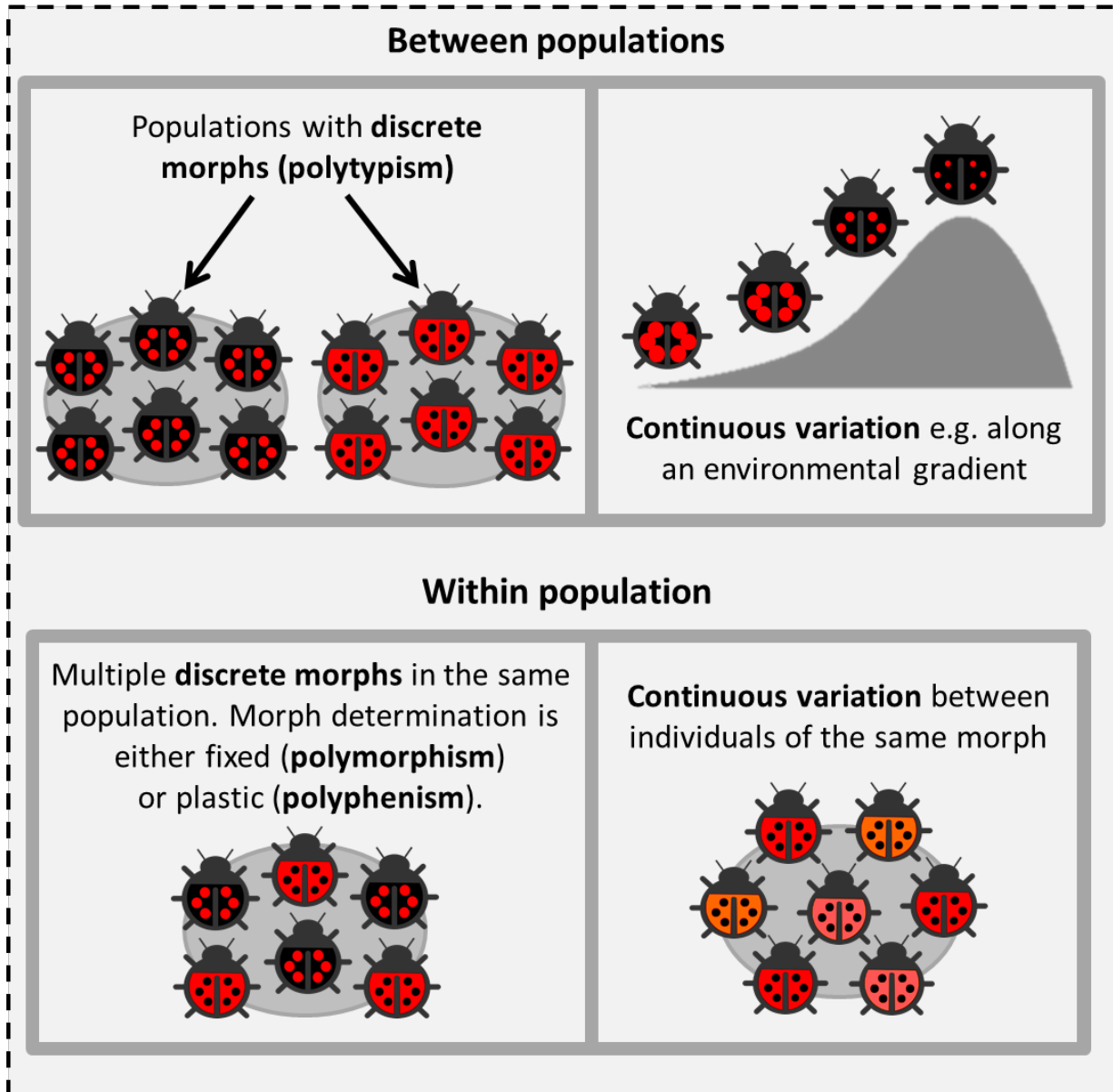
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# Intraspecific variation in aposematic colouration



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**Müllerian mimicry** – two or more defended species resemble each other, thus sharing the costs of educating predators. It is beneficial to all species involved.

