

Join us in shell-a-brating
Hicatee Awareness Month
with

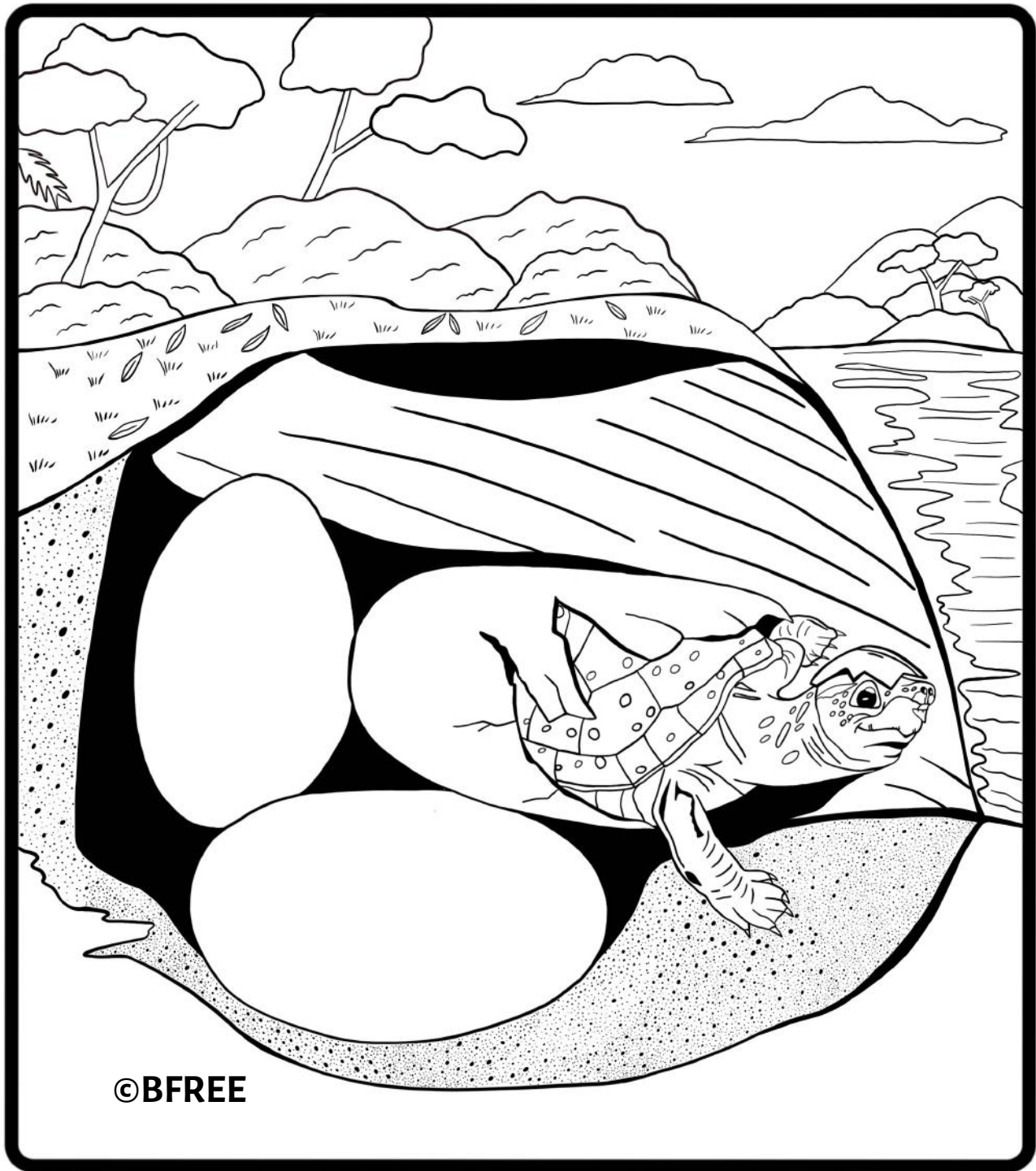
HICATEE & FRIENDS



