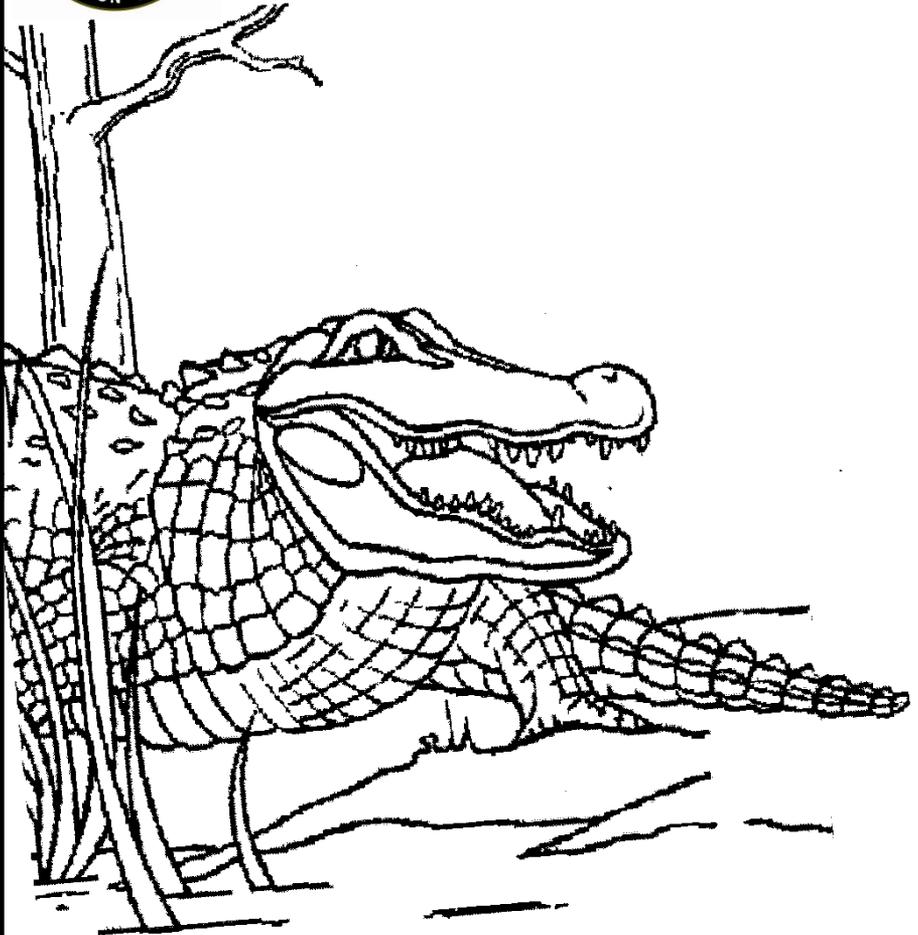




Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission



American Alligators spend most of their time in the water and swim by moving their large, flat tails back and forth like fish. They can also be seen lying on land in the warm sun. Alligators have powerful jaws to help them eat almost anything, including turtles! Mother alligators lay their eggs in large leaf and stick nests and help the babies dig out upon hatching.



Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

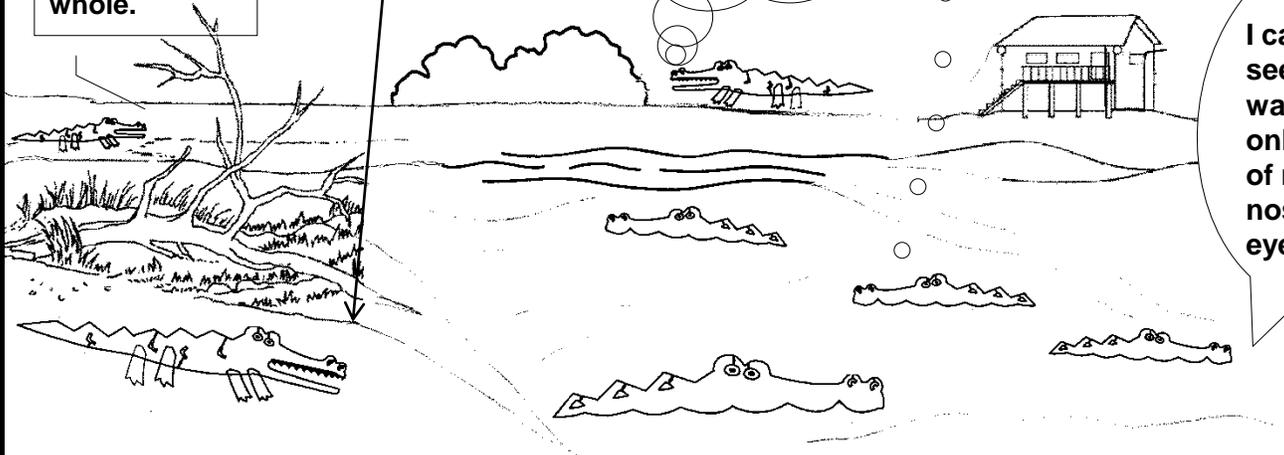
Sometimes I spin to break my prey into chunks that I can swallow whole.

Until laws were passed to protect alligators like me, we almost became extinct because of my handsome hide.

Despite many stories that I may live up to 200 years, the average life span for my species is only about 40 years.

During the dry season, the holes I create provide habitat for many animals such as small fish, snails, turtles, snakes, and frogs.

I can often be seen in the water with only the tip of my nose and my eyes visible.



Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

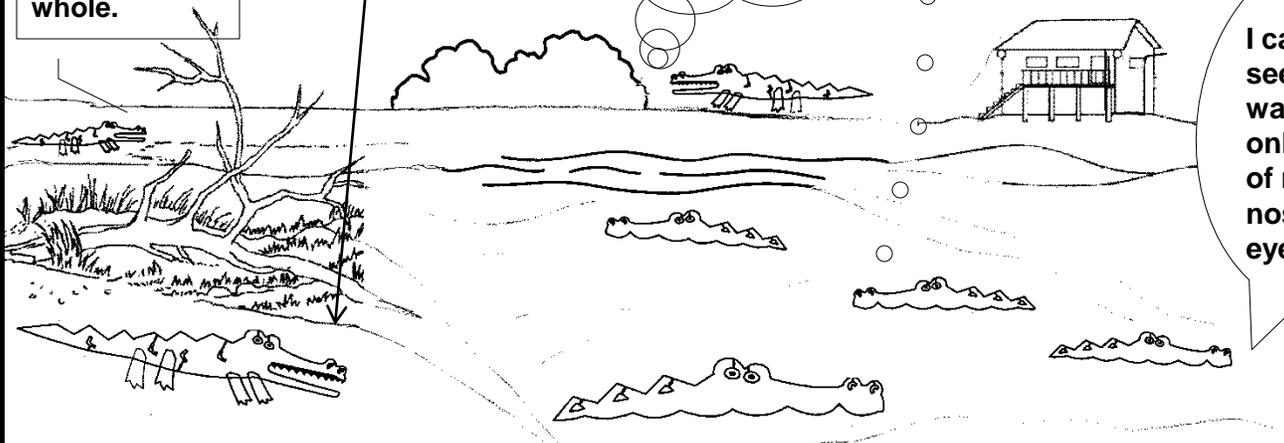
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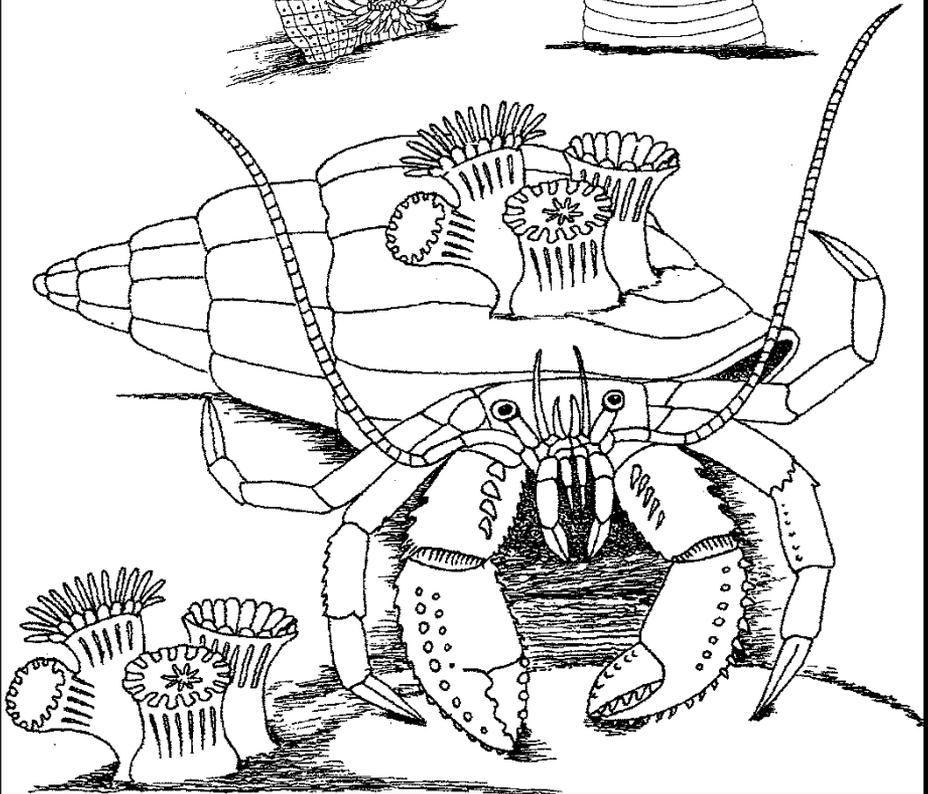
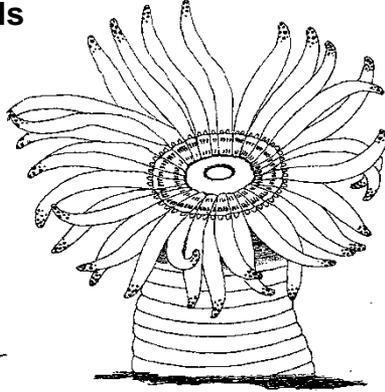
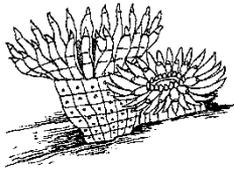
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Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Anemones are animals that often attach themselves to solid surfaces such as rocks or even hermit crab shells. Their mouth is surrounded by tentacles, which are used to capture small fish and other animals for food. Anemones are found along the coasts of Florida.





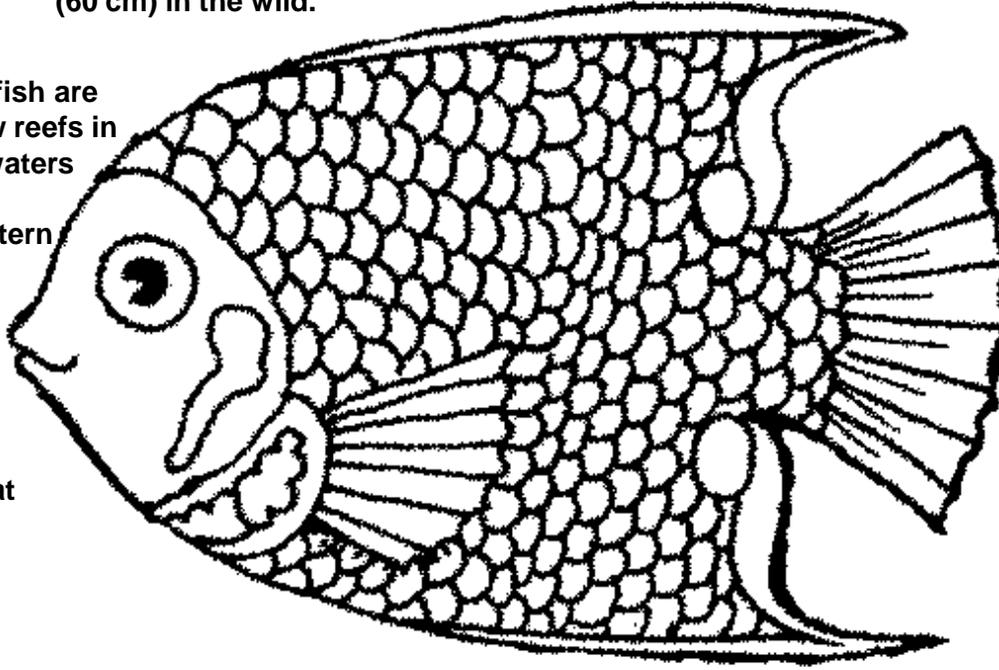
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Angelfish range from about 4 inches (10 cm) to 24 inches (60 cm) in the wild.

Angelfish are very colorful. Young angelfish can have a different coloration than they do as adults.

Saltwater Angelfish are found in shallow reefs in warm, tropical waters like the Atlantic, Indian, and Western Pacific Oceans.

Angelfish swim around and feed during the day; at night they seek shelter in crevices in coral reefs and rocky outcroppings.

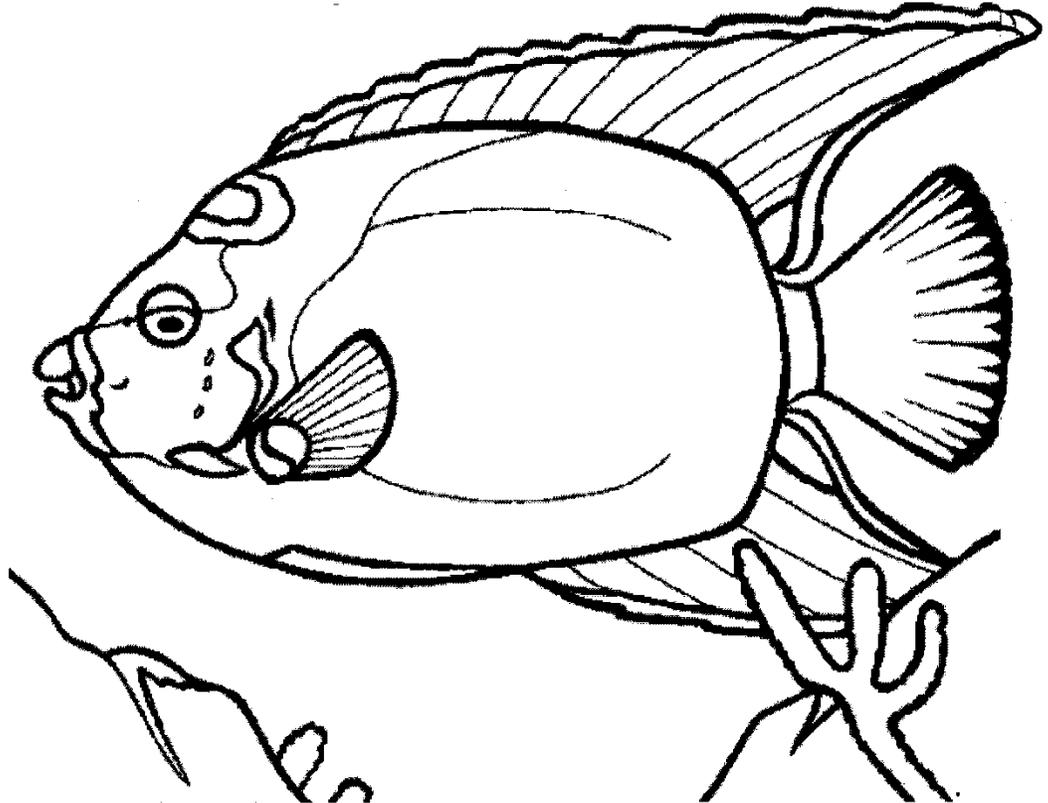


Angelfish are mostly loners, but some are found in pairs, or living in small groups consisting of a dominant male and several females.



Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Queen Angelfish are bright yellow and blue and live around the coral reefs in the shallow ocean waters of south Florida. Their thin, flat bodies help them make quick turns and fit into narrow hiding places. Young angelfish sometimes help other fish by eating tiny insect-like creatures that live on their scales.





Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Wild bald eagles may live as long as thirty years

Once paired, bald eagles remain together until one of them dies

Bald eagles can fly to an altitude of 10,000 feet. During level flight, they can achieve speeds of about 30 to 35 mph.

Young eagles are chocolate brown all over until they are 4 years old

Bald eagles have 7,000 feathers

All eagles are renowned for their excellent eyesight

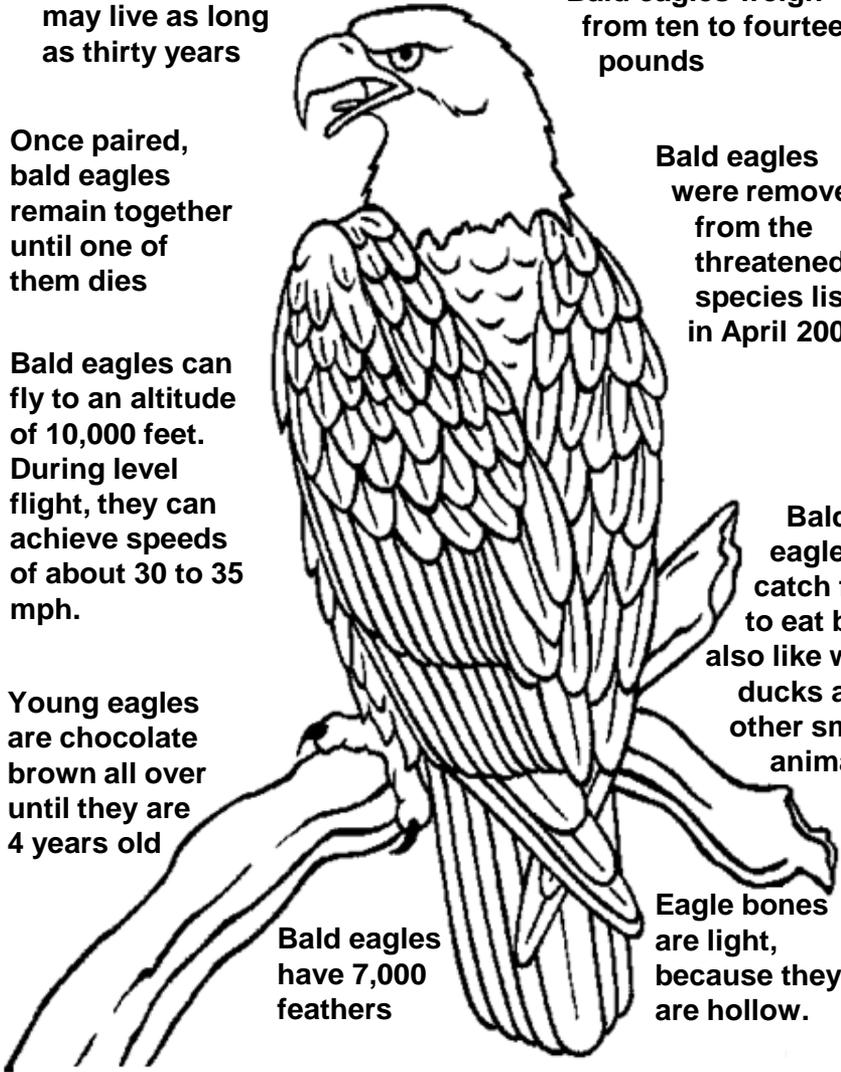
The female bald eagle is 35 to 37 inches, slightly larger than the male. Bald eagles weigh from ten to fourteen pounds

Bald eagles were removed from the threatened species list in April 2008

Bald eagles catch fish to eat but also like wild ducks and other small animals

Eagle bones are light, because they are hollow.