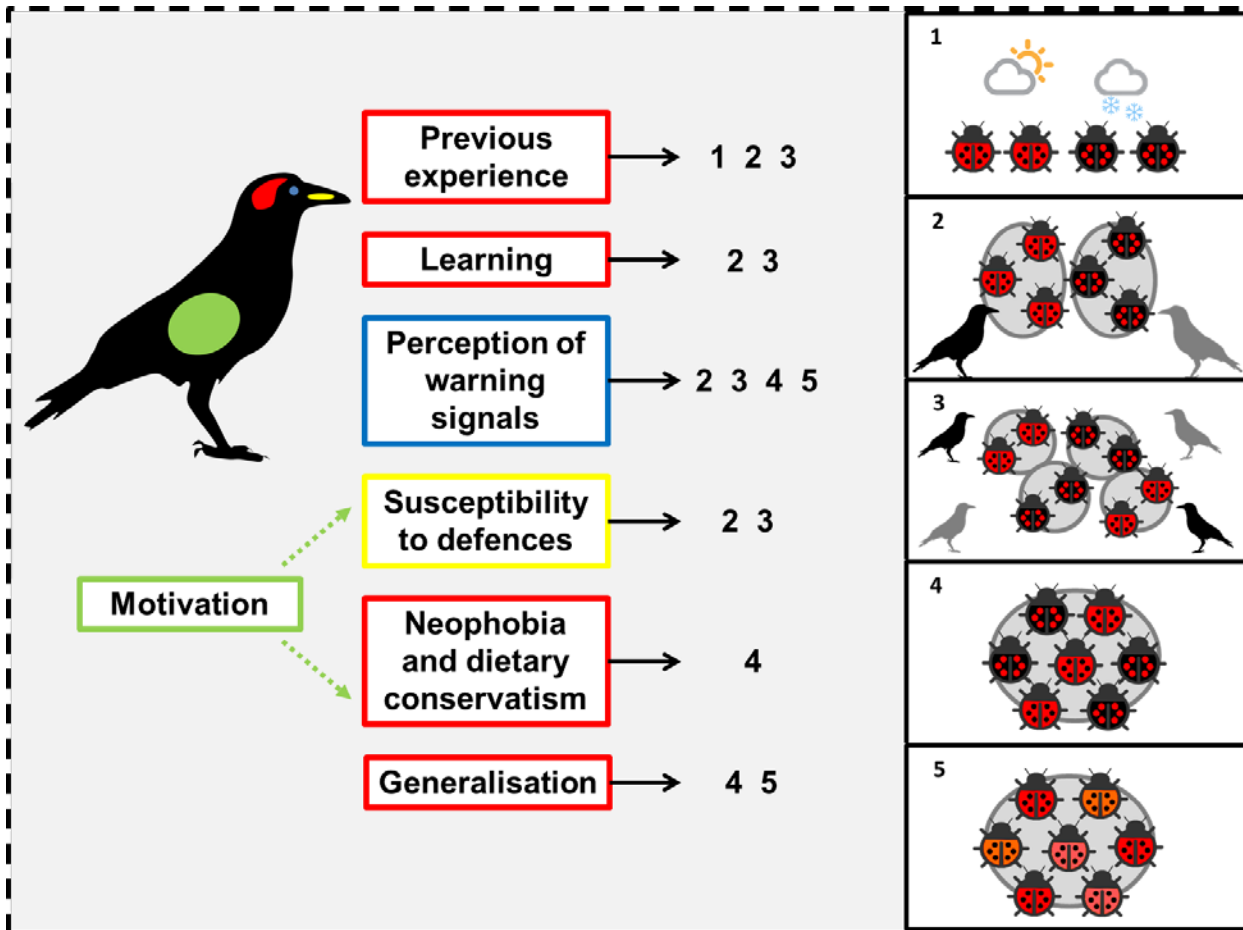
**Batesian mimicry** – an undefended species resembles a defended one, thereby gaining the benefit of predators' learned or innate avoidance. It is beneficial to the undefended species but harmful to the defended species being mimicked, as it may slow predator avoidance learning or reduce avoidance altogether.

**Quasi-Batesian mimicry** – mimicry that initially appears Müllerian as all species possess some form of defence, however differences in either type of defence or in strength between species mean that the mimicry is not beneficial for all species, with the more-defended, mimicked species suffering costs resulting from slower predator learning. Occasionally referred to as Speedian mimicry.

**Automimicry** – some members of a defended species have reduced or absent defences, while retaining the same appearance as their defended conspecifics, thus benefitting from predator avoidance. High levels of automimicry threaten to slow or prevent predator avoidance learning.

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## Appendix S1: Methods for compiling Table S1.

Table S1 was assembled using both traditional literature searches and the authors' own knowledge. In order to reduce the likelihood that any study systems were omitted, we then carried out a standardised literature search. The search terms used were all combinations ( $N = 21$ ) of (Aposematism, Aposematic, Warning signal, Warning colour/color, Warning colouration/coloration) and (Diversity, Variation, Polymorphism). Searches were carried out in *Google Scholar* between May and June 2017 and the first 50 hits, sorted by relevance, were assessed. Any new species, or forms of variation in already included species, that were found were added to the table. Thus we are confident that Table S1 accurately represents the existing literature. As some species are represented by a single study or observation it was not always clear which forms of variation were occurring; in these cases suspected, but unproven, types of variation are denoted. Putatively aposematic cases were included when there was a clear indication of the taxa in question possessing defences against predation.