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BC Art

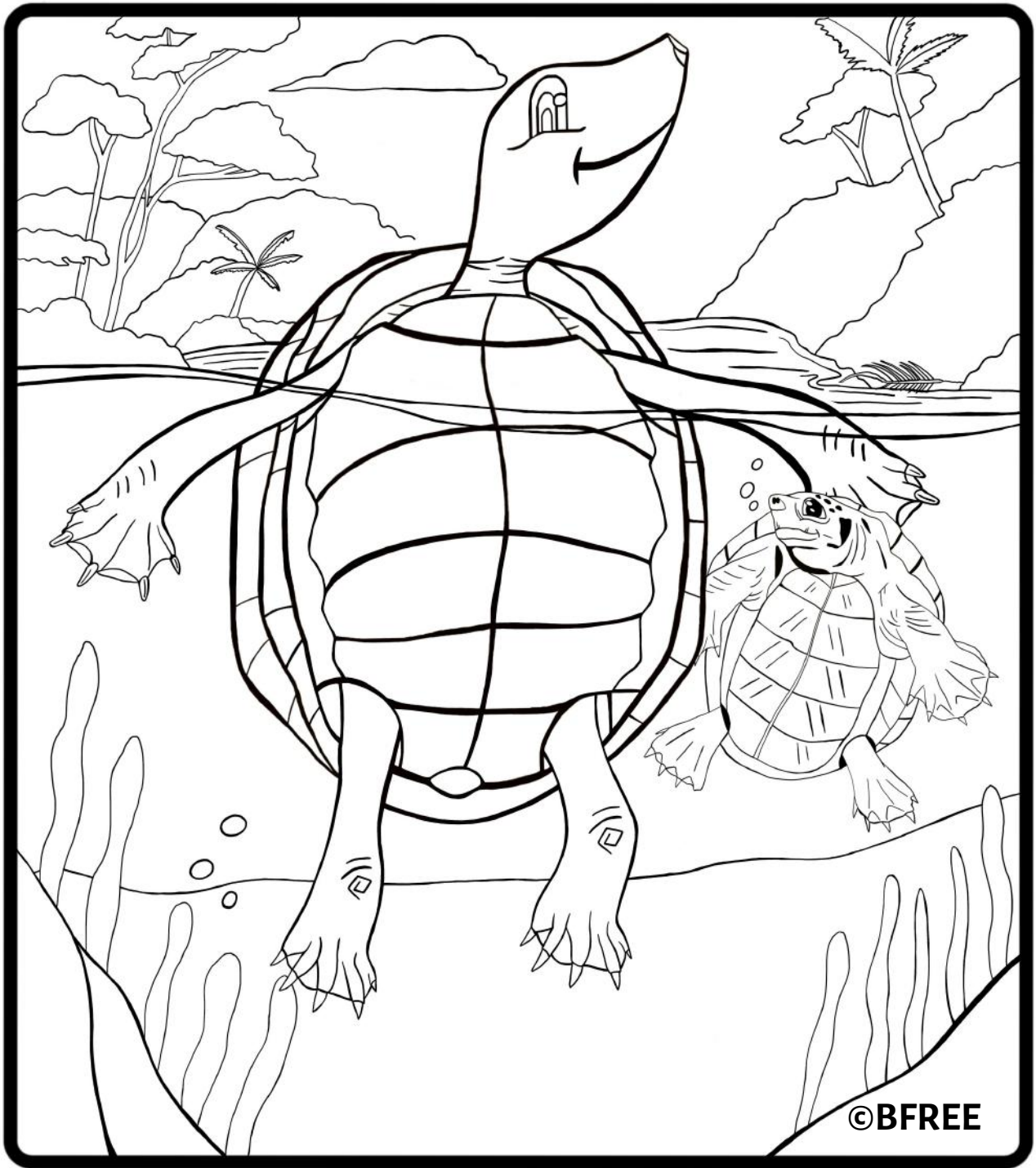
HAPPY HICATEE AWARENESS MONTH!