Wingspan ranges from 72 to 90 inches

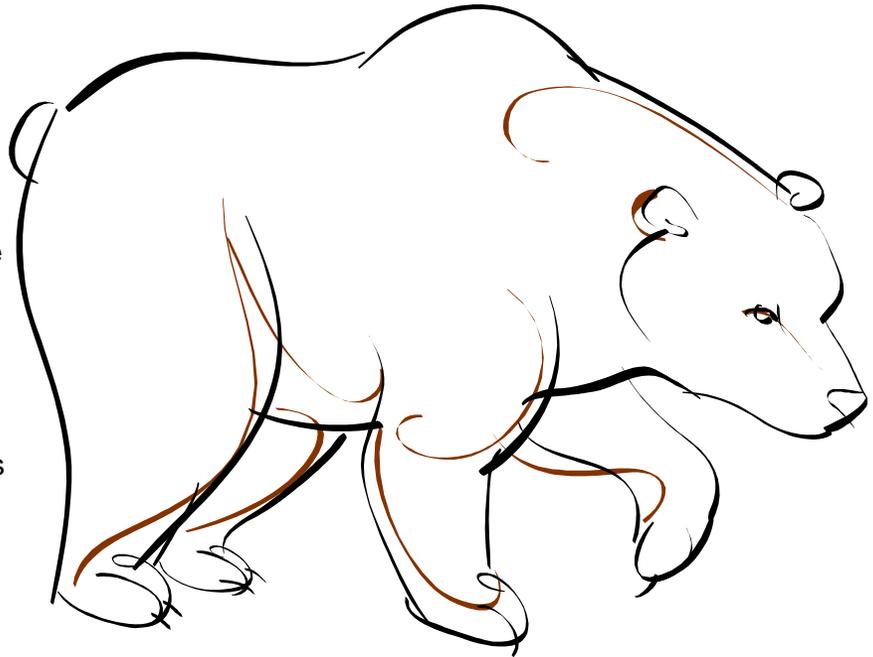




Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Black bears...

- Are big, powerful animals with rounded ears and short, stubby tails.
 - Have five toes on each foot and large canine teeth.
 - May weigh between 125 - 450 pounds when grown.
 - Eat mostly nuts, berries and insects but they can eat animals, too.
 - Have short curved claws and can climb trees very well.
 - Can smell food more than a mile away.
 - Can see in color and have excellent hearing.
 - Have black fur and a tan or black muzzle.
- Some may have a white mark on their chest

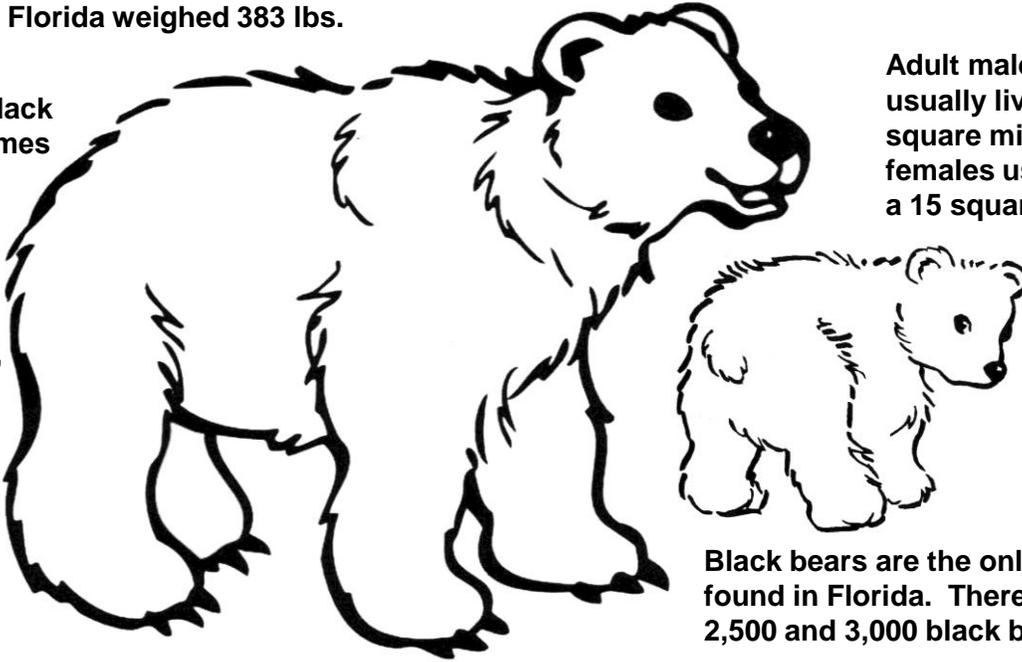




Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Black bears are generally black with a brown muzzle and may have a white chest marking called a blaze. Adult male black bears usually weigh between 250-350 lbs. The largest adult male black bear in Florida weighed 624 lbs. Adult female black bears are smaller than males, usually weighing between 130-180 lbs. The largest adult female black bear in Florida weighed 383 lbs.

About 80 percent of a black bear's diet comes from plants (e.g., fruits, nuts, berries), 15 percent from insects (e.g., termites, ants, yellow jackets) and 5 percent from meat (ie opossums, armadillos, carrion).



Adult male black bears usually live within a 60 square mile area, whereas females usually live within a 15 square mile area.

Bears can run up to 35 miles per hour and climb 100 feet up a tree in 30 seconds!

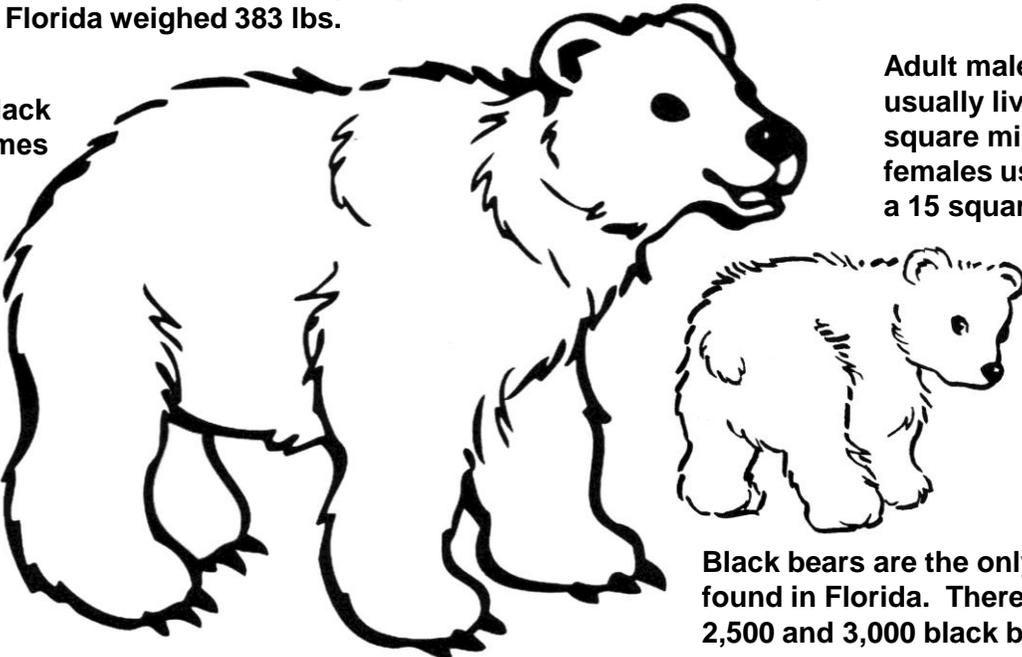
Black bears are the only species of bear found in Florida. There are between 2,500 and 3,000 black bears in Florida.



Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

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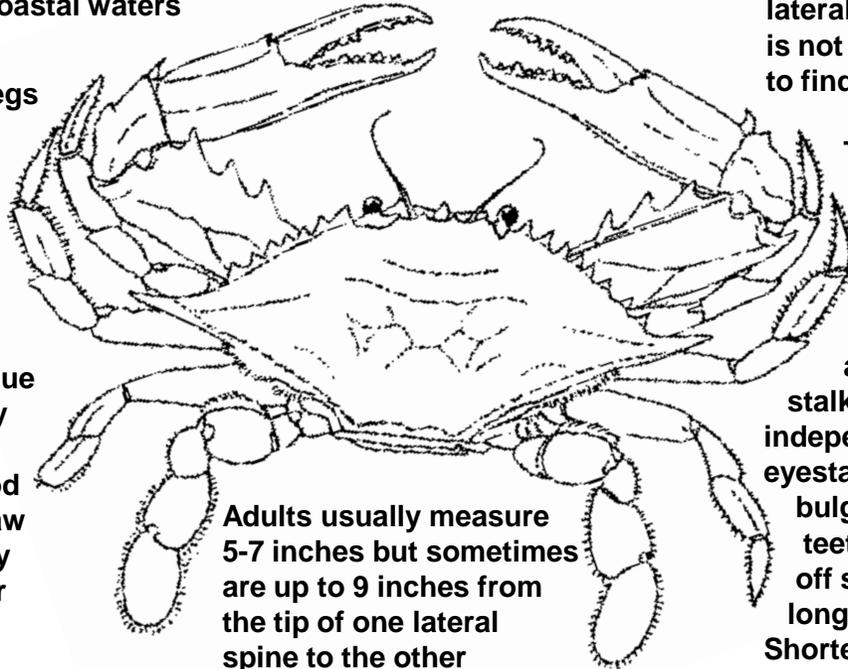
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Blue crabs are common in Florida's estuarine and coastal waters

One tagging study documented female blue crabs that moved 500 miles in 100 days

Shells of adult crabs usually measure 5 to 7 inches from the tip of one lateral spine to the other. It is not uncommon, though, to find 9-inch blue crabs.

Blue crabs have ten legs include one pair that has claws and stout spines for feeding and defense, three pairs of sharply pointed walking legs, and one pair of flat paddles at the rear. Blue crabs can walk rapidly over the seafloor or swim sideways at good speed, folding one claw close against the body while trailing the other straight behind.



Adults usually measure 5-7 inches but sometimes are up to 9 inches from the tip of one lateral spine to the other

The front edge of the shell is serrated, or "toothed," with eight teeth on each side between the spines and the eyes, which are mounted on short stalks and can move independently. Between the eyestalks are two prominent bulges, each with two teeth on them, and pairs off sensory organs: two long antennae and two shorter antennules.



Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Blue whales are the largest animals in the world. They live to be 80-90 years old, are a blue-gray in color, and can weigh about 200 tons or more. Their tongues alone can weigh as much as an elephant and their hearts as much as an automobile.

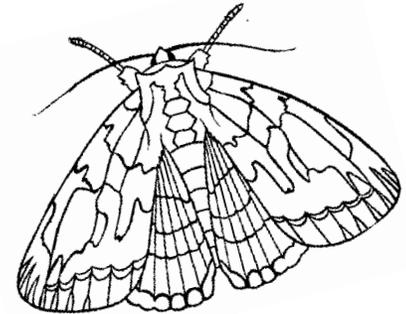
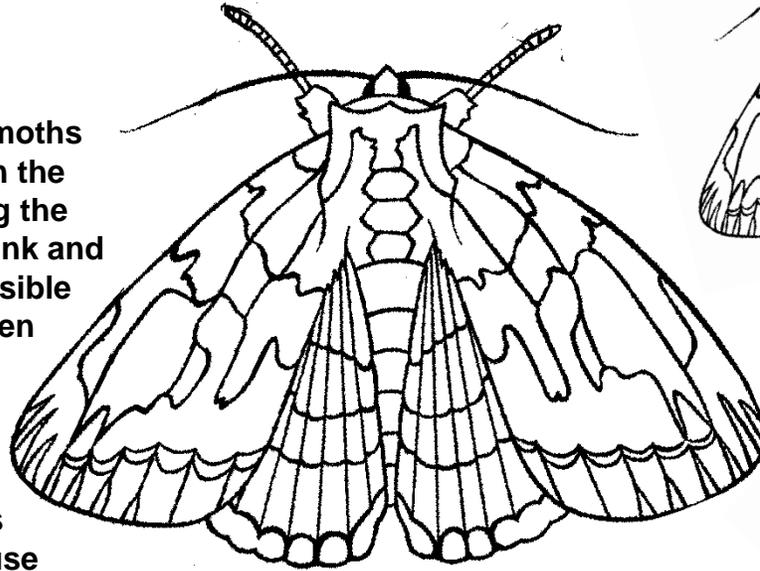




Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Sweetheart Underwing

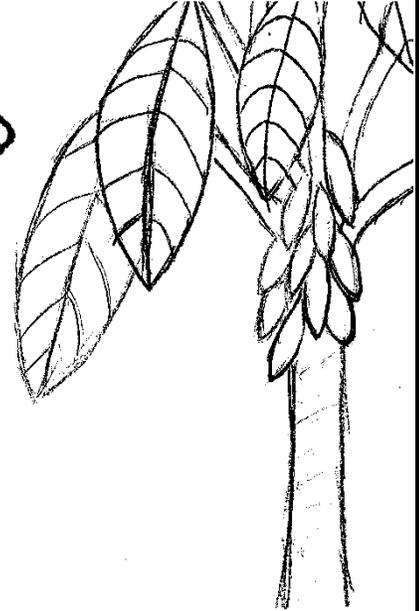
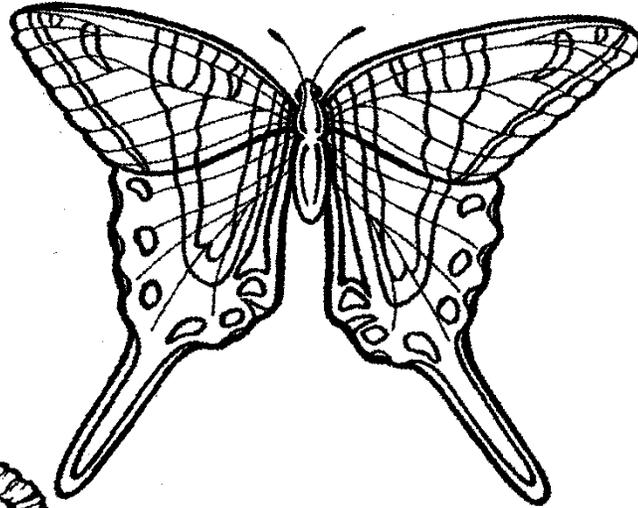
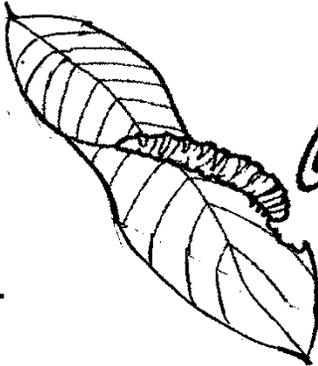
Sweetheart underwing moths feed at night and rest on the branches of trees during the day. During flight, the pink and black underwings are visible and attractive. But, if seen by a hungry bird, the sweetheart underwing lands on the nearest tree, closes its wings to hide the bright colors and "disappears" because its front wings look like the tree bark.





Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Zebra swallowtail Mothers lay their eggs only on paw paw plants. When the eggs hatch, the Caterpillars eat paw paw leaves until they are Ready to change into adult butterflies.



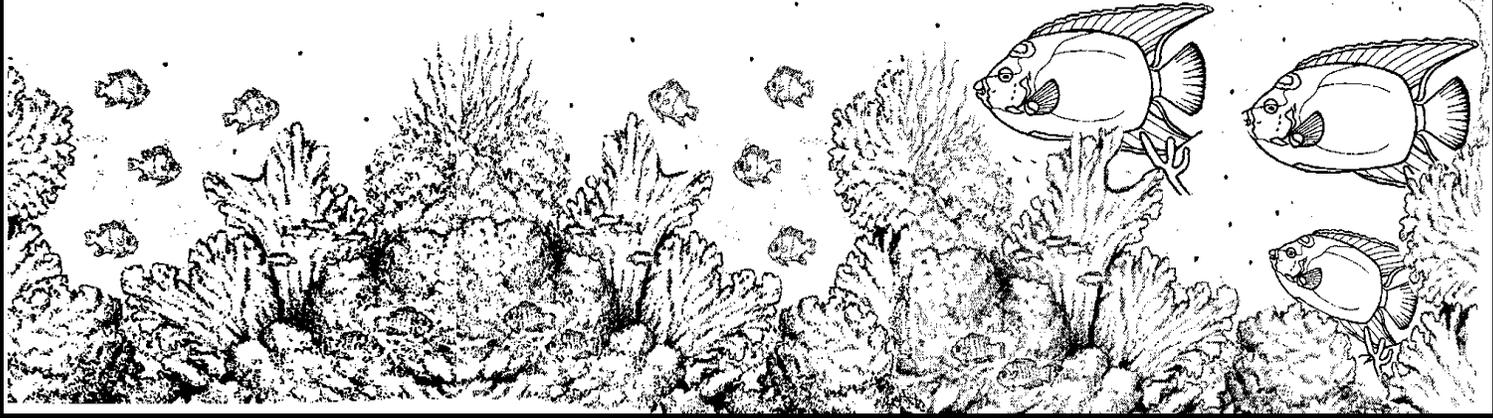
Zebra Swallowtail are very picky about where they live and lay their eggs. They like places near water and often gather at puddles or lakeshores to drink water and warm their bodies in the sun



Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Florida's coral reefs came into existence 5,000 to 7,000 years ago when sea levels rose after the Ice Age. Reef growth is slow—from 1 to 16 feet every 1,000 years.