**Table S1.** (Provided as a separate file). Examples of warning colour variation described in existing literature. The types of warning colour variation reported for each taxon are denoted with crosses (x) in the table. Suspected, but unverified types of variation are denoted with question marks (?). In addition, a short written description of the type of colour variation, including within-population individual variation, is provided.

Table S1. Examples of warning colour variation described in existing literature.			What type of variation is known to occur						References
Order	Species	Short description of variation	fixed	plastic	polytypic	polymorphic	ontogenetic	sexual	
INSECTA									
Lepidoptera (moths and butterflies)	<i>Acraea encedon</i> (common acraea)	Polymorphism	x			x			Owen & Smith (1991); Owen <i>et al.</i> (1994)
	<i>Acraea encedana</i> (Pierre's acraea)	Polymorphism	x			x			Owen & Smith (1991); Owen <i>et al.</i> (1994)
	<i>Arctia plantaginis</i> (wood tiger moth)	Both continuous and discrete variation within and among populations in both larval and adult stages	x	x	x	x	x	x	Hegna, Galarza & Mappes (2015)
	<i>Battus philenor</i> (pipewine/blue swallowtail)	Sex differences in iridescence; continuous variation in males; plastic colour change as response to heat in caterpillars		x				x	Rutowski & Rajyaguru (2013); Nielsen & Papaj (2017)
	<i>Callimorpha dominula</i> (scarlet tiger moth)	Different forewing patterns and colours, hindwings yellow or red	x	x	x	x	x		Marsh & Rothschild (1974)
	<i>Callimorpha quadripunctaria</i> (Jersey tiger moth)	Red, orange and yellow genetically determined hindwing colour morphs	x		x	x			Brakefield & Liebert (1985)
	<i>Danaus chrysippus</i> (plain tiger/African monarch)	Polymorphism, Müllerian mimicry ring with <i>Acraea encedona</i> and <i>A. encedana</i>	x		x	x		?	Owen & Smith (1991); Owen <i>et al.</i> (1994)
	<i>Dysschema marginata</i> & <i>D. terminata</i>	Females and males have different patterns; several male morphs for <i>D. terminata</i> . Sexual dichromatism in other species in the genus too. <i>Dysschema</i> species are thought to be unpalatable (presence of pyrrolizidine alkaloids)				x			Moraes <i>et al.</i> (2017); Conner & Weller (2004)
	<i>Eterusia</i> spp. (Zygaenidae: Chalcosiinae), e.g. <i>Eterusia aedea</i>	Polymorphisms and polytypisms as adults; polymorphisms in larvae too. Sexual dimorphism in some species. Chalcosiinae as a whole have many defended, polymorphic and sexually dimorphic species			x	x		x	Yen, Robinson, & Quicke (2005)
	<i>Grammia incorrupta</i>	Variation in hindwing colour from pink to yellow	?	?				?	Conner (2008); Schmidt (2009)
	<i>Heliconius astraea</i>	Polytypism, slight differences in colouration			x				Brown & Holzinger (1973)
	<i>Heliconius cydno</i> (cydno longwing)	Variety of yellow or white bands on forewings and hindwings, respectively			x				Chamberlain <i>et al.</i> (2009)
	<i>Heliconius doris</i> (Doris longwing)	Different dorsal colouration on hindwing: red, blue, yellow, green				x			Brower & Egan (1997); Brown (1981)
	<i>Heliconius erato</i> (red postman)	Different patterns, lack of yellow bars on hindwing, ray forms, numerous red patches on forewing, white and orange on forewing			x	x		x	Klein & de Araujo (2013); Brown & Benson (1974); Hines <i>et al.</i> (2011)
	<i>Heliconius ethilla</i> (ethilla longwing)	Polytypism, with different yellow spots			x	x			Turner (1968); Brown (1981)
	<i>Heliconius hecale</i> (tiger longwing)	Different arrangement of patterns of yellow, black, white, orange, and red				x			DeVries (1987); Brown (1981)
	<i>Heliconius hecuba</i> (Hecuba longwing)	Polymorphism, with a variety of yellow or white bands or spots on forewings and hindwings				x			Brown (1981)
	<i>Heliconius melpomene</i> (postman butterfly)	Different patterns, lack of yellow bars on hindwing, ray forms, numerous red patches on forewing, white and orange on forewing			x				Turner (1977a); Sheppard <i>et al.</i> (1985); Mallet (1989); Jiggins <i>et al.</i> (1997); Naisbit, Jiggins, & Mallet (2003)
	<i>Heliconius nattereri</i> (Natterer's longwing)	Sexual dimorphism						x	Brown (1970, 1972, 1981)
	<i>Heliconius numata</i> (numata longwing)	Different patterns of black, orange, and yellow				x			Brown & Benson (1974); Joron & Mallet, (1998)
	<i>Heliconius pardalinus</i>	Different patterns of black, yellow, and orange			x	x			Brown (1981)
