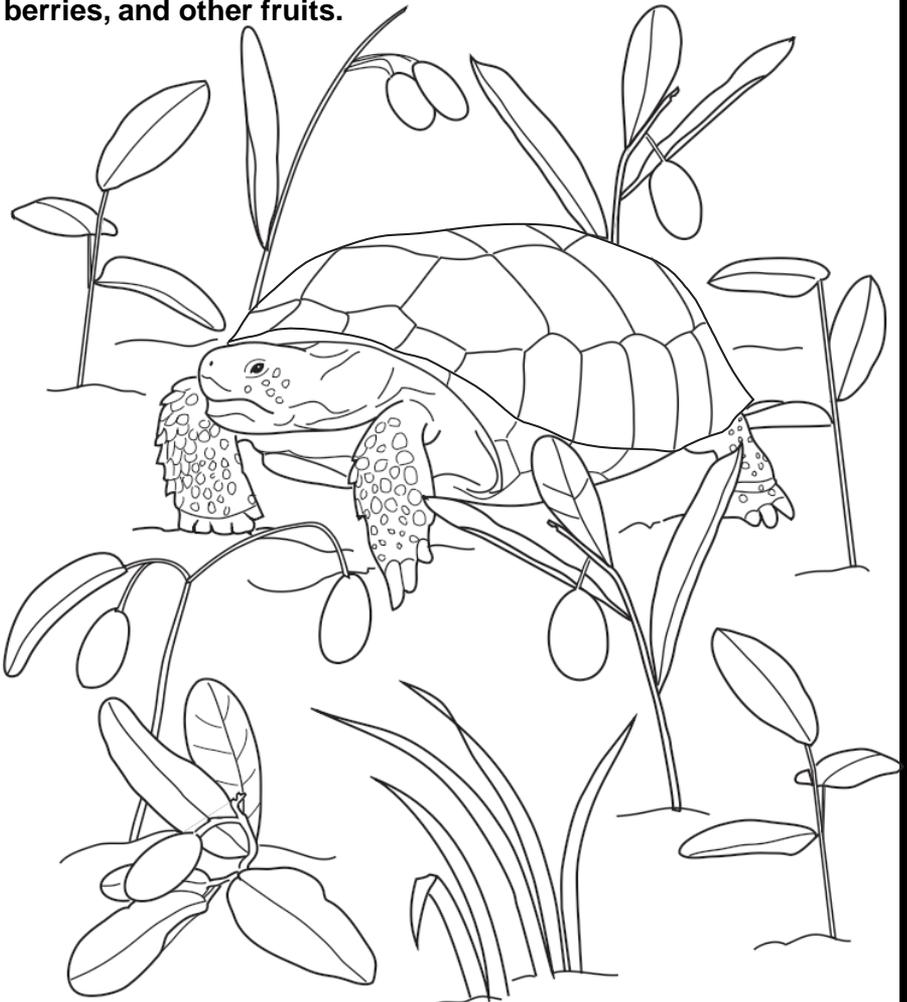




# Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Gopher tortoises live in upland habitats throughout the coastal plain of the

southeastern United States. Gopher tortoises are found in longleaf pine sandhills, xeric oak hammocks, scrub, pine flatwoods, dry prairies, and coastal dunes; and can also live in man-made environments, such as pastures, old fields, and roadsides. Grasses and legumes make up the bulk of their diet, but they also eat a large variety of herbaceous plants including gopher apple, pawpaw, blackberries, saw palmetto berries, and other fruits.

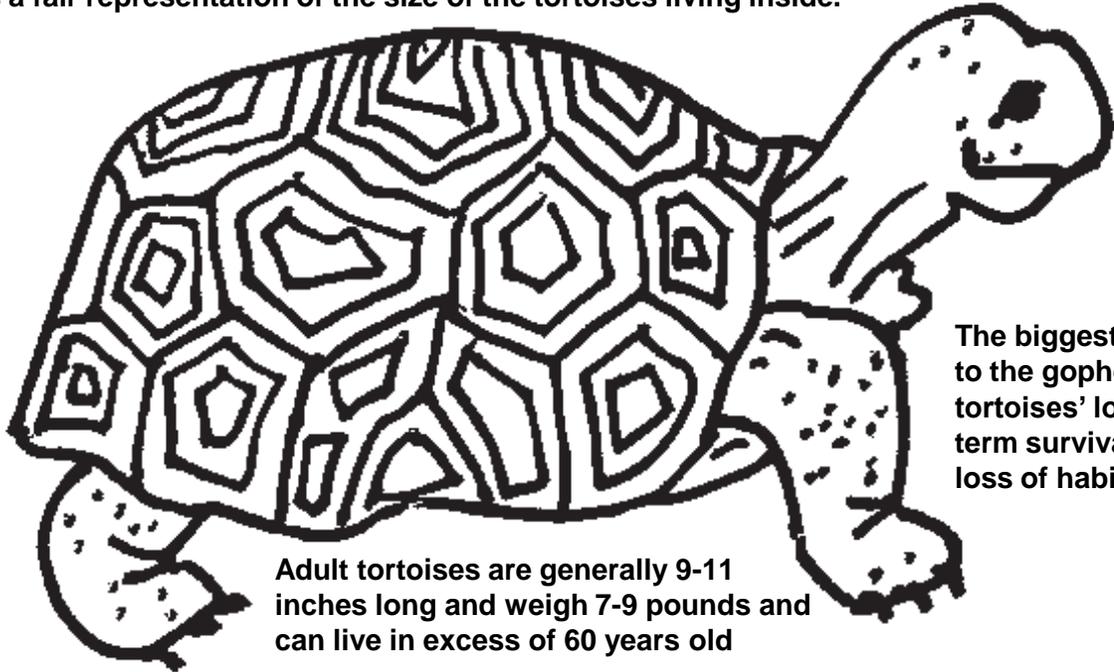




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Gopher tortoises may have multiple burrows within the area it spends most of its time. The burrows average 7 feet deep and 15 feet long but some may be more than 40 feet long. The burrow openings are half-moon shaped with the curve at the top, and its size is a fair representation of the size of the tortoises living inside.

Gopher tortoises lay one 'clutch' per year with an average of six eggs. Many eggs never hatch because they are eaten by mammals, birds and snakes.



The biggest threat to the gopher tortoises' long-term survival is loss of habitat

Adult tortoises are generally 9-11 inches long and weigh 7-9 pounds and can live in excess of 60 years old