Numerous species of coral are found in Florida reefs. Each kind lives in a separate colony that is shaped differently from the others. The colonies take on the various hues of the algae that line within them—usually red, green, and brown. Corals can generally be divided into two main categories: stony and octocorals.

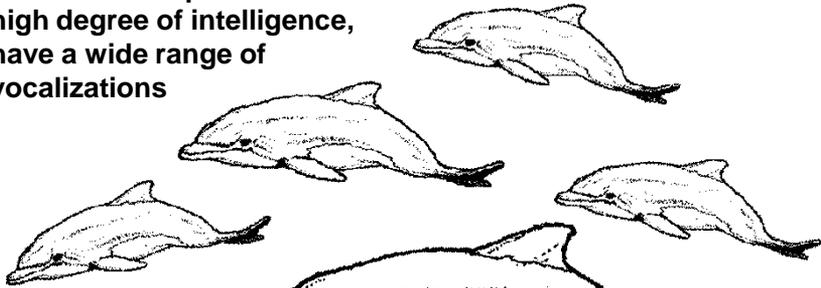




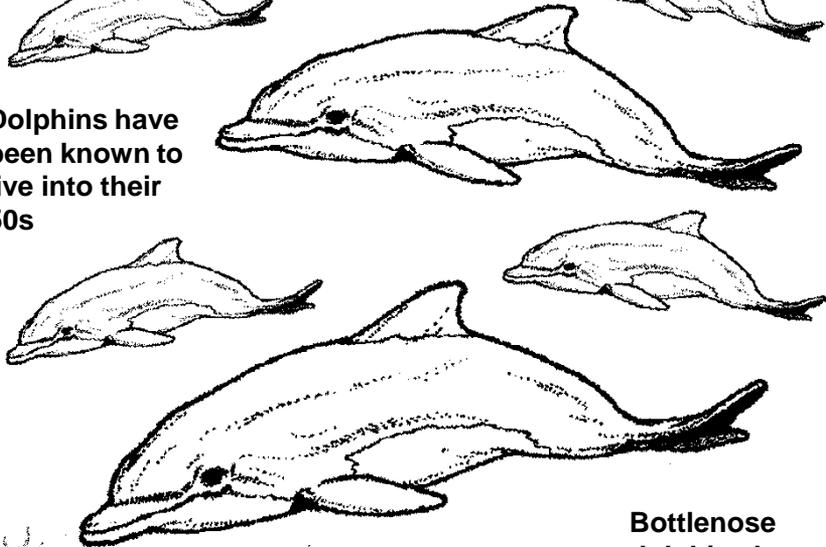
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Adult dolphins are typically 6 to 12 feet long and can eat more than 20 pounds of mullet, sheepshead, pinfish, flounder and marine invertebrates each day

Bottlenose dolphins show a high degree of intelligence, have a wide range of vocalizations

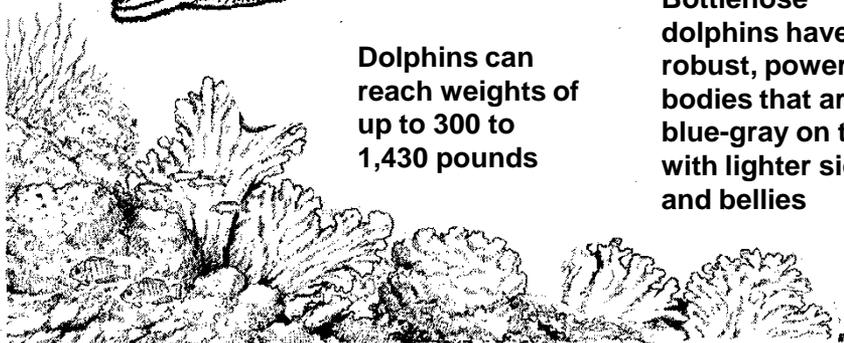


Dolphins have been known to live into their 50s



Dolphins can reach weights of up to 300 to 1,430 pounds

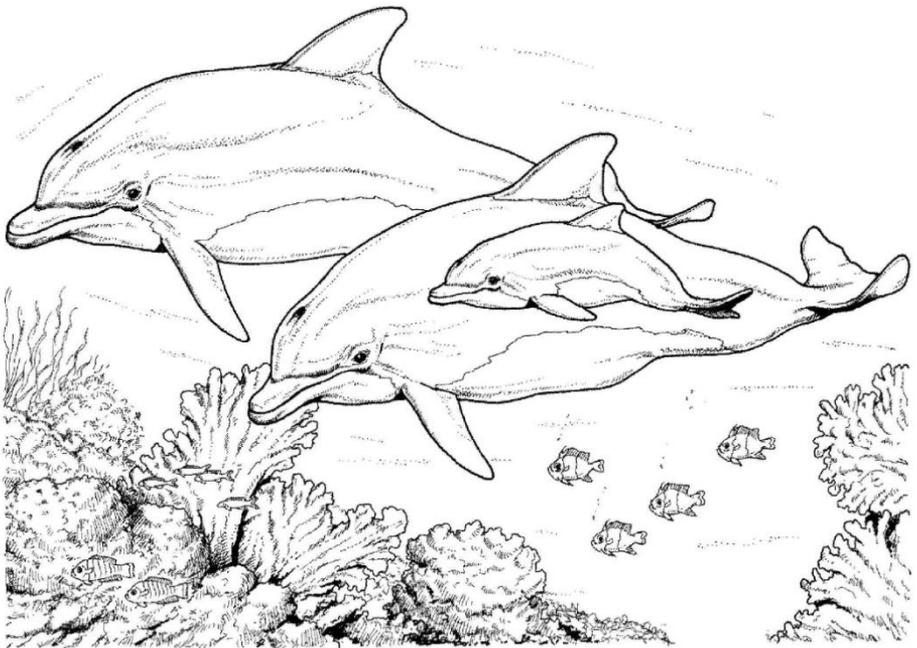
Bottlenose dolphins have robust, powerful bodies that are blue-gray on top with lighter sides and bellies





Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

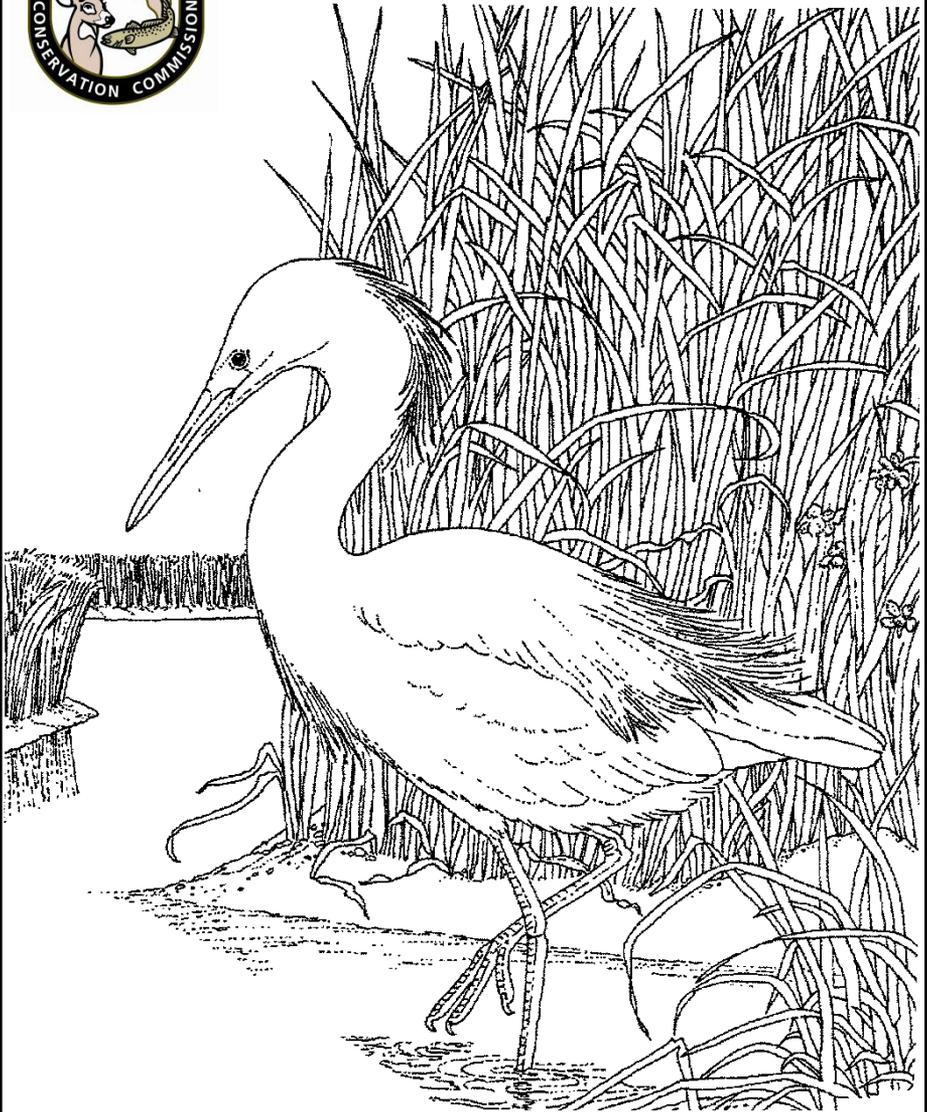
Dolphins are found in **coastal** and offshore waters. They usually travel in groups and frequently ride the waves in front of boats. Dolphins are fast swimmers and can reach speeds up to 25 miles an hour.



Inshore dolphins live in small social groups of approximately 10 individuals; while offshore dolphins form larger groups of 10-100 individuals. Dolphins travel about their home ranges (the geographical area that defines their home) in groups of 4-7 in shallower waters and more than 20 dolphins in deeper areas. The dolphins interact and re-form groups at will, somewhat like a kaleidoscope



Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

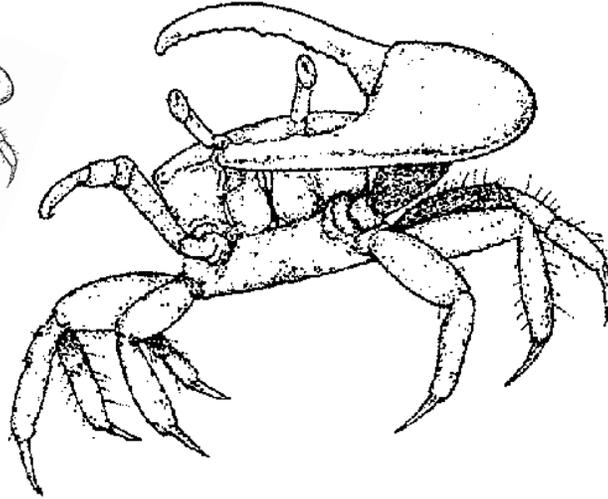


Egrets are large white birds with yellow bills and black legs and feet. They feed by stalking their prey in shallow waters. Their cousin the Snowy Egret is shorter and has a black bill and yellow feet.



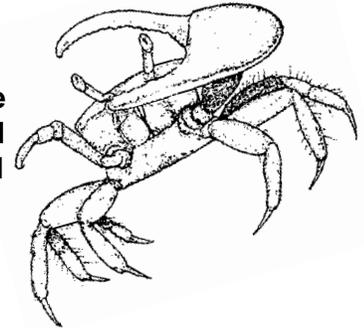
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Male fiddlers are very obvious because they have one oversized claw that resembles a fiddle. The claw is waved around to attract females during courtship and is used as a defense against other males.



Fiddler crabs dig burrows about a foot deep in the sand close to the water's edge. They retreat to these holes when alarmed or when the tide comes in. The opening is plugged with sand or mud to keep out the water. As they maintain their sandy homes or strain clumps of sand through specialized mouthparts to sustain their diet of algae and decomposed matter, they leave behind conspicuous sand pellets.

The thumbnail-sized fiddler crabs are a favorite food of snook, redfish, ibis, yellow-crowned night herons, raccoons, foxes and a host of other predators. Though not rare or endangered, fiddler crabs are a vital part of the coastal food chain.

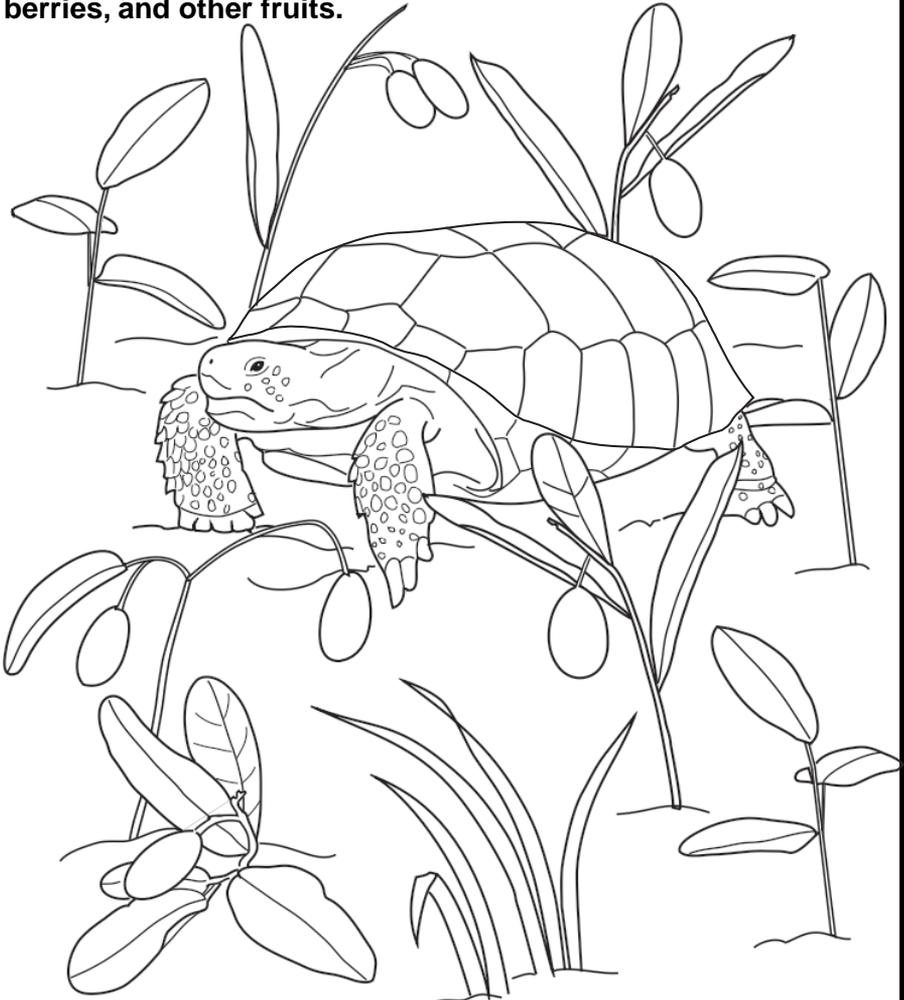




Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

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.

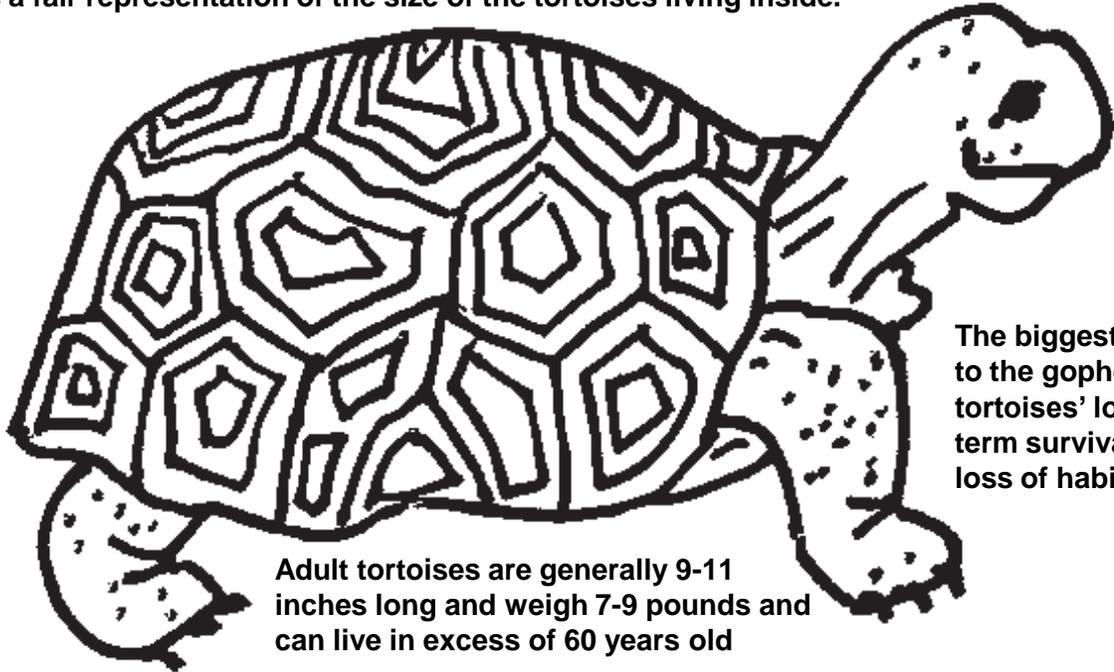




Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

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.

