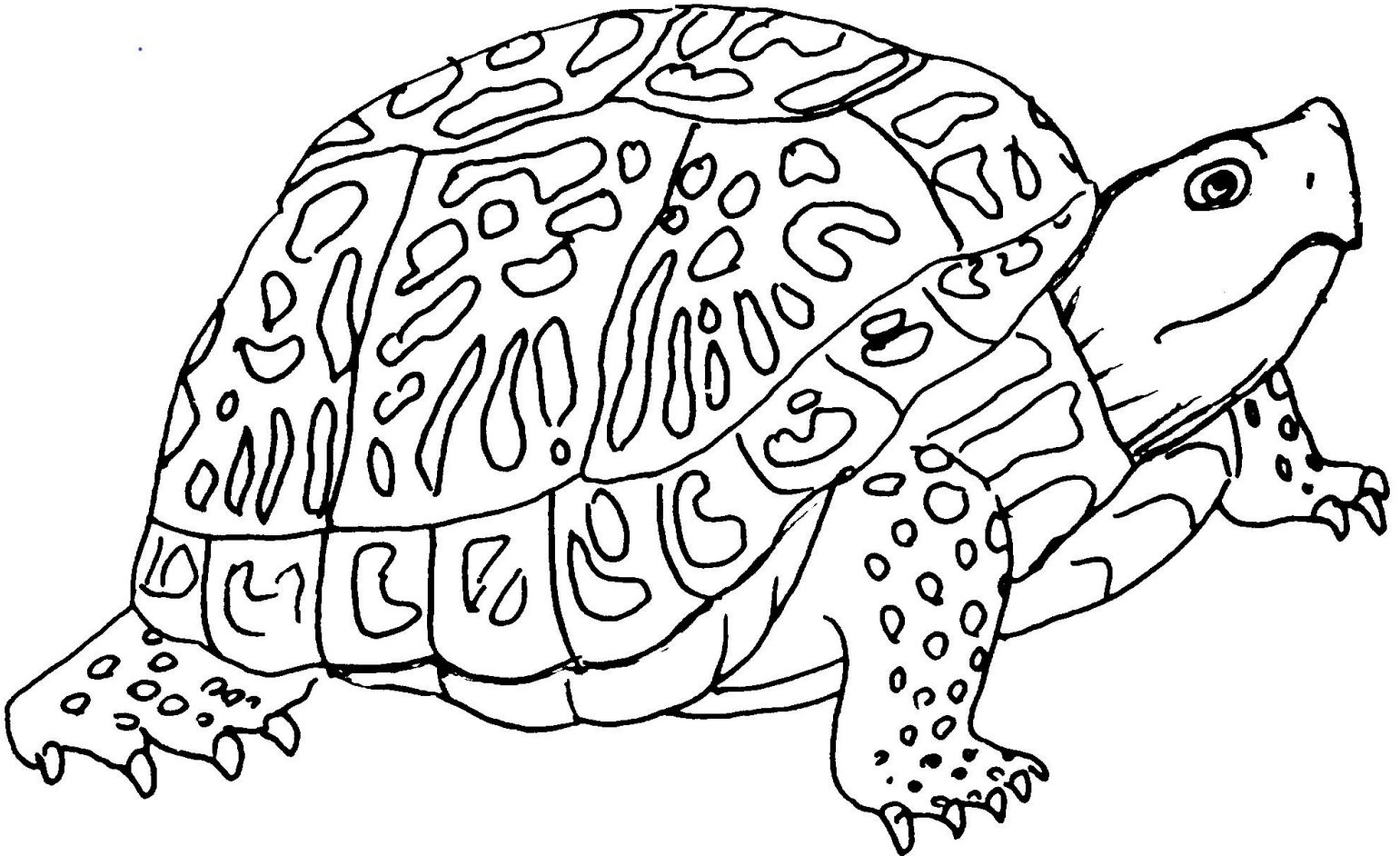




PA's Amphibian and Reptile Coloring Series

Eastern Box Turtle



All About Me: Hello there! I am an Eastern Box Turtle. Adults have shell lengths from four to six inches. Our carapace (upper shell) is a tall dome, and it is one good way to help identify us. Our color and patterns vary, but we often have a black or brown base color with yellow, orange or olive markings. The colors on the plastron (lower shell) are quite varied. Markings may range from yellow, orange, or olive on a base color of tan, brown, or black. Our plastron has a single, movable hinge that we can close tightly to our carapace to protect our heads from predators or other threats. Male often have red eyes, and the eyes of the female are normally yellow and brown. Our upper jaw is shaped like a beak. Although we live on land, we also enjoy soaking for hours at a time in wet mud or water. We like to live in forests with wet areas, wet meadows, and flood plains. On hot days, we seek out a swampy area to burrow in cool logs or rotting vegetation. We eat wild fruits, berries, invertebrates, and carrion. We live over most of the southern two-thirds of PA. Our range also reaches into the Lake Erie Basin.