The Hicatee is the **only critically endangered turtle in Belize**. At the Hicatee Conservation and Research Center at the BFREE Field Station in Toledo, we are working with local and international partners to save this turtle from extinction.

Hicatee Awareness Month was established in 2017 as a way to raise awareness of this species, a true national treasure. This October, we would like to introduce you to the Hicatee and eight other freshwater turtles who also call Belize home.

MEET MAMA HICATEE



Local name: Hicatee/Hickatee/Hikatee

Common name: Central American river turtle

Scientific name: *Dermatemys mawii*

Diet: herbivorous - plants, leaves, fruit, and seeds

Habitat: freshwater habitats including rivers, lagoons, and creeks

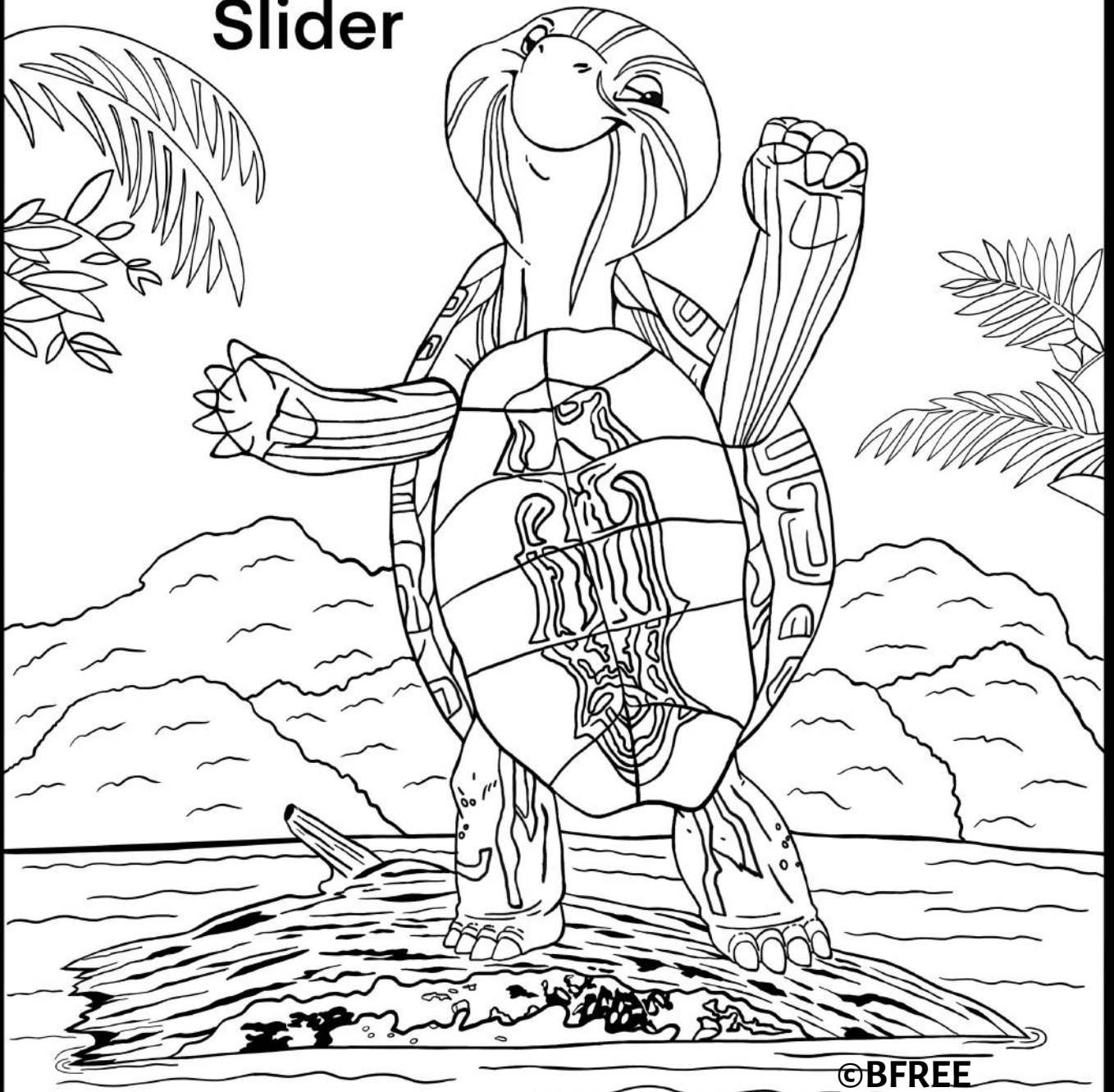
Range: southern Mexico, northern Guatemala, and Belize