	<i>Heliconius telesiphe</i> (telesiphe longwing)	Different colour forms among populations			x				Vane-Wright (1975)
	<i>Heliconius timareta</i>	Polymorphism, with no red on hindwings or hindwing rays but no horizontal bar, or complete red-rayed hindwing with horizontal red bar				x			Lamas (2004)
	<i>Heliconius xanthocles</i>	Polytypism, with black and red or just black on the hindwing			x				Brown (1981); Lamas (2004)
	<i>Hyphantria cunea</i> (fall webworm)	Variation in colouration of both fore- and hindwings, mostly along north-south axis of the distribution; variation in larval colouration from yellow to pale grey to almost black	?	?	?	?			Conner (2008)
	<i>Hypolimnas misippus</i> (Danaid eggfly)	Female-limited polymorphism in hindwing colour	x			x		x	Edmunds (1969)

	Ithomiine butterflies	Polymorphism, involved in sympatric mimicry rings, recorded for: <i>Mechanitis mazaesus</i> , <i>M. messenoides</i> , <i>Hypothris anastasia</i> , <i>H. moebiusi</i> , <i>Callithomia alexirrhoe</i> and <i>Ceratimia tutia</i>			?	x			Beccaloni (1997)
	many Zygaeninae species (burnet moths)	Polytypism and polymorphism are ubiquitous in the Zygaeninae; monomorphy is extremely rare, limited to a few species with very narrow distributions. Variation in imaginal phenotype includes differences in spot colour (red, yellow, and more rarely white, orange, and black), ground colour, size of pale rings around spots, spot number and confluence, colour of collare and cingulum, as well as variation in the translucence and sheen of scales. Variation includes discrete morphs and continuous variation, as well as differences between sexes. Well-known cases of polytypisms include littoral melanism in many species and white morphs of <i>Z. carniolica</i> in Cappadocia.	x		x	x		x	Tremewan (2006); Briolat <i>et al.</i> (2018); comprehensively reviewed in Hofmann & Tremewan (2017)
	many Zygaeninae species	Variation in larval appearance within and among populations, including differences in ground colour, size of black-pigmented spots, presence and colour of a mediodorsal line, and presence of red elements (e.g. <i>Zygaena corsica</i> )	x		x	x			Naumann, Tarmann, & Tremewan (1999); Nahirnic & Tarmann (2016); Tremewan (2015); comprehensively reviewed in Hofmann & Tremewan (2017)
	<i>Zygaena ephialtes</i>	Two pattern types (ephaltoid/peucedanoid), with two colours (red and yellow); morphs often differ among populations but can also co-occur. Possible quasi-Batesian mimicry with <i>Amata phegea</i>	x		x	x			Sbordoni <i>et al.</i> (1979); Tremewan (2006)
	<i>Utetheisa ornatrix</i> (ornate moth)	Variation in extent of melanism	x	x	x	x			Pease (1968)
	many other Lepidoptera larvae	Colour changes between larval stages	x					x	Booth (1990a)
Hymenoptera	<i>Bombus</i> spp. (bumblebees)	Allopatric morphs joining local mimicry rings, sexual dimorphism						x	Plowright & Owen (1980)
	<i>Bombus breviceps</i>		x	?	x	x		?	Hines & Williams (2012)
	<i>Bombus haemorrhoidalis</i>		x	?	x	x		?	Hines & Williams (2012)
	<i>Bombus malanopygus</i> (black-tailed bumblebee)	Red-black abdominal dimorphism	?		?	?			Plowright & Owen (1980)
	<i>Bombus rufocinctus</i> (red-belted bumblebee)	Two metasomal colour dimorphisms	x			x			Owen & Plowright (1988); Plowright & Owen (1980)
	<i>Bombus trifasciatus</i>	Müllerian mimicry with <i>B. haemorrhoidalis</i> and <i>B. breviceps</i> , all polymorphic	x	?	x	x		?	Hines & Williams (2012)
	<i>Chryptocheilus</i> spp. (spider wasps)	Colour variation within and among populations	?	?	x	x		x	Day (1984)
	<i>Dasymutilla bioculata</i> (velvet ant)	Three populations with different colours, forming three mimicry complexes with other species. In addition, velvet ants are sexually dimorphic					x	x	Wilson <i>et al.</i> (2012)
	<i>Dasymutilla quadriguttata</i> (velvet ant)	Molecular analyses suggest several named species are in fact a single variable species; this could be the case for other species too			x	?			Pilgrim <i>et al.</i> (2009); Wilson <i>et al.</i> (2012)
	<i>Eulaema</i> spp.	Geographic variation in colouration and mimicry	?		x				Dressler (1979)
	<i>Psorthaspis variegata</i> (spider wasp)	Müllerian mimicry with velvet ants (no information on species-level variation, but <i>P. variegata</i> is variable?)	?		?				Rodriguez <i>et al.</i> (2014)
	<i>Vespa velutina</i> (Asian hornet)	Geographic variation in patterns of melanisation, also mimicry	?	?	?				Perrard <i>et al.</i> (2014)