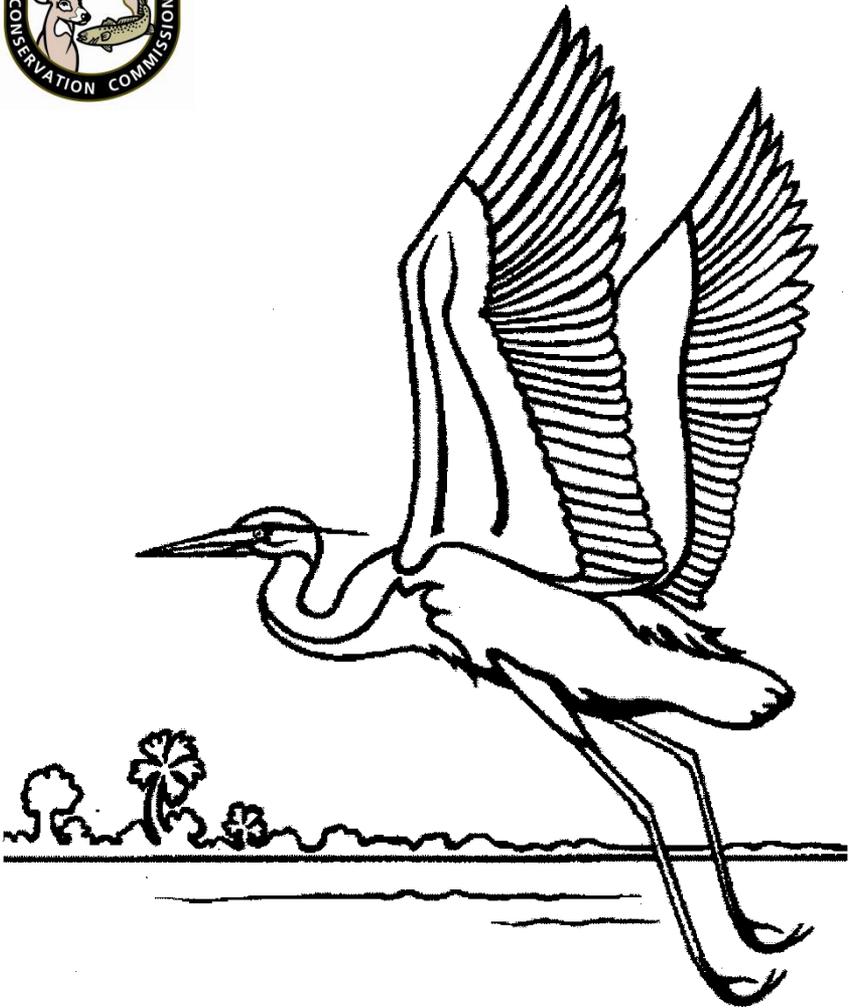


The biggest threat to the gopher tortoises' long-term survival is loss of habitat

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



Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission



Great blue herons are tall, long-legged birds often seen wading in shallow water. Herons eat fish and other small animals. To catch their food, great blue herons stand very still, like feathered statues. When an animal that is good to eat wanders nearby, the heron spears it with its sharp bill.

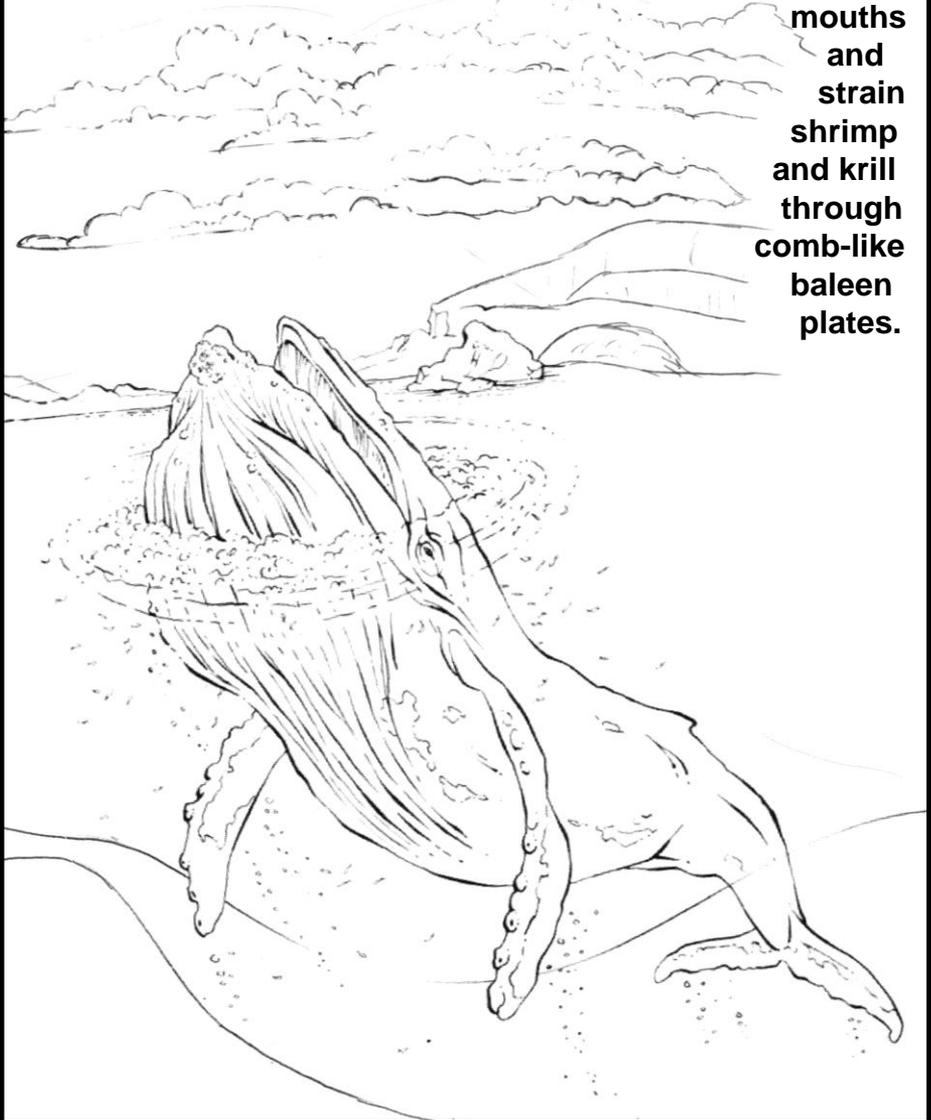


Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

The giant humpback whale lives in oceans around the world. It weighs about 40 tons and grows up to 65 feet in length.

Humpback whales often make noises that sound like songs. When feeding, humpbacks open their huge

mouths and strain shrimp and krill through comb-like baleen plates.

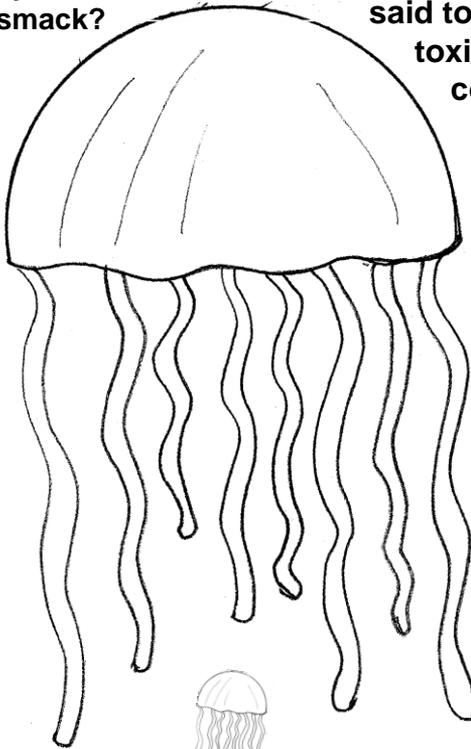
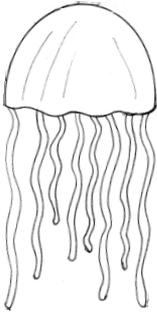
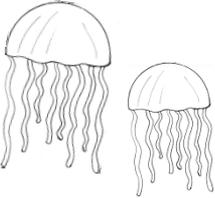
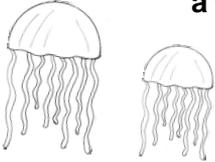




Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

A group of jellyfish is called a smack?

Portuguese man-of-war's sting is said to be as toxic as a cobra's bite



All jellyfish sting, but the stings of small specimens and those with short tentacles often are not painful to humans

Jellyfish are mainly made up of water and protein



Jellyfish have been on Earth for millions of years, even before dinosaurs

Jellyfish have no brain, no blood, and no nervous system

Jellyfish are invertebrates and don't have a backbone

Lion's Mane Jellyfish is the largest jellyfish known. It's bell can reach six feet in diameter with tentacles as long as 100 feet .

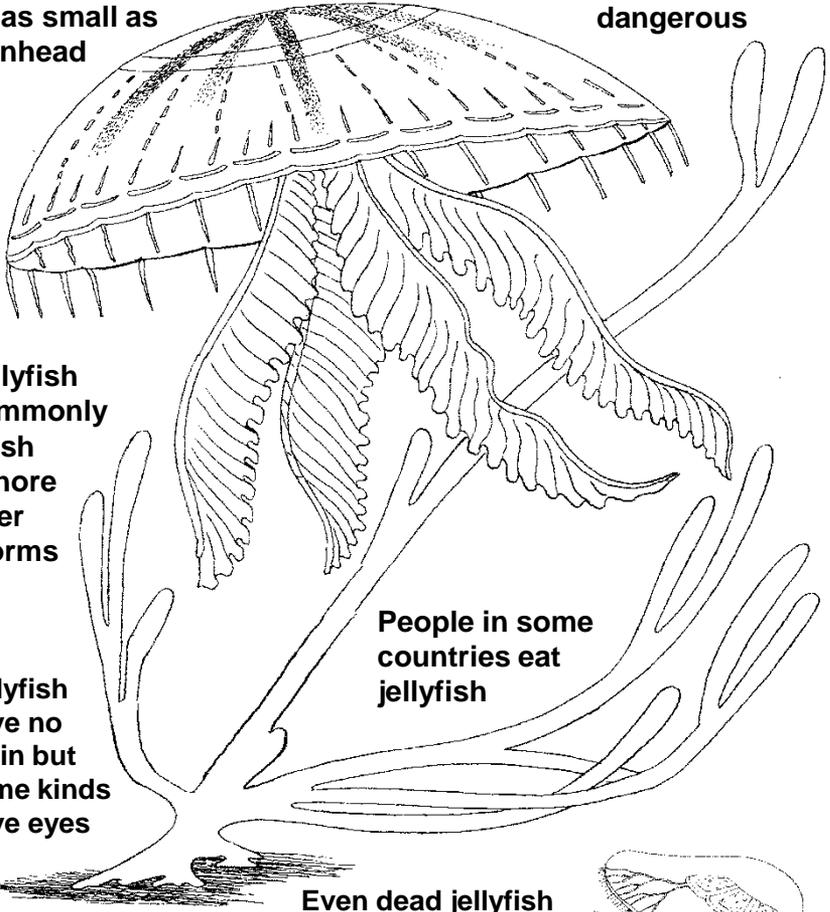


Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Some jellyfish are bigger than a human and others are as small as a pinhead

Jellyfish dine on fish, shrimp, crabs, tiny plants, and will even eat other species of jellyfish

Jellyfish stings can be painful to humans and sometimes very dangerous



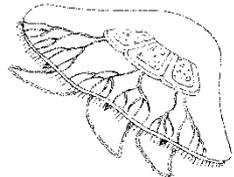
Jellyfish commonly wash ashore after storms

Jellyfish have no brain but some kinds have eyes

People in some countries eat jellyfish

Even dead jellyfish can sting

Jellyfish digest their food very quickly. They wouldn't be able to float if they had to carry a large, undigested meal around for a long period





Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission



The Key deer is the smallest of all white-tailed deer. Bucks range from 28-32 inches at the shoulder and weigh an average of 80 pounds, while does stand 24-28" at the shoulder and weigh an average of 65 pounds. Some people call them "toy deer" because they are only about the size of a large dog. That's small for a deer! Usually, only the male deer have antlers, and they grow a new pair every year.



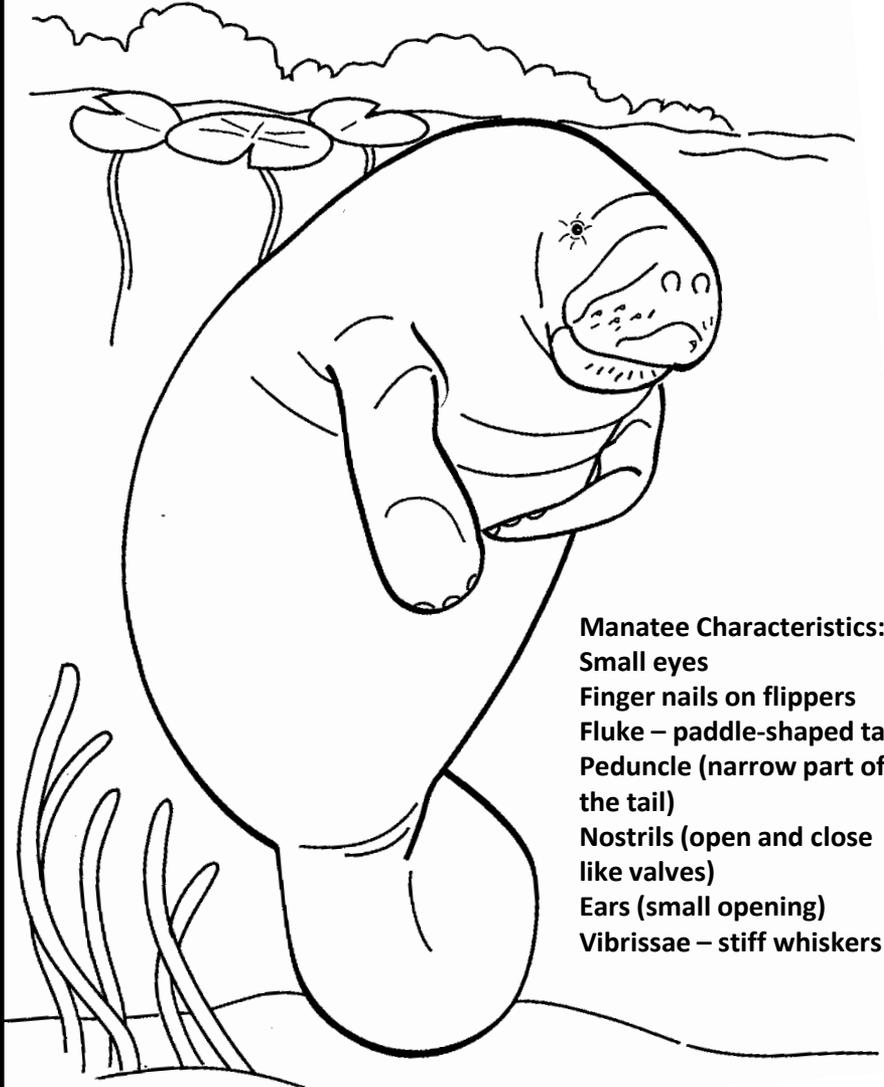
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission



Manatees are large, gray aquatic animals with thick, finely-wrinkled skin. From the blunt whiskered snout, a manatee's body is torpedo-shaped and then tapers to a flat, paddle-shaped tail. Two forelimb flippers, with up to four "finger" nails, are located near the head. Like all mammals, manatees have hair on their bodies. Although the hair is very sparse, it exists in short strands from a manatee's head all the way down to its tail. Manatees do not have external ear lobes, eyelids or eyelashes. A thin membrane protects the manatees' eyes when underwater. Stiff bristles around its mouth help manatees hold food while eating.



Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

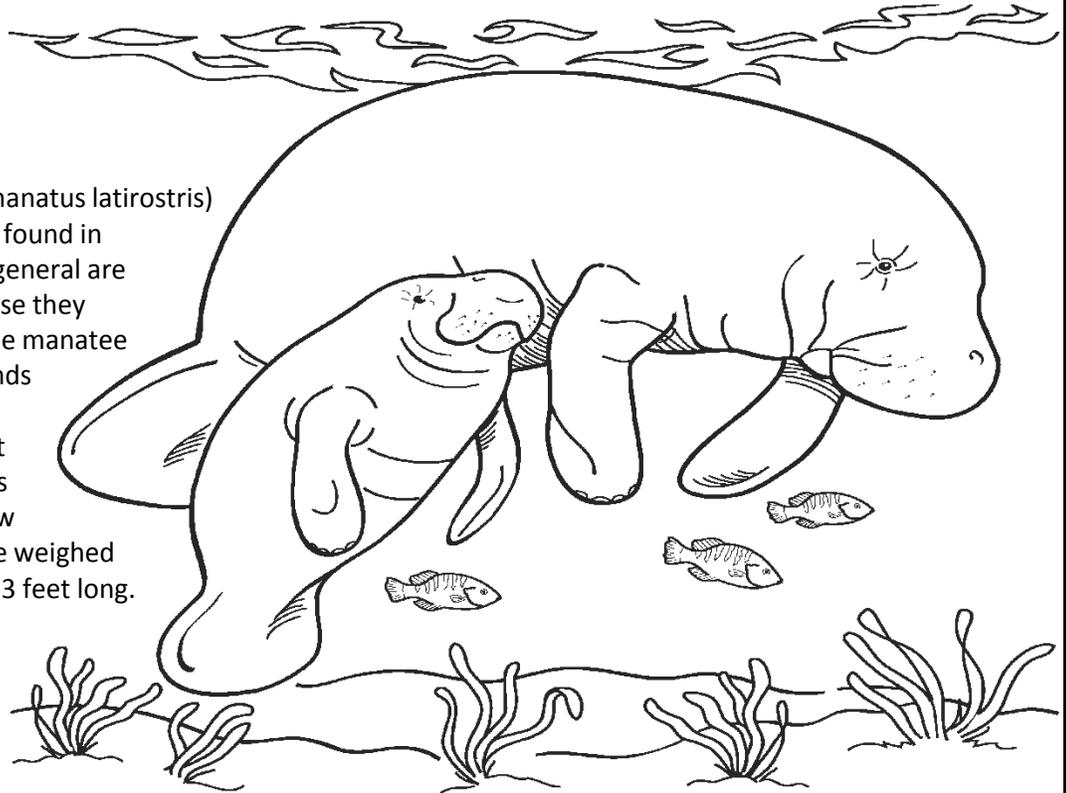


Manatee Characteristics:
Small eyes
Finger nails on flippers
Fluke – paddle-shaped tail
Peduncle (narrow part of the tail)
Nostrils (open and close like valves)
Ears (small opening)
Vibrissae – stiff whiskers



Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

The Florida manatee (*Trichechus manatus latirostris*) is an endangered aquatic mammal found in Florida's waterways. Manatees in general are sometimes called sea cows, because they consume aquatic plants. The female manatee is better known as the cow and tends to be larger than male manatees (bulls). Although the average adult manatee is 10 feet long and weighs about 1,200 pounds, they can grow much larger. The heaviest manatee weighed was 3,600 pounds and measured 13 feet long. A newborn or young manatee is called a calf and weighs 60-80 pounds, is 4 to 4 1/2 feet in length at birth, and grows quickly during its first two years.