Conservation Status: Critically-endangered

Did you know? Female Hicatee are at least 12 years old when they lay their first eggs.

MEET SLIDE

Mesoamerican Slider



Local name: Bocotora

Common name: Mesoamerican slider

Scientific name: *Trachemys venusta*

Diet: plants and animals that occur in natural aquatic habitats

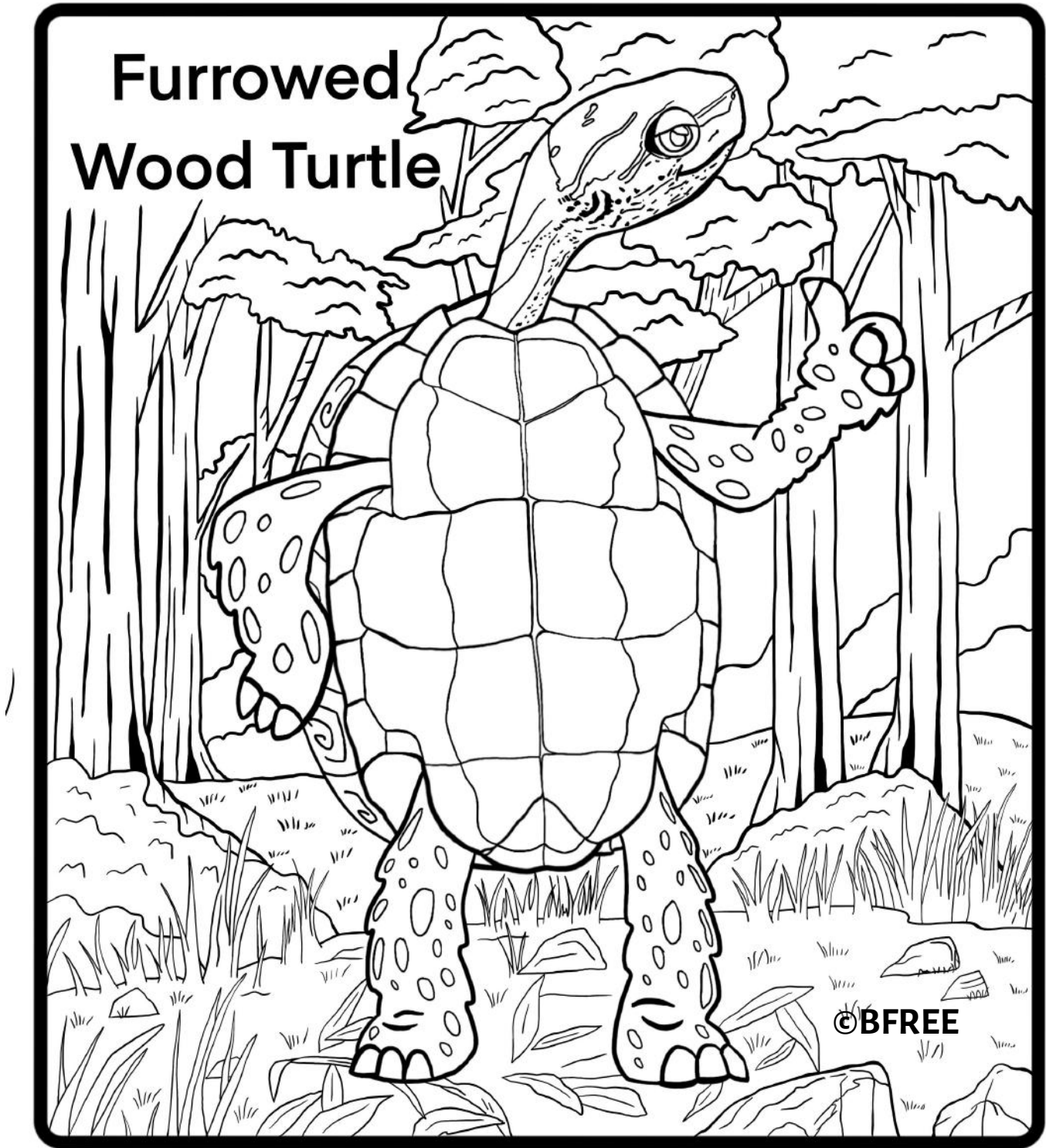
Habitat: rivers, ponds, lakes, estuaries, and marshes