Coleoptera (beetles)	Alticinae: <i>Disonycha</i> , <i>Kuschelina</i> , <i>Capraita</i> , <i>Haltica</i> , <i>Crepidocera</i> , <i>Systema</i> spp. (flea beetles)	Many species vary in the extent of pale versus dark bands, or have forms uniform or striated in colour. Some have regional varieties and distinct colour forms with overlapping distribution.	?	?	x	?			Horn (1889); Deroe & Pasteels (1982); Gilbert (2011)
	<i>Cantharis livida</i> (soldier beetle)	Orange-black colouration and a melanic morph; putatively aposematic	x			x			Brakefield (1985)
	<i>Ceroglossus</i> spp. (ground beetles)	High intraspecific variation in elytral colouration.	?		x				Muños-Ramírez <i>et al.</i> (2016)
	<i>Chauliognathus</i> spp. (soldier beetles)	Variation in elytra pattern between regions (for three species studied); variation with elevation in one population			x				Machado & Valiati (2006)
	<i>Eniclases niger</i> (net-winged beetle)	Polymorphic in colouration, and can be uniformly black or have a brightly coloured pronotum and scutellum	x?		x				Bocek & Bocak (2016)

	<i>Eniclases variabilis</i> (net-winged beetle)	Highly polymorphic species; resembles in general appearance several distinct, sympatric mimetic types	x?		x						Bocek & Bocak (2016)
	<i>Nicrophorus vespilloides</i> (burying beetle)	Heritable variation in the size of orange patterns on black elytra	x								Lindstedt <i>et al.</i> (2017)
	<i>Oreina</i> spp. (Chrysomelidae leaf beetles)	Green and blue iridescent morphs, both in sympatry and allopatry			x	x					van Noort (2013); Borer <i>et al.</i> (2010)
	<i>Pachyrhynchus</i> spp. (pachyrhynchid beetles)	Diverse colouration in several species, details unknown			?	?					Tseng <i>et al.</i> (2014)
Coleoptera: Coccinellidae (ladybird beetles)	<i>Adalia bipunctata</i> (two-spot ladybird)	~ 40 different morphs identified, including variation in spot number and melanism among morphs. Within-morph variation in spot size and elytral colouration; differences between larval and adult colouration	x	?		x	x				Majerus (1994)
	<i>Adalia decempunctata</i> (ten-spot ladybird)	Melanic and non-melanic morphs; variation in spot number and size; within-morph variation in elytral colouration; differences between larval and adult colouration	x	?		x	x				Majerus (1994)
	<i>Adonia variegata</i> (Adonis' ladybird)	Variation in spot number and size; differences between larval and adult colouration	?			x	x				Majerus (1994)
	<i>Anatis ocellata</i> (eyed ladybird)	Melanic and non-melanic morphs, variation in spot number and size, and elytral colouration; differences between larval and adult colouration	?			x	x				Majerus (1994)
	<i>Anisosticta 19-punctata</i> (water ladybird)	Variation in spot number and size, and in elytral colouration; differences between larval and adult colouration	?			x	x				Majerus (1994)
	<i>Calvia quatuordecimguttata</i> (cream-spot ladybird)	Number of different morphs that vary in dominance; differences between larval and adult colouration	x	?							Lusis (1971)
	<i>Cheilomenes sexmaculata</i>	20 different morphs identified, including variation in spot number and melanism among morphs.	?	?		x	x				Kawakami, Yamazaki, & Ohashi (2013)
	<i>Coccinella 11-punctata</i> (11-spot ladybird)	Variation in spot number and size; differences between larval and adult colouration	?			x	x				Majerus (1994)
	<i>Coccinella 5-punctata</i> (five-spot ladybird)	Variation in spot number and size; differences between larval and adult colouration	?			x	x				Majerus (1994)
	<i>Coccinella hieroglyphica</i> (hieroglyphic ladybird)	Melanic and non-melanic morphs, variation in spot number and size, and elytral colouration; differences between larval and adult colouration	?			x	x				Majerus (1994)
	<i>Coccinella septempunctata</i> (seven-spot ladybird)	Melanic and non-melanic morphs, variation in spot number among morphs. Within-morph variation in spot size and elytral colouration; differences between larval and adult colouration	?	x	x	x	x				Majerus (1994); Okuda, Gomi, & Hodek (1997); Blount <i>et al.</i> (2012)
	<i>Halyzia 16-guttata</i> (orange ladybird)	Variation in spot number and size; differences between larval and adult colouration	?			x	x				Majerus (1994)
	<i>Harmonia 4-punctata</i> (cream streaked ladybird)	Melanic and non-melanic morphs, variation in spot number and size, and elytral colouration; differences between larval and adult colouration	?			x	x				Majerus (1994)