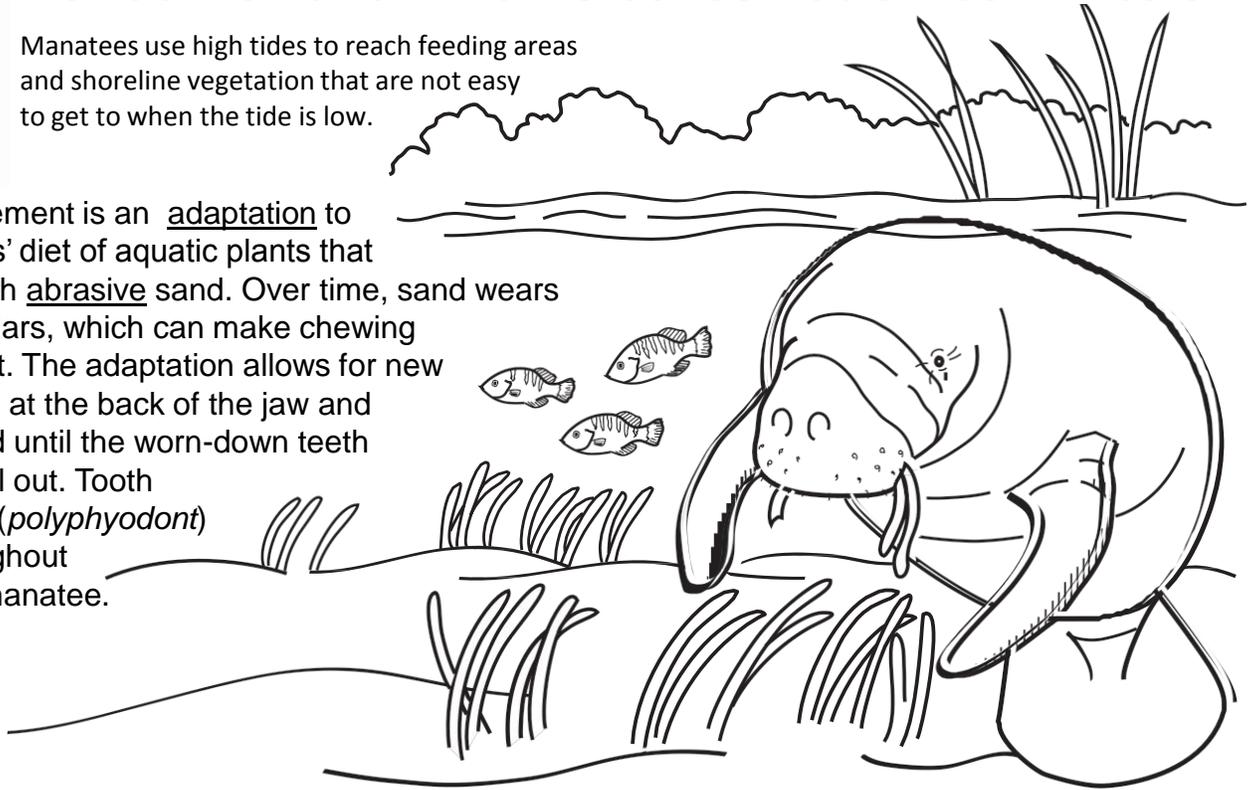




Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Manatees use high tides to reach feeding areas and shoreline vegetation that are not easy to get to when the tide is low.

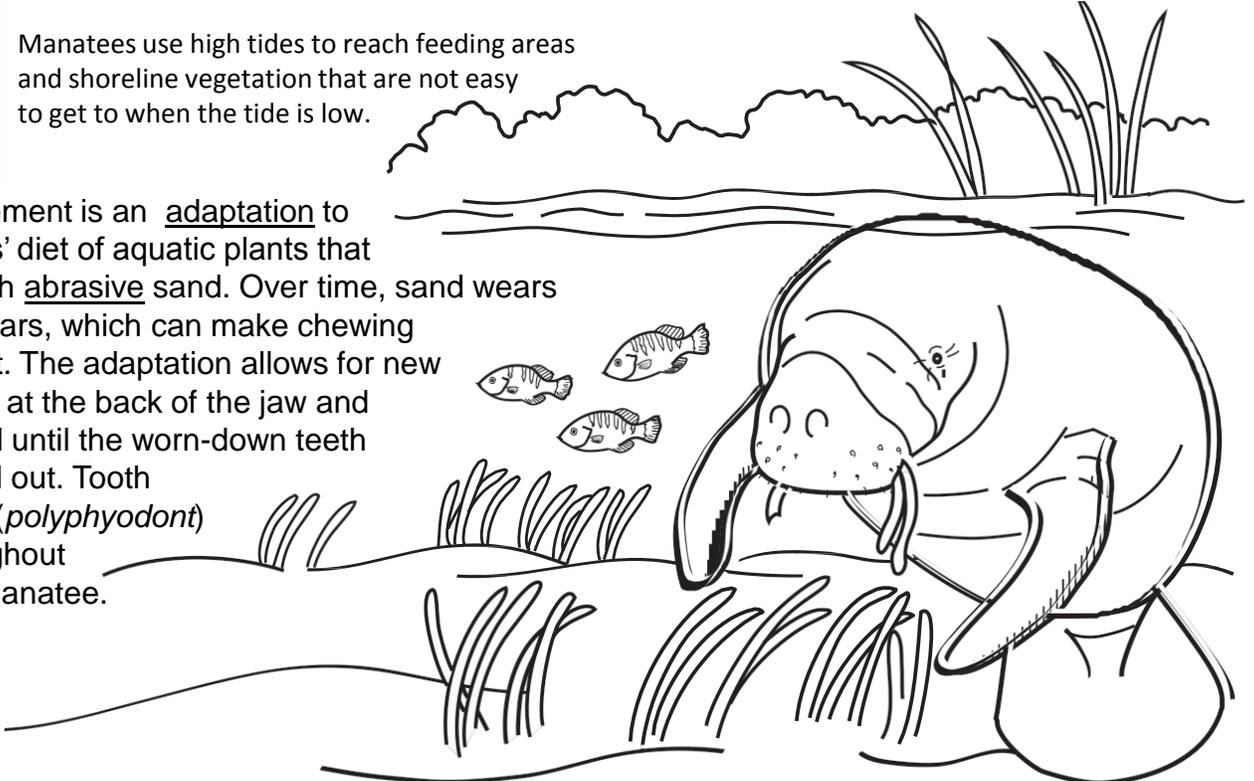
Tooth replacement is an adaptation to the manatees' diet of aquatic plants that are mixed with abrasive sand. Over time, sand wears down the molars, which can make chewing plants difficult. The adaptation allows for new teeth to erupt at the back of the jaw and move forward until the worn-down teeth eventually fall out. Tooth replacement (*polyphyodont*) occurs throughout the life of a manatee.



Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

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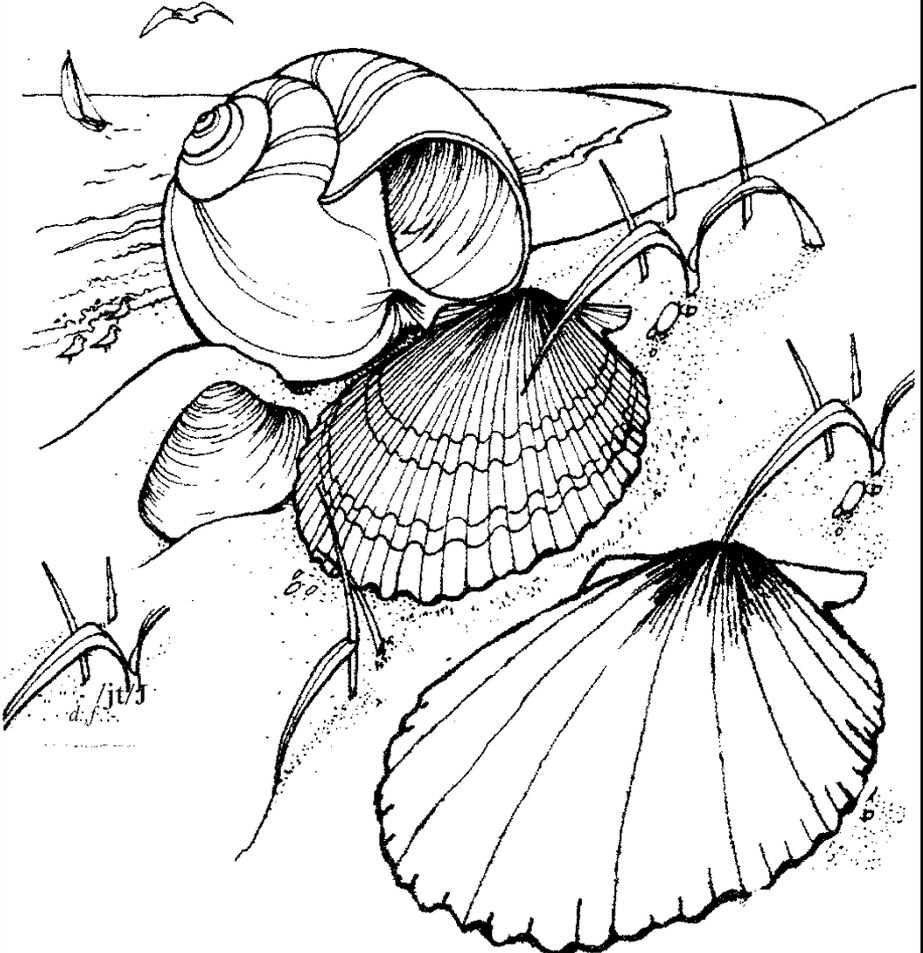
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Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

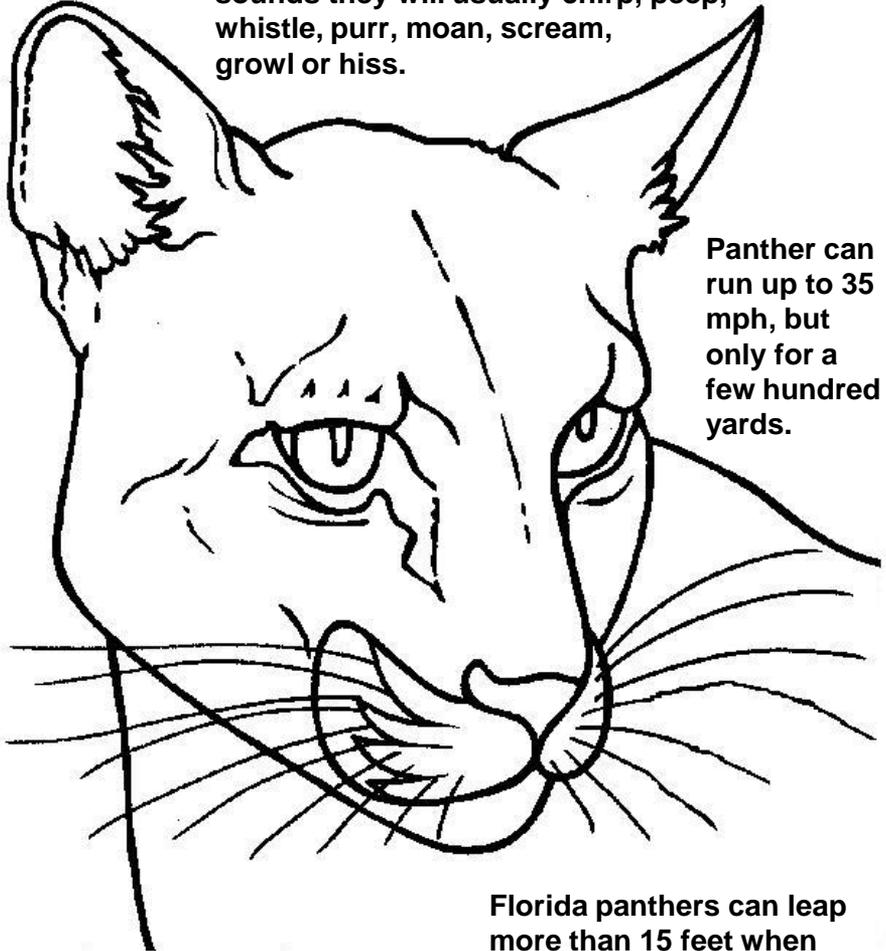
Marine conservation is the protection and preservation of ecosystems in oceans and seas. It focuses on limiting human-caused damage to marine ecosystems, and on restoring damaged marine ecosystems. It also focuses on preserving vulnerable marine species for future generations.





Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Panthers belong to a group of cats, including cougars, domestic cats, lynx and cheetahs, that do not roar. When panthers do make sounds they will usually chirp, peep, whistle, purr, moan, scream, growl or hiss.



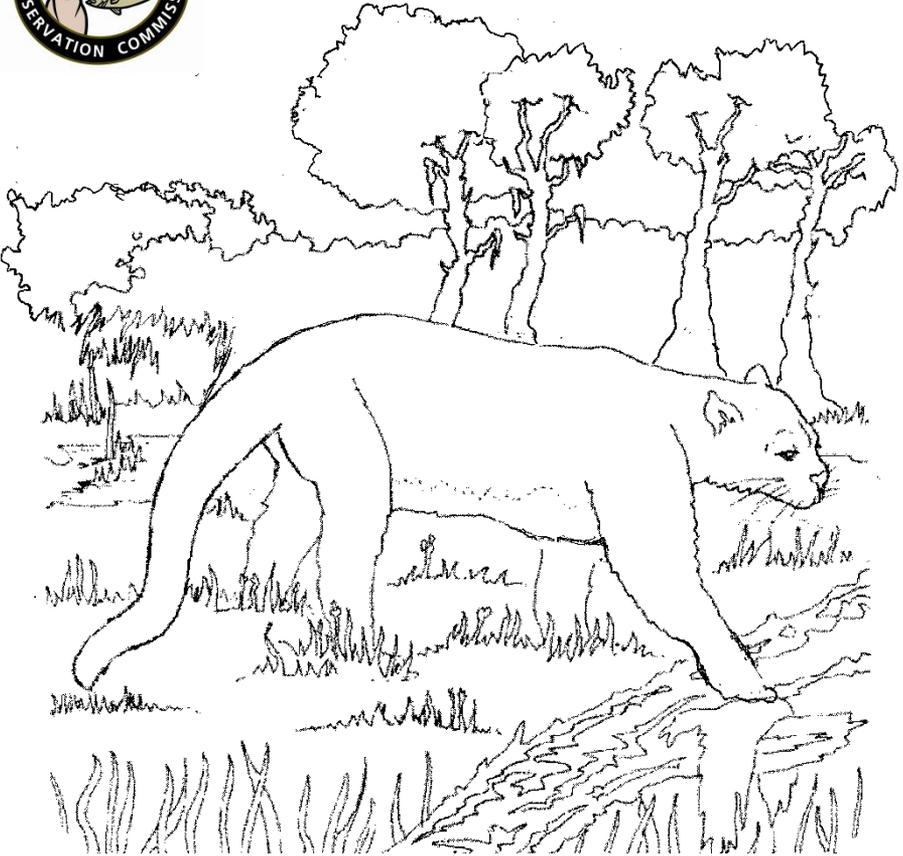
Panther can run up to 35 mph, but only for a few hundred yards.

The Florida Panther is one of the most critically endangered animals on the planet.

Florida panthers can leap more than 15 feet when pouncing on their prey. There are no documented cases of attacks on humans in Florida.



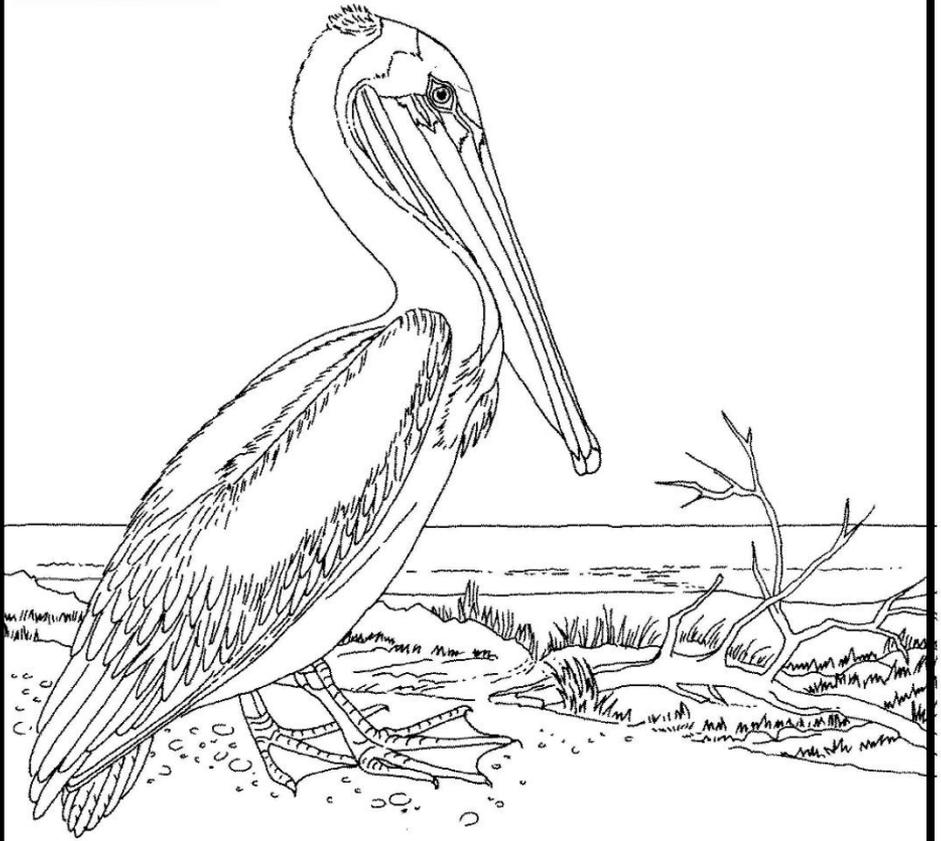
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission



Florida panthers are tawny brown and the tips of their long tails are crooked. They are hunters and mainly eat deer. Panthers are very rare, live mostly in south Florida, and need large areas of woods and swamps to hunt and raise their young. Panther kittens stay with their mother for nearly 18 months, until they are able to hunt on their own. Florida panthers are very shy and seldom are seen by humans. The remaining estimated population of the Florida Panther is 100 to 160. For more information on the majestic Florida Panther please visit <http://www.floridapanther.net.org/> and see how you can help.



Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

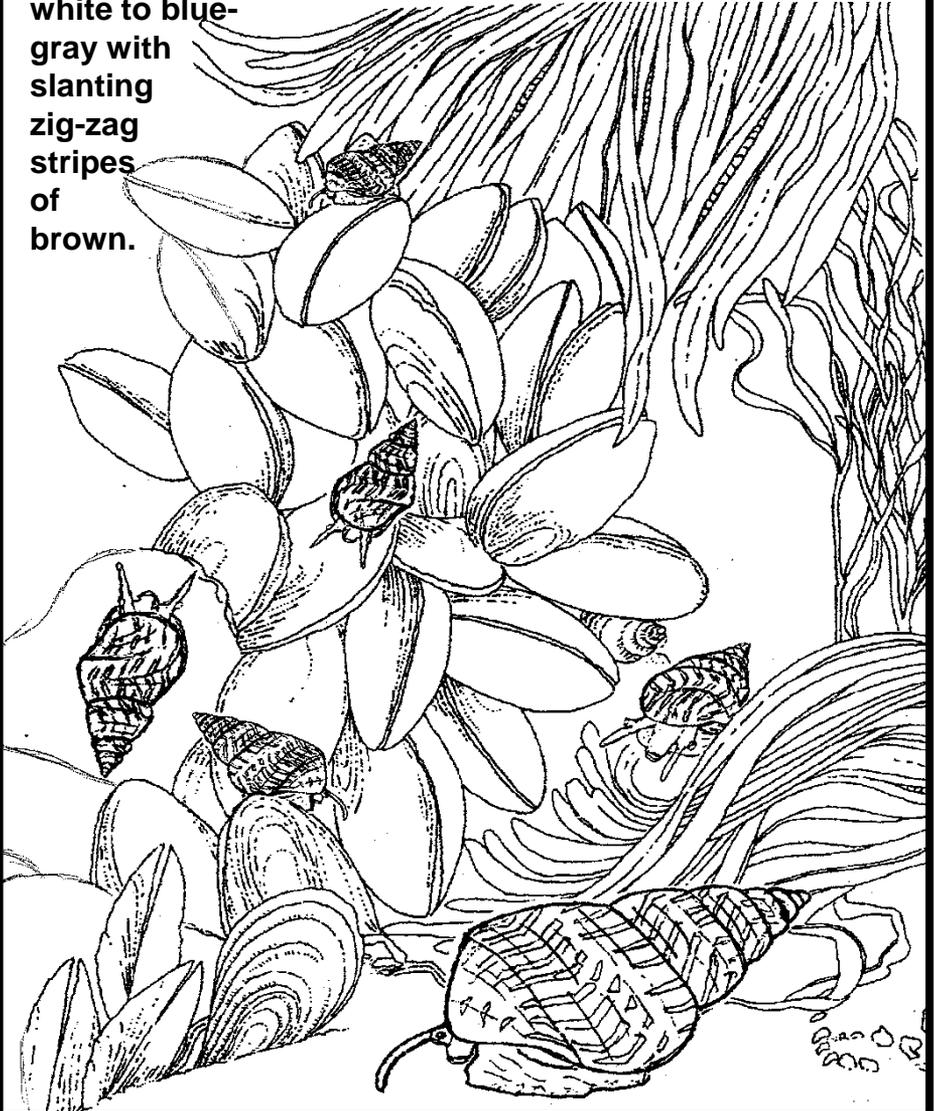


Pelicans are stout birds with long pouched beaks. Brown pelicans are the most common in Florida and can reach 3-5 feet in length. They feed by diving out of the sky into the water head first and catching fish in their pouches.



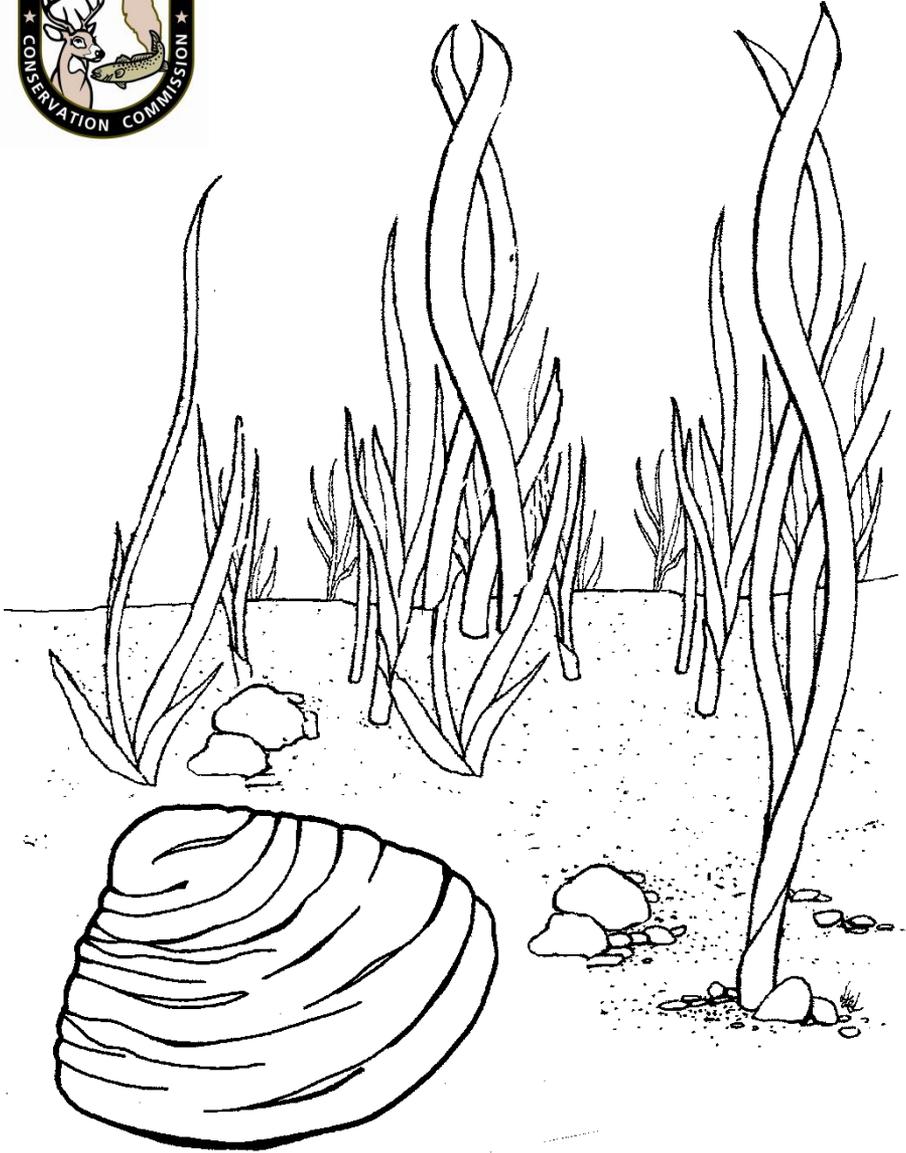
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Periwinkles are small snail-shaped shells found in intertidal areas in the crevices of rocks. These shells are less than one inch long, and empty ones are homes for small hermit crabs. They're a favorite food of birds and crabs. Periwinkle shells are white to blue-gray with slanting zig-zag stripes of brown.





Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission



Quahog clams are very common in shallow bays and lagoons. They live in soft muddy sand and can be found by digging in the sand at low tide. The shells are very thick and dirty-gray to whitish. Quahogs can be 3 to 6 inches long.

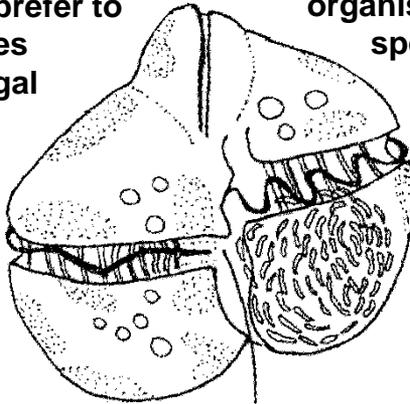


Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

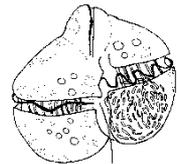
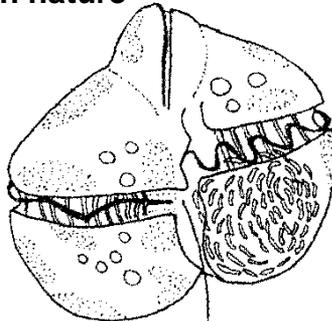
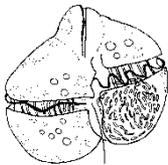
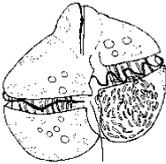
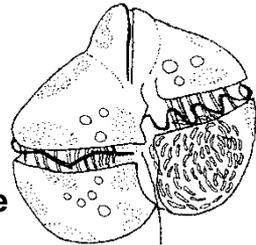
A red tide is a higher-than-normal concentration of a microscopic alga (plant-like organism). In Florida, the

species that causes most red tides is *Karenia brevis* (*K. brevis*).

Scientists prefer to call red tides Harmful Algal Blooms, or HABs because a "bloom" can also be yellow, orange, brown, pink, purple, or reddish-brown.



Dinoflagellates can produce some of the most powerful poisons in nature



The greatest threat to humans from a red tide is eating shellfish that have been contaminated with the red tide toxin

Red tides can kill fish and other marine animals and contaminate shellfish such as clams and oysters

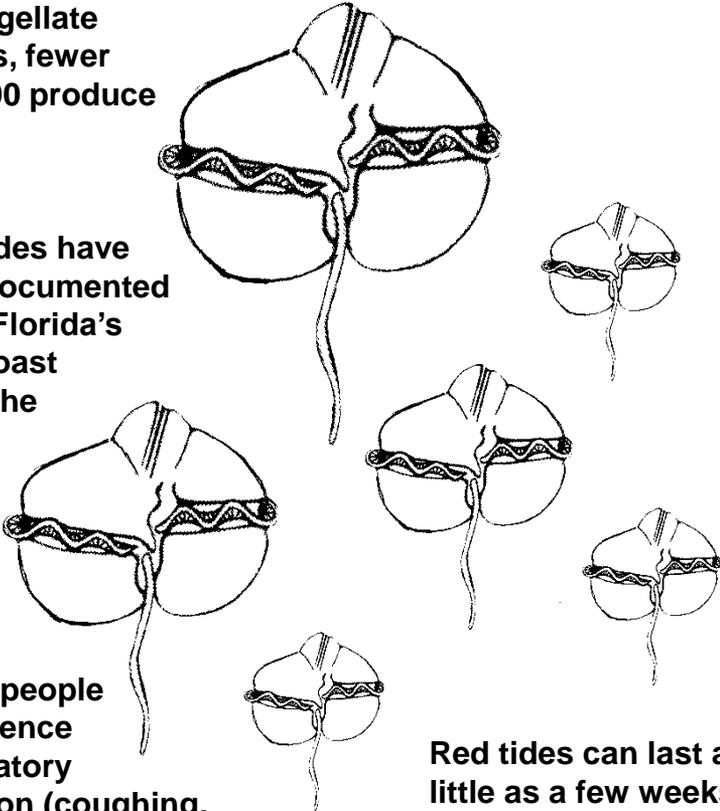


Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

A red tide is a higher-than-normal concentration of a microscopic algal (plant-like organism). In Florida, the species that causes most red tides is *Karenia brevis* (*K. brevis*).

Of the more than 2,000 known dinoflagellate species, fewer than 100 produce toxins

Red Tides have been documented along Florida's Gulf Coast Since the 1840's



Some people experience respiratory irritation (coughing, sneezing, tearing and an itchy throat) when the Florida red tide organism, *K. brevis*, is present and winds blow onshore.

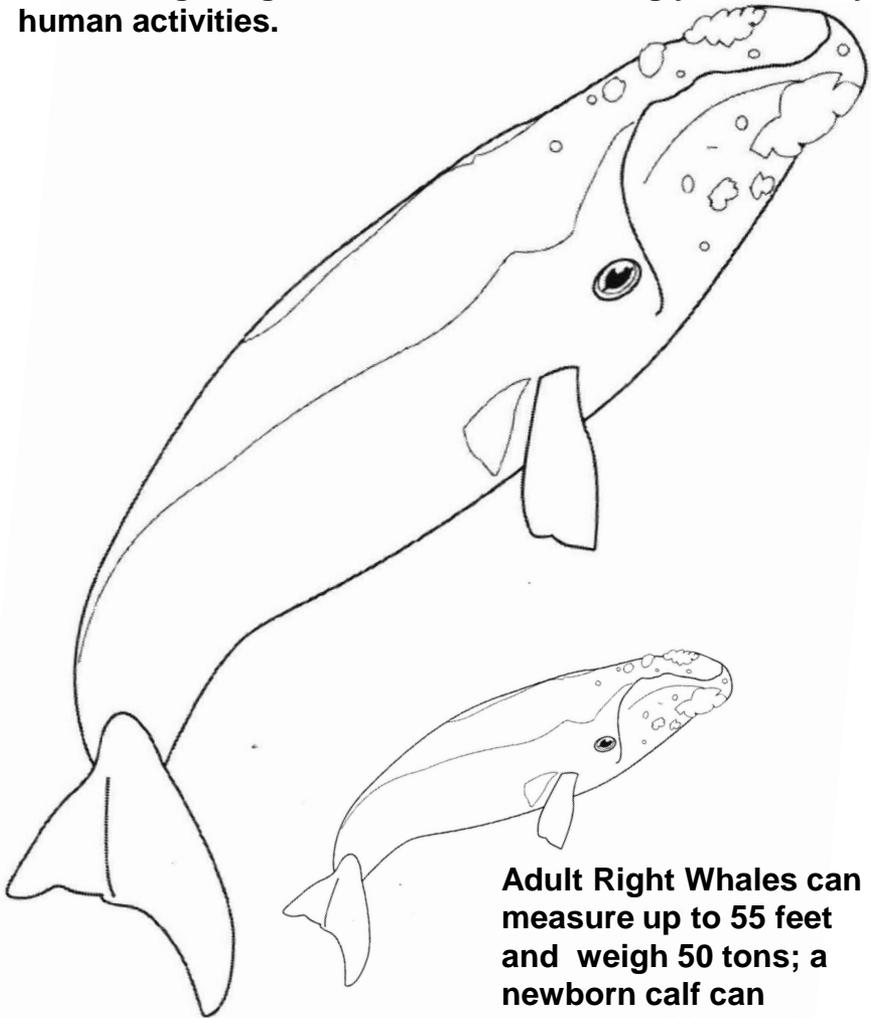
Red tides can last as little as a few weeks or longer than a year. They can even subside and then reoccur.

The red tide bloom of 946-47 is estimated to have killed 500 million fish



Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

The North Atlantic right whale is one of the most endangered large whales in the world, facing a high likelihood of extinction largely due to human activities. About 300 animals remain of the western North Atlantic population. Although whaling is now illegal, right whales are still strongly affected by human activities.



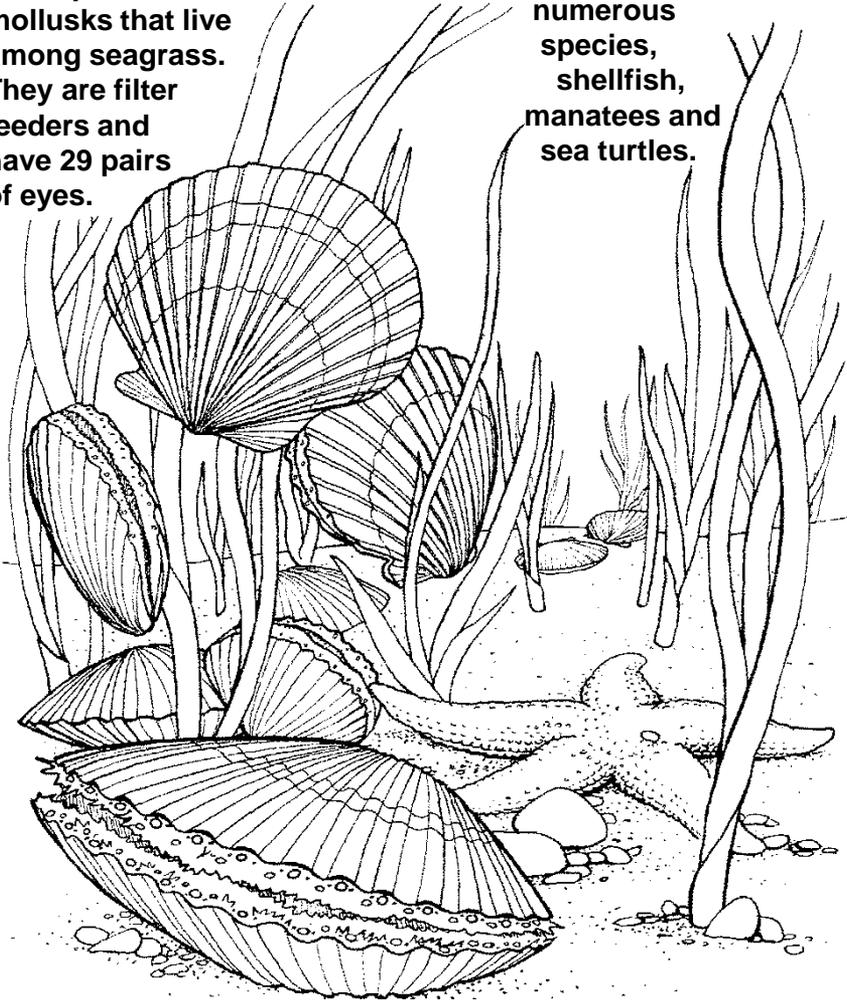
Adult Right Whales can measure up to 55 feet and weigh 50 tons; a newborn calf can measure 15 feet at birth and weigh 2,000 pounds.



Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Scallops are mollusks that live among seagrass. They are filter feeders and have 29 pairs of eyes.

Florida's seagrass beds are vital marine ecosystems, providing food, habitat and nursery areas for numerous species, shellfish, manatees and sea turtles.



Starfish feed mostly on clams, oysters, and other mollusks. A starfish wraps around its prey, pulls the shells open, and then extends its stomach out of its mouth and eats the animal in the shell.



Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission



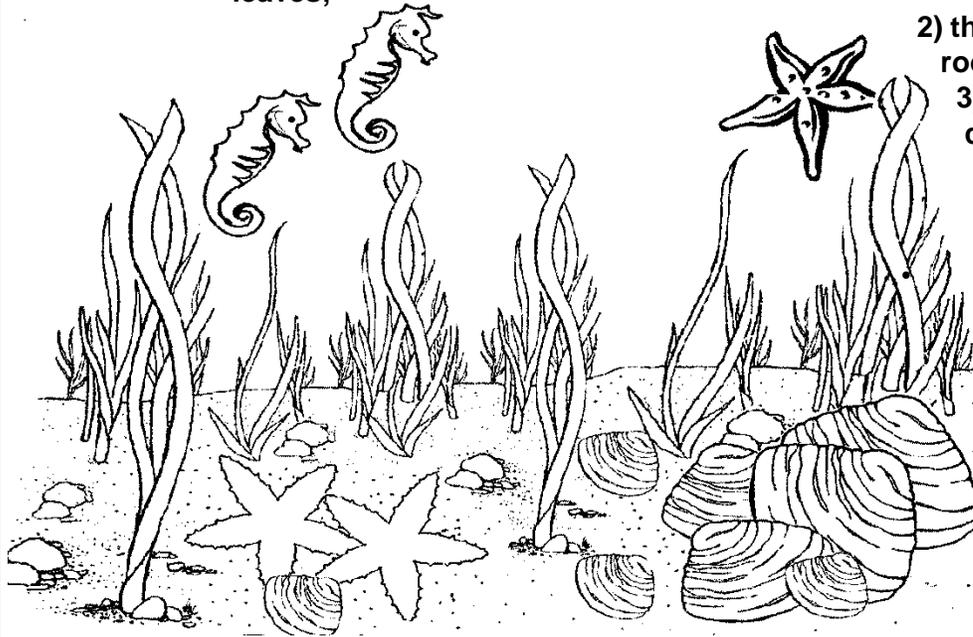
Eastern Screech-owls' "ear tufts" are really just special feathers which help them blend into the trees where they hide during the day. The owl's round, disc-shaped face helps it to gather sound for better hearing. Good hearing and eyesight help them catch mice and other small animals to eat at night.



Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Seagrasses are grass-like flowering plants that live completely submerged in marine and estuarine waters. Florida's approximately 2 million acres of seagrasses perform many significant functions:

1) they help maintain water clarity by trapping fine sediments and particles with their leaves;



2) they stabilize the bottom with their roots and underground stems;

3) they provide shelter for fishes, crustaceans, and shellfish; and

4) they and the organisms that grow on them are food for many marine animals and water birds.

The canopy of seagrass leaves protects young marine animals from larger predators. Some animals, such as manatees and sea turtles, eat seagrass blades. Other animals derive nutrition from eating algae and small animals that live on the seagrass leaves.

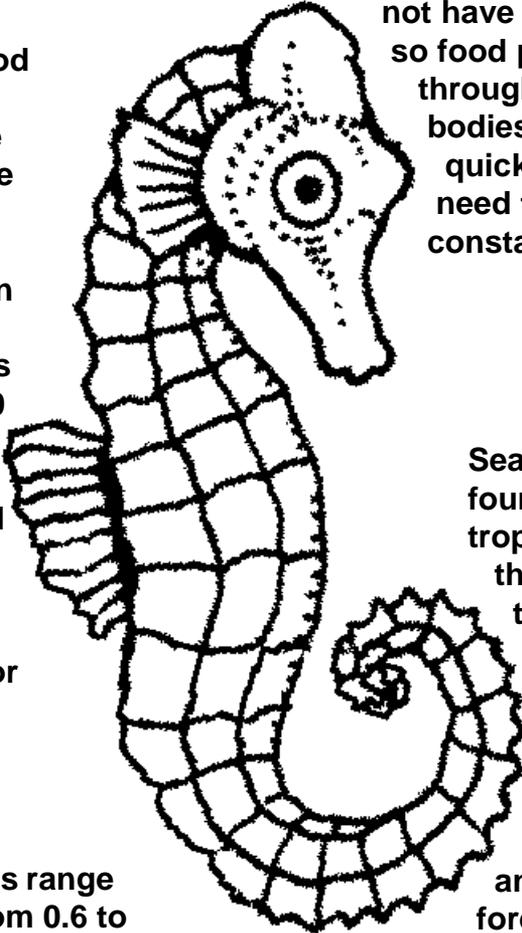


Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Many seahorses mate for life

Seahorses feed on plankton and small crustaceans. They do not have a stomach, so food passes through their bodies very quickly, and they need to eat nearly constantly

Seahorses are not good swimmers. They move through the water by using the small fin on their back that flutters up to 35-50 times per second. Their small pectoral fins near their head are used for steering.



Seahorses are found in warm, tropical water throughout the world. Their favorite locations are coral reefs, seagrasses, and mangrove forests.

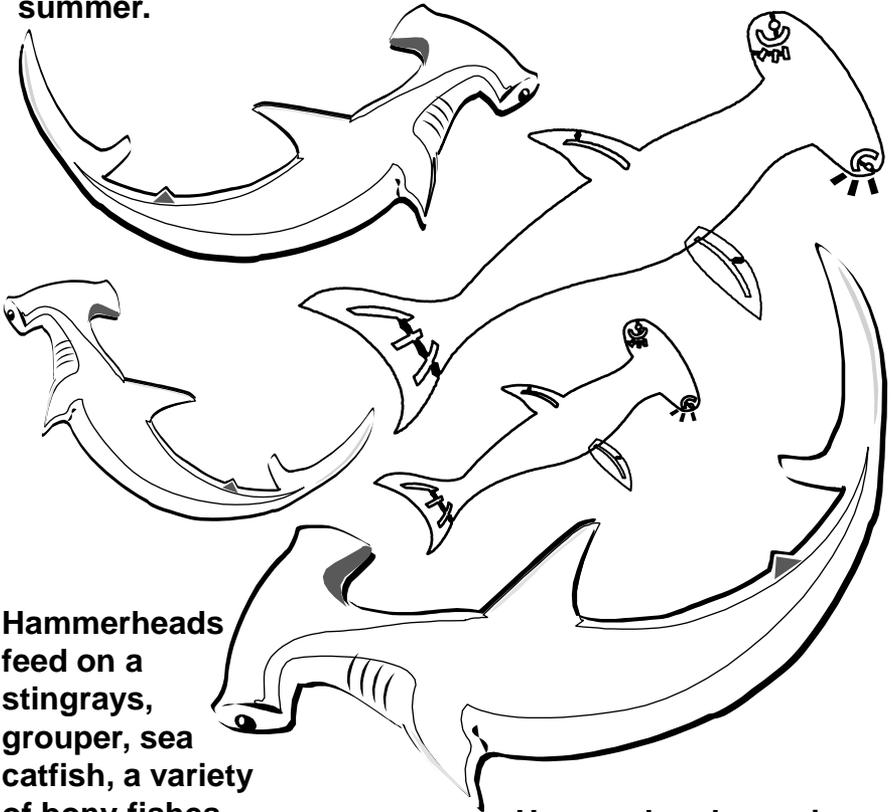
Seahorses range in size from 0.6 to 14 inches long

Seahorses live in the wild an estimated 1 to 5 years



Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Hammerheads. A common tropical and subtropical shark that inhabits the open ocean and the shallow coastal waters of both the Gulf and Atlantic coasts of Florida. They favor continental and insular coral reefs but are often associated with inlets and the mouths of bays. Nomadic and migratory, with some Florida populations moving north along the Atlantic coast in summer.



Hammerheads feed on a stingrays, grouper, sea catfish, a variety of bony fishes, sharks, crabs, and squid.

Hammerheads maximum size is about 18 feet and live to 20+ years.



Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission



Bull Sharks may inhabit estuarine, nearshore, and offshore waters along the Florida coasts. They commonly enter estuarine waters and are one of the few shark species that may inhabit freshwater, sometimes venturing hundreds of miles inland via coastal river systems. They are versatile, opportunistic feeders; their stomach contents have included bony fishes and invertebrate species, sharks, rays, dolphins, sea turtles, and sea birds. One of the more dangerous shark species, they account for the third highest number of attacks on humans. Bull Sharks can reach 11 feet in size, and live to 24+ years.



Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

The great white shark lives in warmer oceans throughout the world. One of the largest sharks, its average length is 10-20 feet and its average weight is about 2,500 pounds. A fierce predator, the great white will eat almost any fish or warm-blooded creature it can catch.

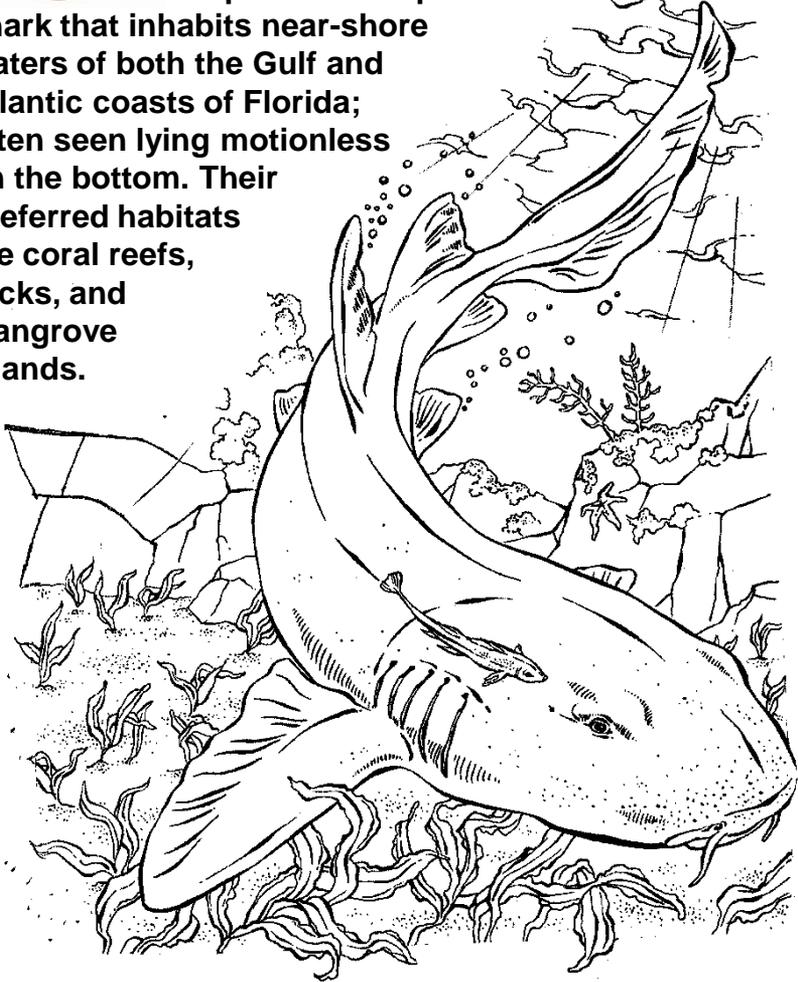




Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Nurse sharks are an abundant, coastal, tropical/ subtropical

shark that inhabits near-shore waters of both the Gulf and Atlantic coasts of Florida; often seen lying motionless on the bottom. Their Preferred habitats are coral reefs, rocks, and Mangrove islands.



Feeds mainly on bottom invertebrates such as spiny lobsters, shrimps, crabs, sea urchins, squid, octopi, and marine mollusks; also feeds on some fish species, especially grunts.

Nurse sharks grow to about 9 feet and live for 24+ years.



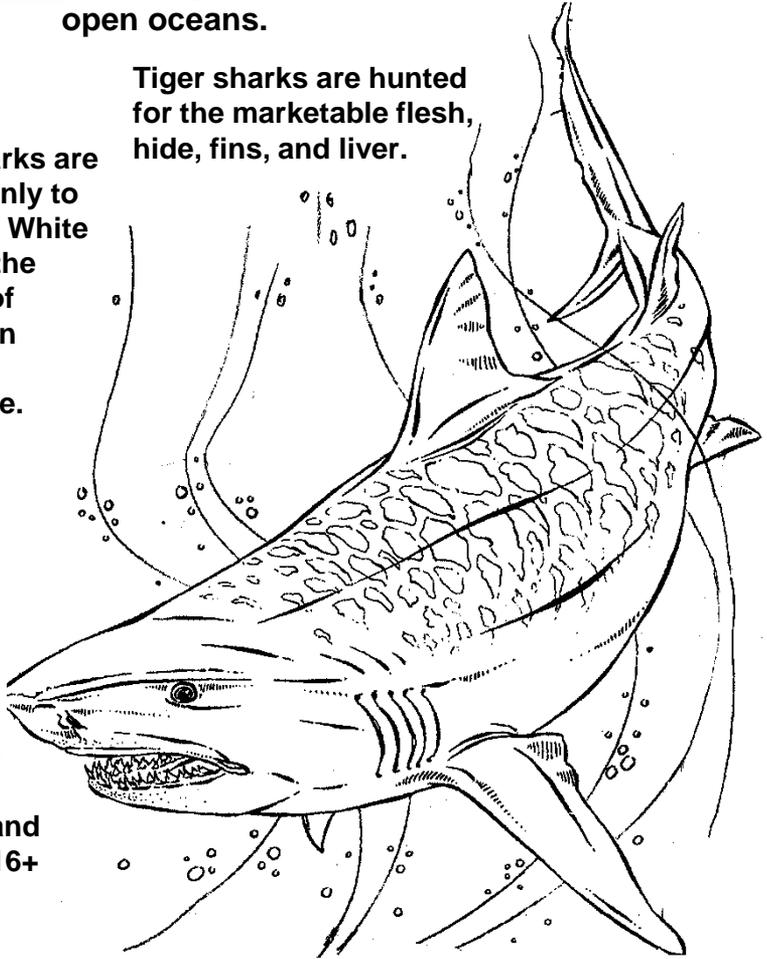
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Tiger sharks are common throughout Florida. They can be found in a variety of habitats including river mouths, shallow bays, and open oceans.

Tiger sharks are second only to the Great White shark in the number of attacks on humans worldwide.

Tiger sharks are hunted for the marketable flesh, hide, fins, and liver.

Tiger sharks grow to about 18 feet, can weigh up to 2000 pounds and can live 16+ years.

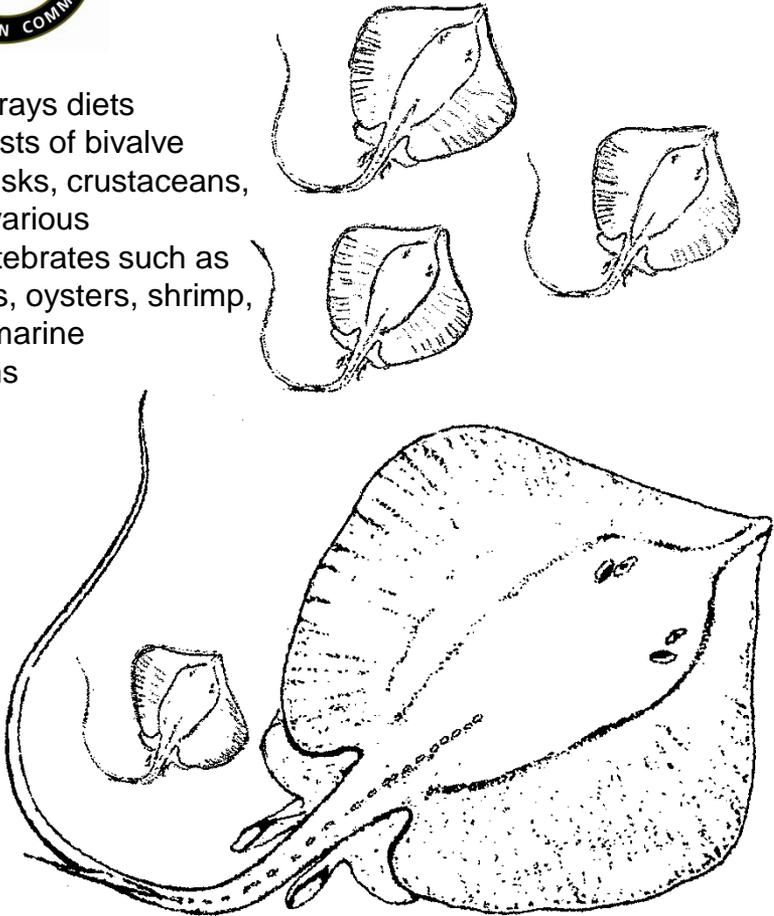


Tiger sharks are voracious feeders that will eat just about anything. Stomach contents have been reported to include sea turtles, many species of bony fish, marine birds, other sharks, porpoises, skates, rays, conchs, crabs, and garbage (for example, pieces of coal and wood, burlap bags, small barrels, cans).



Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Stingrays diets consists of bivalve mollusks, crustaceans, and various invertebrates such as clams, oysters, shrimp, and marine worms



Rays are very common. They live mostly on the bottom and often bury themselves in the sand with only their eyes showing. They are shy and usually try to avoid people. Stingrays have one or many sharp, **serrated spines** on their tails. The Atlantic stingray comes **inshore** during warm months and is tan.