Range: Mexico, Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, and Colombia

Conservation Status: Is classified “under special protection” in Mexico

MEET WOODY

Furrowed Wood Turtle



Local name: Black-belly

Common name: Furrowed wood turtle

Scientific name: *Rhinoclemmys areolata*

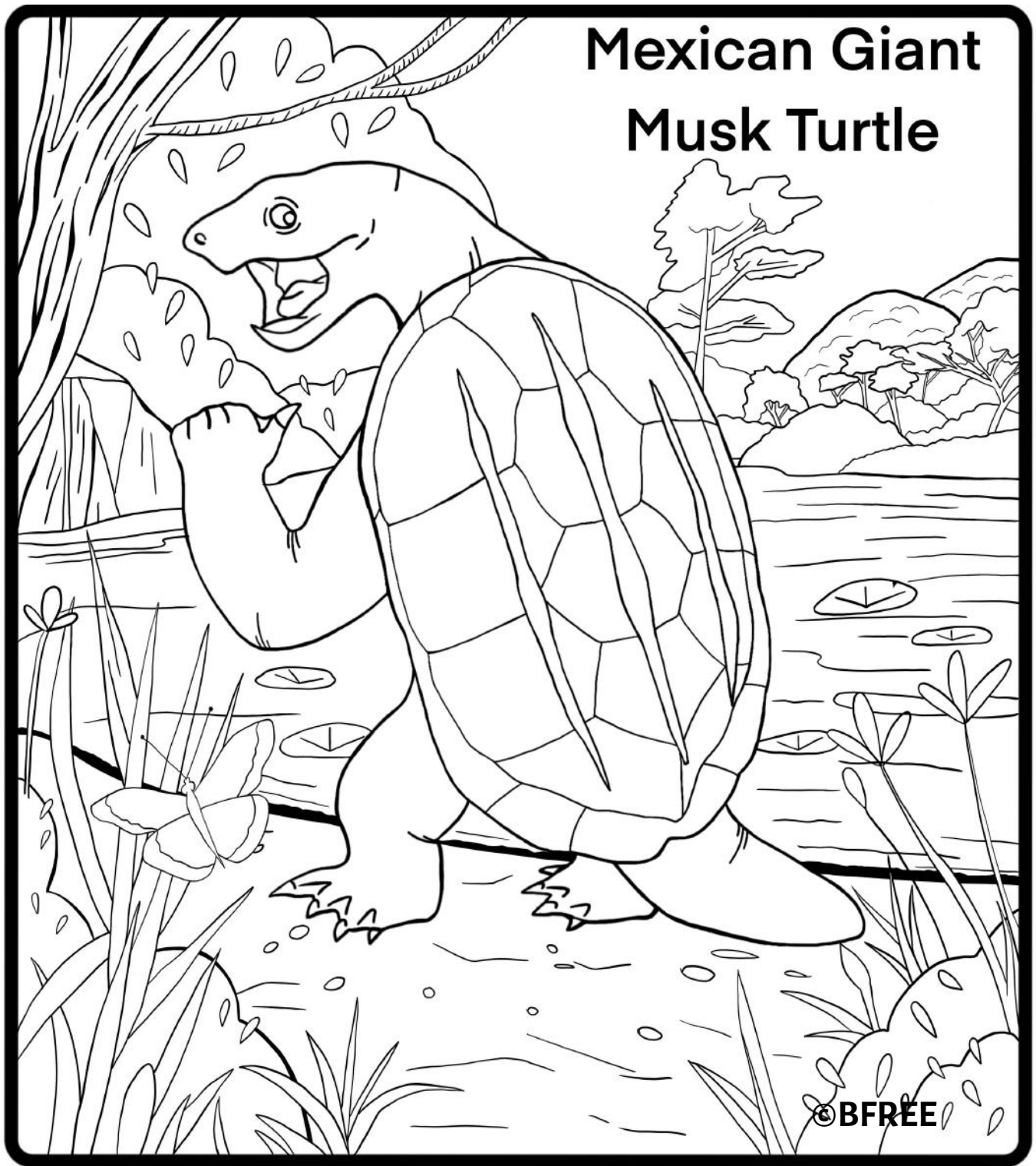
Diet: leaves, plants, fungi, legumes

Habitat: closed forest, forest edges and savanna. They prefer land and are rarely found in water.