	<i>Harmonia axyridis</i> (harlequin ladybird)	>20 different morphs identified, including variation in spot number and melanism among morphs. Within-morph variation in spot size and elytral colouration. Larval and adult colouration differs and sexes differ in pronotum colouration.	x	x	x	x	x	x			Tan & Li (1934); Tan (1946); Komai, Chino, & Hosino (1948); McCornack, Koch, & Ragsdale (2007); Michie <i>et al.</i> (2010)
	<i>Henosepilachna elaterii</i> (melon ladybird)	Variation in spot size and spot fusion affected by both selection and temperature during development; differences between larval and adult colouration	x	x				x			Zimmerman (1931)
	<i>Hippodamia convergens</i> (convergent ladybird)	Red beetle with two morphs; spotted or spotless; differences between larval and adult colouration	x	?				x			Shull (1944)
	<i>Hippodamia 13-punctata</i> (13-spot ladybird)	Melanic and non-melanic morphs and variation in spot number and size; differences between larval and adult colouration	?			x	x				Majerus (1994)
	<i>Menochilus sexmaculatus</i>	Melanic and non-melanic morphs. Within-morph variation in spot size and elytral colouration; differences between larval and adult colouration	x	x		x	x				Dubey, Omkar, & Mishra (2016)
	<i>Myrrha 18-guttata</i> (18-spot ladybird)	Variation in spot number and size, and elytral colouration; differences between larval and adult colouration	?			x	x				Majerus (1994)

	<i>Propylea quatuordecimpunctata</i> (14-spot ladybird)	Yellow ladybird with variation in size of spots and in degree of spot fusion. Larval and adult colouration differs and sexes differ in pronotum colouration.	x	?				x	x	Rogers <i>et al.</i> (1971); Majerus (1994)
	<i>Psyllobora 22-punctata</i> (22-spot ladybird)	Variation in spot number.	?				x	x		Majerus (1994)
	<i>Subcoccinella 24-punctata</i> (24-spot ladybird)	Melanic and non-melanic morphs, variation in spot number and size, and in elytral colouration; differences between larval and adult colouration	?				x	x		Majerus (1994)
	<i>Tytthaspis 16-punctata</i> (16-spot ladybird)	Melanic and non-melanic morphs, variation in spot number and size; differences between larval and adult colouration	?				x	x		Majerus (1994)
Hemiptera	<i>Bagrada hilaris</i> (painted bug)	Changes from orange to red-black with age, also after moulting						x		Singh & Malik (1993)
	<i>Graphosoma lineatum</i> (striated shieldbug)	Seasonal variation in colouration in adult bugs: pale and red morphs		x	x			x		Tullberg <i>et al.</i> (2008); Johansen <i>et al.</i> (2010); Veselý <i>et al.</i> (2006)
	<i>Lygaeus equestris</i> (black-and-red bug)	Adults possess white spots on wings that are absent in wingless nymphs	x					x		Sillén-Tullberg, Wiklund & Järvi (1982)
	<i>Pachycoris torridus</i>	Polymorphism in adult spot colour and pattern; assumed to be aposematic, but this is unconfirmed	x				x			Souza <i>et al.</i> (2012)
	<i>Philaenus spumarius</i> (common froghopper)	Several morphs coexist at different frequencies within population; morph frequency also varies between sexes					x		x	Thompson (1973); Quartau & Borges (1997)
	<i>Phylloscelis atra</i>	One black and two yellow morphs; putatively aposematic		x			?			Ball (1930); McPherson & Wilson (1995)
	<i>Phymata americana</i> (ambush bug)	Variation in extent of black markings, thought to be dependent on temperature		x						Mason (1976)
	<i>Prosapia ignipectus</i> (red-legged spittlebug)	A black form, parapatric orange-lined form and local polymorphism	x		x		x			Thompson & Carvalho (2016)
	Pyrrhocoridae <i>Dysdercus obscuratus</i> , <i>D. imitator</i> , <i>D. collaris</i> , <i>D. mimus</i> (firebugs)	Putatively aposematic. Several species of <i>Dysdercus</i> have variation in colouration, ranging from yellow to black					x	x		Zrzavý & Nedvěd (1999)
	<i>Pyrrhocoris apterus</i> (red firebug)	Developmental stages vary in colour pattern and signal size						x		Prokopová <i>et al.</i> (2010)
	<i>Tectocoris diophthalmus</i> (hibiscus/cotton harlequin bug)	Variation occurs within and among populations, including latitudinal and seasonal gradients in colour; there is continuous variation in the base colour and iridescent patches, and the species is sexually dimorphic				x	x		x	Fabricant & Herberstein (2015); Fabricant <i>et al.</i> (2013)