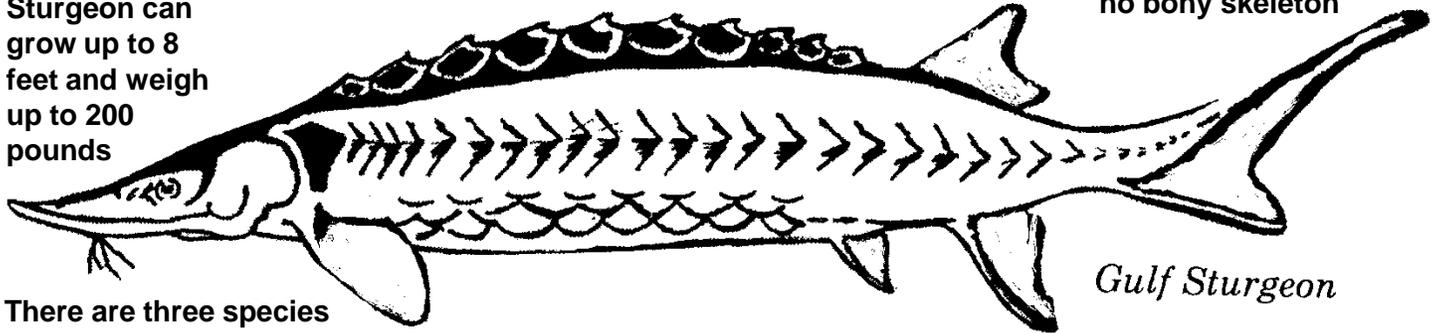
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Sturgeon have no teeth and the upper lobe of the tail is longer than the lower lobe similar to sharks

Sturgeon are a protected species and cannot be harvested

Sturgeon can grow up to 8 feet and weigh up to 200 pounds

Sturgeon have no bony skeleton



Gulf Sturgeon

There are three species of sturgeon in Florida:

Atlantic sturgeon (*Acipsener oxyrinchus oxyrinchus*), Gulf sturgeon (*Acipenser oxyrinchus desotoi*) and shortnose sturgeon (*Acipenser brevirostrum*). All three species have a round body imbedded with an armor of five rows of bony plates or scutes.

Florida sturgeon can live long lives, exceeding 25 years in some case

All three species are anadromous, meaning that they move from saltwater to freshwater to spawn

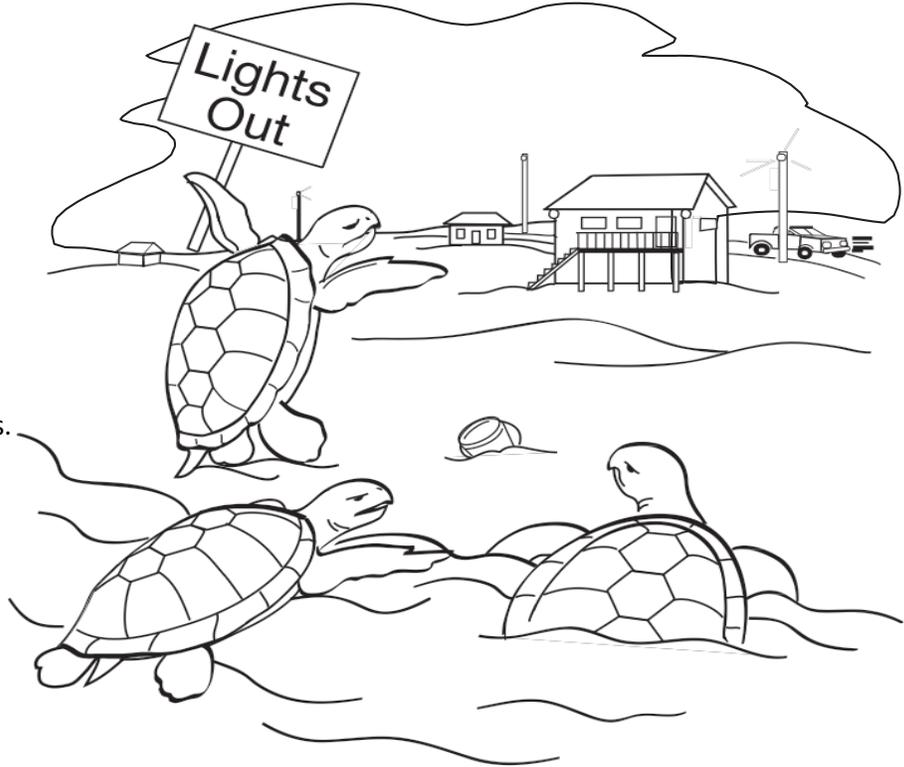


Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

What you can do to help

- Anyone who lives near a beach should turn lights off at night – especially those seen from the beach.
- Never leave beach chairs or other items out overnight. They can entrap nesting sea turtles or hatchlings, leading to their death.
- Never approach or take flash photos of turtles. Lights and noise can hinder turtles' ability to nest or find their way back to the sea.
- Keep oceans, bays and rivers pollution-free. Take a trash bag with you when you go to the beach and remove any trash you see.

Report injured or dead sea turtles, poaching of eggs or other wildlife emergencies. Call the Wildlife Alert Hotline, 1-888-404-FWCC (3922)

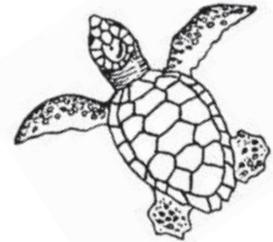
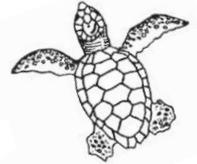
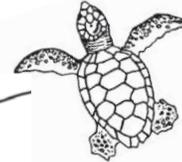
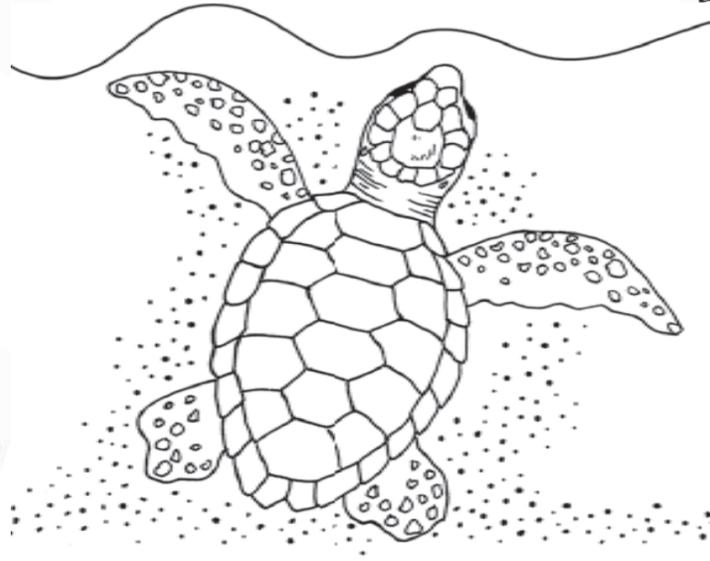
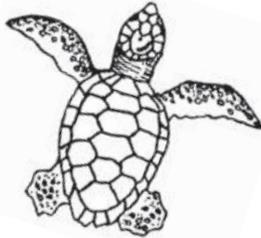
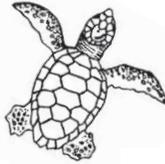




Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Sea turtles are among the oldest creatures on earth and have remained essentially unchanged for 110 million years.

In most sea turtles, the top shell, or carapace, is composed of many bones covered with horny scales or "scutes."



Turtles are toothless but have powerful jaws to crush, bite, and tear their food.

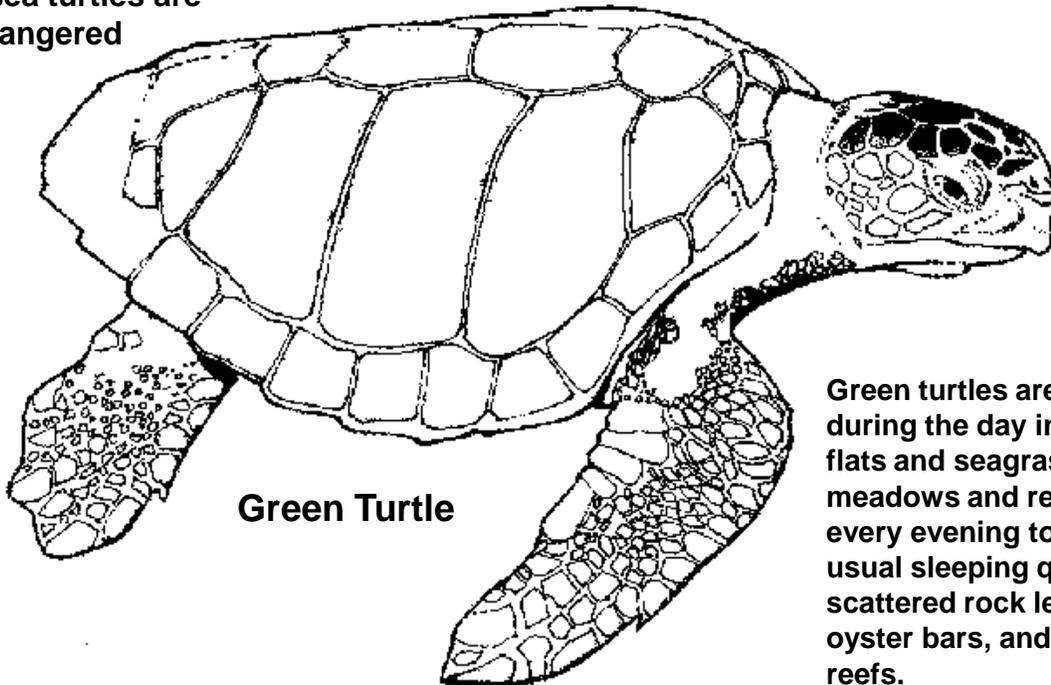


Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Green Turtles, as all sea turtles are endangered

Unlike most sea turtles, adult green turtles are herbivorous (plant eaters), feeding on sea grasses and algae.

Green turtles weigh an average of 350 pounds and have a small head for its body size. Its oval-shaped upper shell averages 3.3 feet in length and is olive-brown with darker streaks running through it; its lower shell, or plastron, is yellow.



Green Turtle

Green turtles are found during the day in shallow flats and seagrass meadows and return every evening to their usual sleeping quarters—scattered rock ledges, oyster bars, and coral reefs.

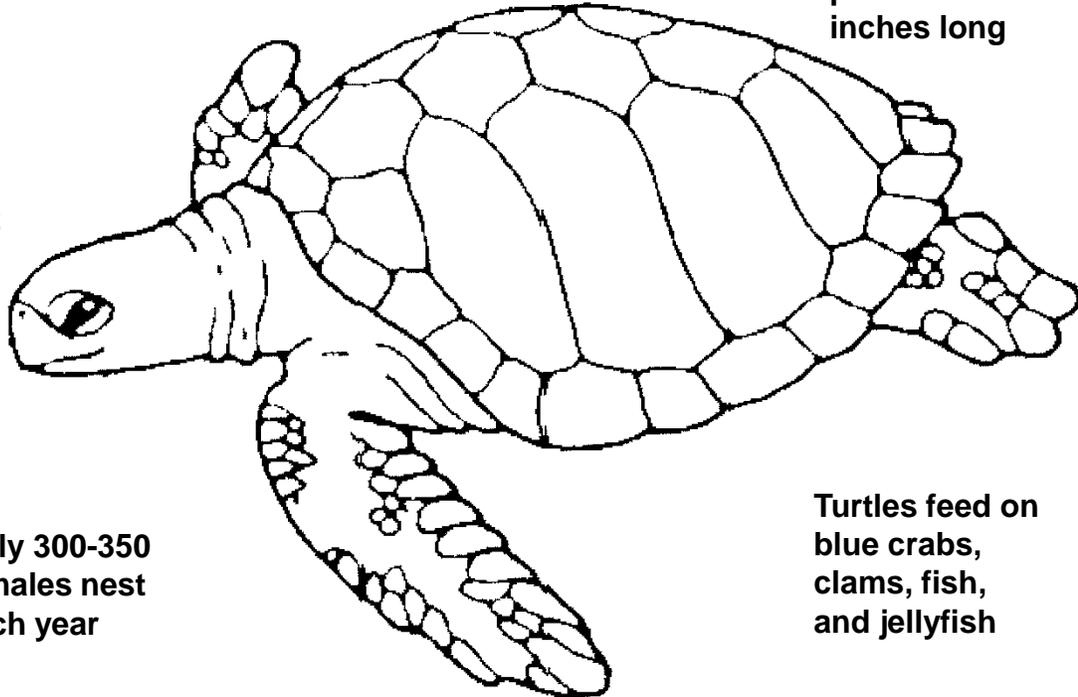


Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Kemp's Ridley Turtle

Adults weigh 85-100 pounds and are 24-30 inches long

Kemp's Ridley Turtles are the rarest and most endangered of the sea turtles; as well as the smallest sea turtle species.



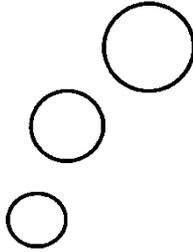
Only 300-350 females nest each year

Turtles feed on blue crabs, clams, fish, and jellyfish

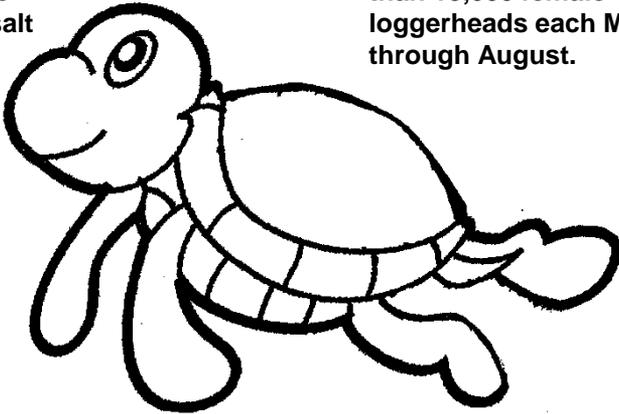


Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

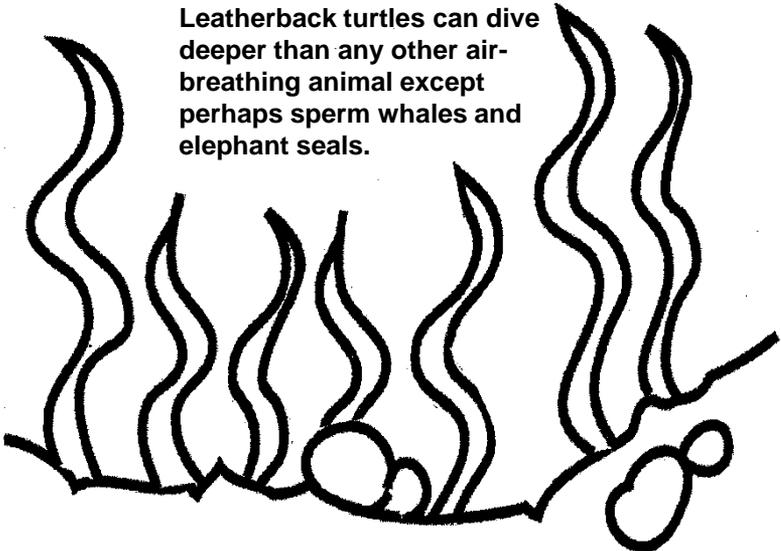
Female sea turtles often appear to be weeping as they nest; the main purpose of these tears is to remove salt from the turtle's body.



The contiguous beaches of Brevard, Indian River, St. Lucie, Martin, and Palm Beach counties are the most important loggerhead nursery areas in the Western Hemisphere, attracting more than 15,000 female loggerheads each May through August.



Leatherback turtles can dive deeper than any other air-breathing animal except perhaps sperm whales and elephant seals.



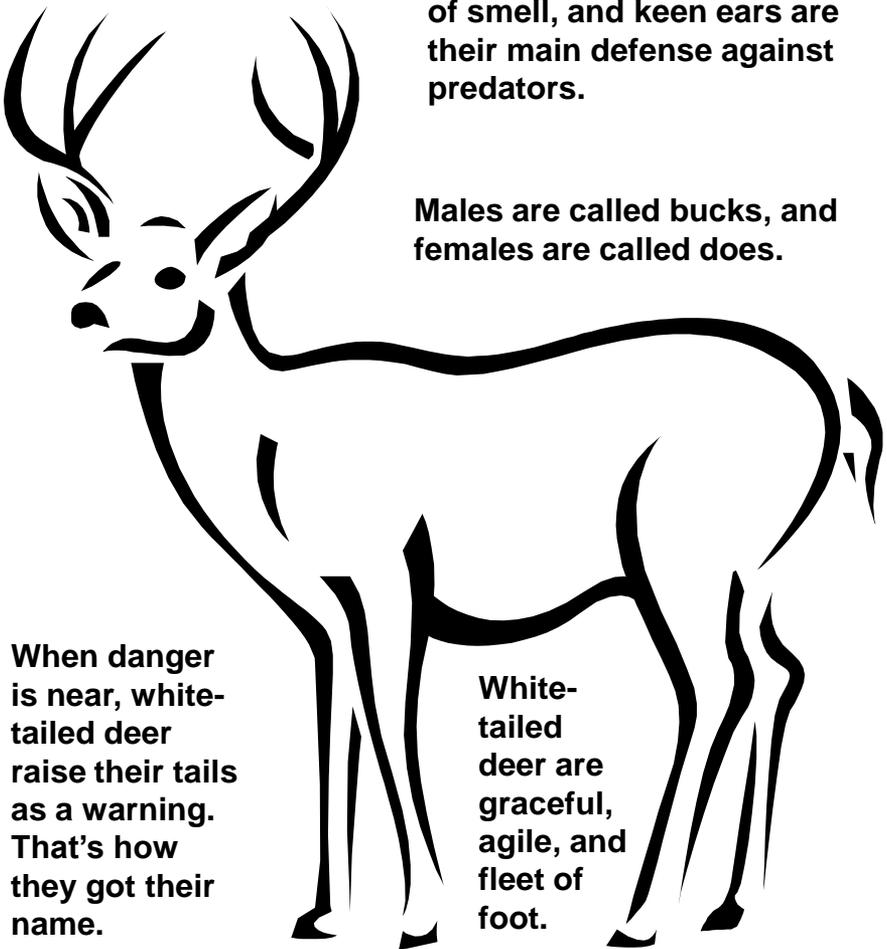


Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

White-tailed deer are herbivores, which means they eat plants. Some of their favorites are young plants that grow on the edges of forests.

Their speed, excellent sense of smell, and keen ears are their main defense against predators.

Males are called bucks, and females are called does.



When danger is near, white-tailed deer raise their tails as a warning. That's how they got their name.

White-tailed deer are graceful, agile, and fleet of foot.