Range: Yucatan peninsula, Belize, Guatemala and Honduras

Conservation Status: Near Threatened

MEET KEELEY



Local name: Three-keeled

Common name: Mexican giant musk turtle

Scientific name: *Staurotypus triporcatus*

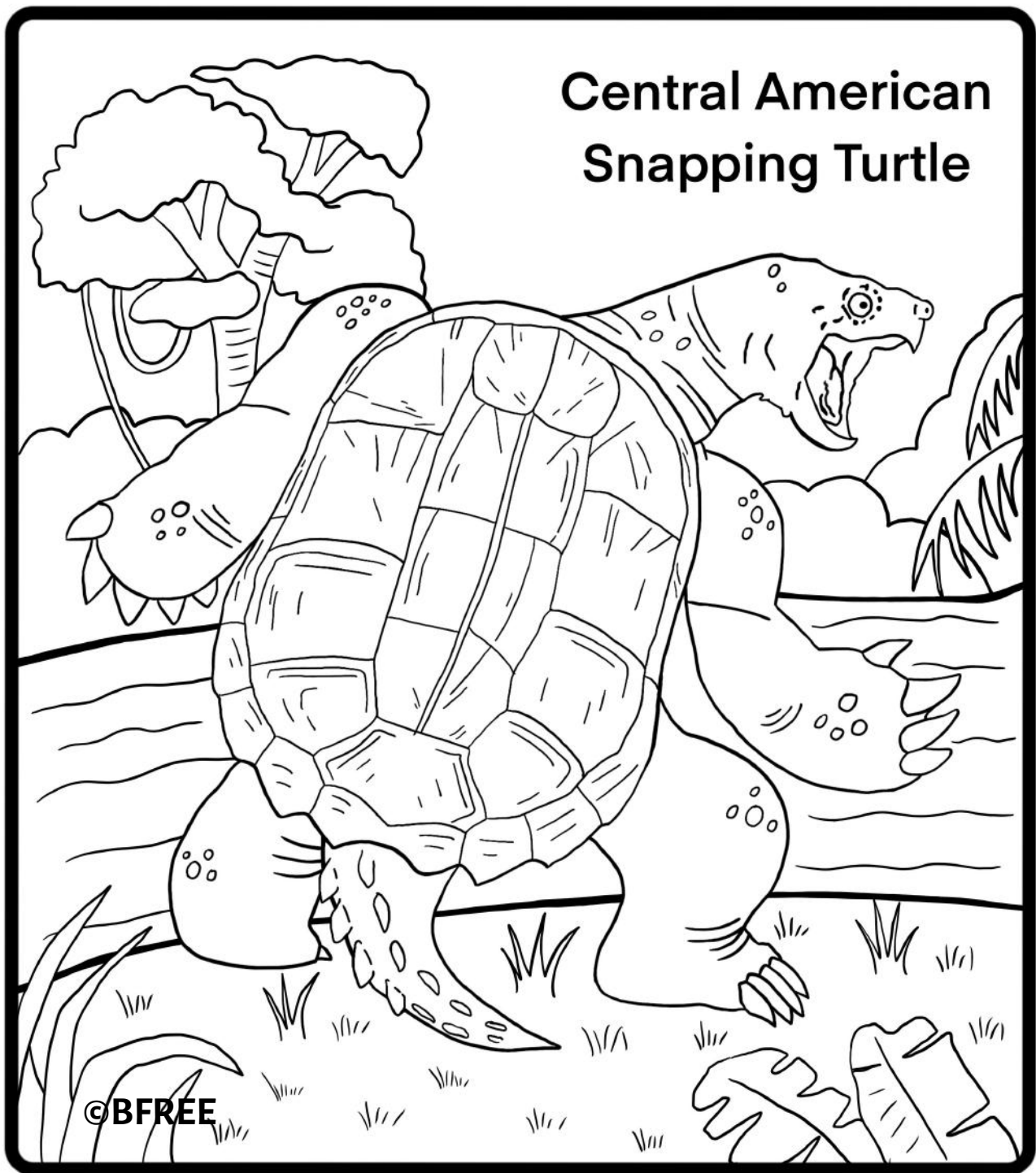
Diet: mollusks, apple snails, fish, plant stems, flowers

Habitat: lakes, ponds, rivers, oxbows, mangrove swamps, and marshes

Range: Gulf lowlands of Mexico below 300 meters, Belize, northern Guatemala and adjacent western Honduras

Conservation Status: Near Threatened

MEET SNAP



Local name: Sergeant/ Sambonago

Common name: Central American snapping turtle

Scientific name: *Chelydra rossignonii*

Diet: crustaceans, fruits, seeds, hatchling crocodiles

Habitat: slow-moving freshwater, swamps and wetlands

Range: Mexico, northern Guatemala, southern Belize, and extreme northwest Honduras

Conservation Status: Vulnerable

MEET MUSKY

Narrow-Bridged Musk Turtle



Local name: Loggerhead

Common name: Narrow-bridged musk turtle

Scientific name: *Claudius angustatus*

Diet: varies widely with season and food availability, includes crayfish, ants and bees

Habitat: seasonal ponds, flooded fields, flooded forests, marsh lands and occasionally along the margin of shallow lakes