	many Hemiptera nymphs, e.g. <i>Largus californicus</i>	Nymphs change from red to black; adults are black with orange borders						x		Booth (1990b)
Orthoptera	<i>Acridium arenosum</i> (grouse locust)	24 distinct colour patterns for the pronotum and femora of the posterior legs, thought to be controlled by 13 genes	x	x						Nabours (1929); Darlington & Mather (1949)
	<i>Apotettix eurycephalus</i> (grouse locust)	Multiple distinct morphs, thought to be controlled by a 'supergene' cluster of genes	x				x			Nabours (1929); Darlington & Mather (1949)
	<i>Dactylotum bicolor</i> (rainbow grasshopper)	Variation in colouration, within and among subspecies	?			?	?			McGovern, Mitchel, & Knisley (1984); Roberts (1947)
	<i>Paratettix texanus</i>	As above, with 25 colour pattern genes thought to be involved	x					x		Nabours (1929); Darlington & Mather (1949)
	<i>Schistocerca emarginata</i> (spotted bird grasshopper)	Cryptic green changes to black-and-yellow in high-density populations; locusts are considered unpalatable		x				x		Sword (1999)
MYRIAPODA Polydesmida (Millipedes)	<i>Apheloria</i> spp. (flat-backed millipedes)	Clade A with species status has six colour morphs, involved in a Müllerian mimicry ring. Clade B with a species status also shows colour polymorphism.	x		x		x			Marek & Bond (2009)
	<i>Brachoria cedra</i>	Two colour morphs, involved in Müllerian mimicry	x			x	x			Marek & Bond (2009)
	<i>Brachoria dentata</i>	Five colour morphs, involved in Müllerian mimicry	x			x	x			Marek & Bond (2009)
	<i>Brachoria insolida</i>	Two colour morphs, involved in Müllerian mimicry at some sites	x			x	x			Marek & Bond (2009)
	<i>Brachoria mendota</i>	Several colour morphs, involved in Müllerian mimicry at some sites	x			x				Marek & Bond (2009)
AMPHIBIA Caudata (newts & salamanders)	<i>Ambystoma maculatum</i> (spotted salamander)	Variation in amount of orange and yellow spots on brown, grey or black background				?	?		?	Gibbons (1991)
	<i>Cynops pyrrhogaster</i> (Japanese fire-bellied newt)	Differences in extent of red ventral colouration within and among populations; island populations redder than mainland counterparts, and males redder than females	x		x	x		?	x	Mochida (2009); Mochida (2011)

	<i>Plethodon cinereus</i> (redback salamander)	Two colour morphs, with behavioural differences				x			Venesky & Anthony (2007)
	<i>Plethodon jordani</i> (red-cheeked salamander)	Geographic variation in colour			x				Hensel & Brodie (1976); Thompson, (1984); Weisrock, Kozak, & Larson (2005)
	<i>Notophthalmus viridescens</i> (eastern n	Orange juvenile stage with variable amount of spots and an aquatic adult form			x		x	x	Kraemer, Serb & Adams (2015)
Anura (frogs)	<i>Allobates femoralis</i>	Geographic variation in colour			x				Amezquita <i>et al.</i> (2017)
	<i>Andinobates</i> spp.	Geographic variation in colour and pattern; putatively aposematic			x				Brown <i>et al.</i> (2011)
	<i>Atelopus</i> spp.	As a genus, <i>Atelopus</i> has a large amount of variability, especially polyphenism within species and populations. Some species appear to have polytypisms, although this may be a result of unclear taxonomy.	x	?	?			x	Savage (2002); LaMarca <i>et al.</i> (2005)
	<i>Dendrobates</i> spp.	Geographic variation in colour and pattern in many species			x				Grant <i>et al.</i> (2006); Kahn <i>et al.</i> (2016)
	<i>Dendrobates auratus</i> (green-and-black poison frog)	Geographic variation in colour and pattern			x				Dunn (1941); Grant <i>et al.</i> (2006)
	<i>Dendrobates tinctorius</i> (dyeing poison frog)	Geographic variation in colour and pattern, sexual dimorphism, continuous intra-population variation			x	x		x	Grant <i>et al.</i> (2006); Noonan & Comeault (2009); Rojas & Endler (2013)
	<i>Eleutherodactylus limbatus</i> (yellow-striped pygmy eleuth)	Geographic variation in colour and pattern in several species			x				Rodríguez <i>et al.</i> (2012)
	<i>Incilius (Bufo) periglenes</i> (golden toad)	Sexual dimorphism, with males bright orange and females olive/black. Putatively aposematic, but also extinct.						x	Savage (1966)
	<i>Mantella</i> spp.	Geographic variation, potential hybridization, putative Müllerian mimicry among species. Species are not entirely clear.			x			x	Chiari <i>et al.</i> (2004); Rabemananjara <i>et al.</i> (2007)
	<i>Melanophryniscus rubriventris</i>	Geographic variation in colour and pattern, substantial within-population (continuous) variation. Variation in melanin levels appears to be important within populations.			x				Bonanse & Vaira (2012); Sanabria <i>et al.</i> (2014)
	<i>Oophaga</i> spp.	Geographic variation in colour and pattern in many species			x	x			McGugan <i>et al.</i> (2016)
	<i>Oophaga granulifera</i> (granular poison frog)	Geographic variation in colour and pattern			x				Willink <i>et al.</i> (2013)
	<i>Oophaga histrionica</i> (harlequin poison frog)	Geographic variation in colour and pattern			x				Amézquita <i>et al.</i> (2013)
	<i>Oophaga pumilio</i> (strawberry poison frog)	Geographic variation in colour and pattern, one polymorphic population			x	x		x	Summers & Amos (1997); Siddiqi <i>et al.</i> (2004)
	<i>Oophaga sylvatica</i>	Geographic variation in colour and pattern			x				McGugan <i>et al.</i> (2016)
	<i>Phrynomantis bifasciata</i> (Somali rubber frog)	Variable red patterns on a dark background			?			?	Cott (1940)
	<i>Pseudophryne</i> spp.	Putatively mimetic, with black-and-white individually variable marble patterns on ventral side; some variation in dorsal colouration							Williams <i>et al.</i> (2000)
	<i>Ranitomeya</i> spp.	Many members exhibit polytypism; species are almost certainly aposematic, although few have been characterised			x				Summers & Amos (1997); Brown <i>et al.</i> (2011)
	<i>Ranitomeya imitator</i> (mimic poison frog)	Polymorphism, Müllerian mimicry; certain transition zones highly phenotypically variable			x				Twomey, Vestergaard, & Summers (2014); Twomey <i>et al.</i> (2016); Stuckert, Venegas, & Summers (2014b); Stuckert <i>et al.</i> (2014a); Stuckert, Venegas, & Summers (2018)
	<i>Ranitomeya variabilis</i> (splash-back poison frog)	Geographic variation in colour and pattern			x				Brown <i>et al.</i> (2011)
REPTILIASquamata	Crotalinae Asian pitvipers	Putative Müllerian mimicry rings across species, sex-limited	?		x			x	Sanders, Malhotra & Thorpe (2006)
	<i>Heloderma suspectum</i> (Gila monster)	Colour changes with age and variation among populations	x		x				Beck (2005)
AVES (Birds)	<i>Pitohui kiriocephalus</i> (variable pitohui)	Variation in plumage between populations, although they are referred to as subspecies	?		x	?			Dumbacher <i>et al.</i> (2008); Dumbacher & Fleischer (2001)

MAMMALIA	Carnivora	<i>Conepatus</i> spp. (hog-nosed skunks)	Continuous variation in stripe length and thickness			?				Van Gelder (1968)
		<i>Mephitis mephitis</i> (striped skunk)	Continuous variation in stripe length and thickness			?				Verts (1967)
FISH		<i>Meiacanthus nigrolineatus</i> (red sea blenny)	Colour and pattern change between juveniles and adults; juveniles may be involved in 'school-oriented' mimicry with cardinalfishes						x	Dafni & Diamant (1984)
CEPHALOPODA		Sepiida and Octopoda	Rapid behavioural change in colouration in response to predation		x					Hanlon & Messenger (1998)
GASTROPODA (nudibranchs)		<i>Goniobranchus splendidus</i>	Red spots on a white background vary in colour and pattern, yellow outer rim less variable.	?	?	x	?			Winters <i>et al.</i> (2017)
		<i>Noumea haliclona</i>	Pink or orange background colour, variation in shape and number of dark-pink spots	?	?	x				Rudman (1983, 1986)
		Various nudibranchs, e.g. <i>Pteraeolidia ianthina</i>	Young individuals often appear paler, and diet can also affect pigmentation		x				x	Cortesi & Cheney (2010)
PLATYHELMINTHES		Marine turbellarian flatworms	Multiple forms of colour variation, often changes with diet		x					Newman & Cannon (2003)
FUNGI		Many species	Although no clear correlation between bright colours and toxicity has been found, some toxic species display variable bright colours							Sherratt, Wilkinson, & Bain (2005)
PLANTS		<i>Pseudopanax crassifolius</i> (lancewood)	Spots of brightly coloured tissues on leaves: brightness varies during growth, and spots disappear when the plant is no longer vulnerable to herbivory						x	Kavanagh, Shaw, & Burns (2016)
		<i>Pseudowintera colorata</i>	Variable width of red leaf margins among individuals; mechanical damage also induces the development of red leaf margins				?		x	Cooney <i>et al.</i> (2012)
		<i>Rosa multiflora</i> (multiflora rose)	Variable prickle colour, both within and among individuals		?		?	?		Rubino & McCarthy (2004)
		<i>Trifolium repens</i> (white clover)	More or less marked strains, and age-related markings	x	?		?		x	Cahn & Harper (1976)
		Many species	Delayed greening	?	?				x	Lev-Yadun (2009)