Range: coastal lowlands of Belize, Mexico and northern Guatemala

Conservation Status: Near Threatened

MEET SCORPIO

Scorpion Mud Turtle



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Local name: swanka/swanca

Common name: Scorpion mud turtle/ Red-cheeked mud turtle

Scientific name: *Kinosternon scorpiodes*

Diet: fruit, seeds, algae, frogs, fish, and shrimp

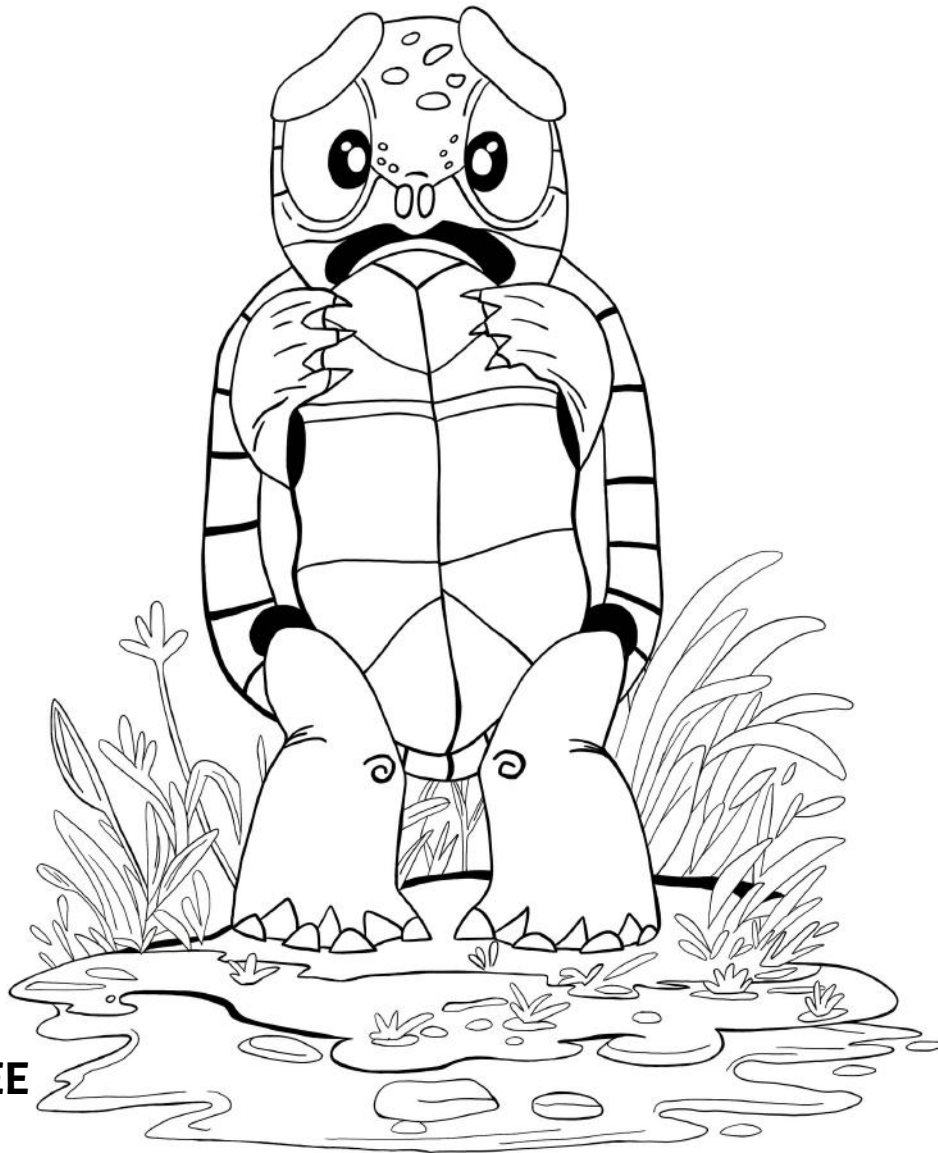
Habitat: small streams, oxbows, marshes, and ponds

Range: Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, and Belize

Conservation Status: Least Concern

MEET SWANKIE

White-Lipped Mud Turtle



Local name: swanka/swanca

Common name: White-lipped mud turtle

Scientific name: *Kinosternon leucostomum*

Diet: Ficus shoots, flowers, insects, fish, cray fish, tadpoles and mollusks

Habitat: Seasonal creeks, puddles, rivers, swamps

Range: Central America and northern South America

Conservation Status: Least Concern

MEET TABBY

Tabasco Mud Turtle



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Local name: swanka/swanca

Common name: Tabasco mud turtle

Scientific name: *Kinosternon acutum*

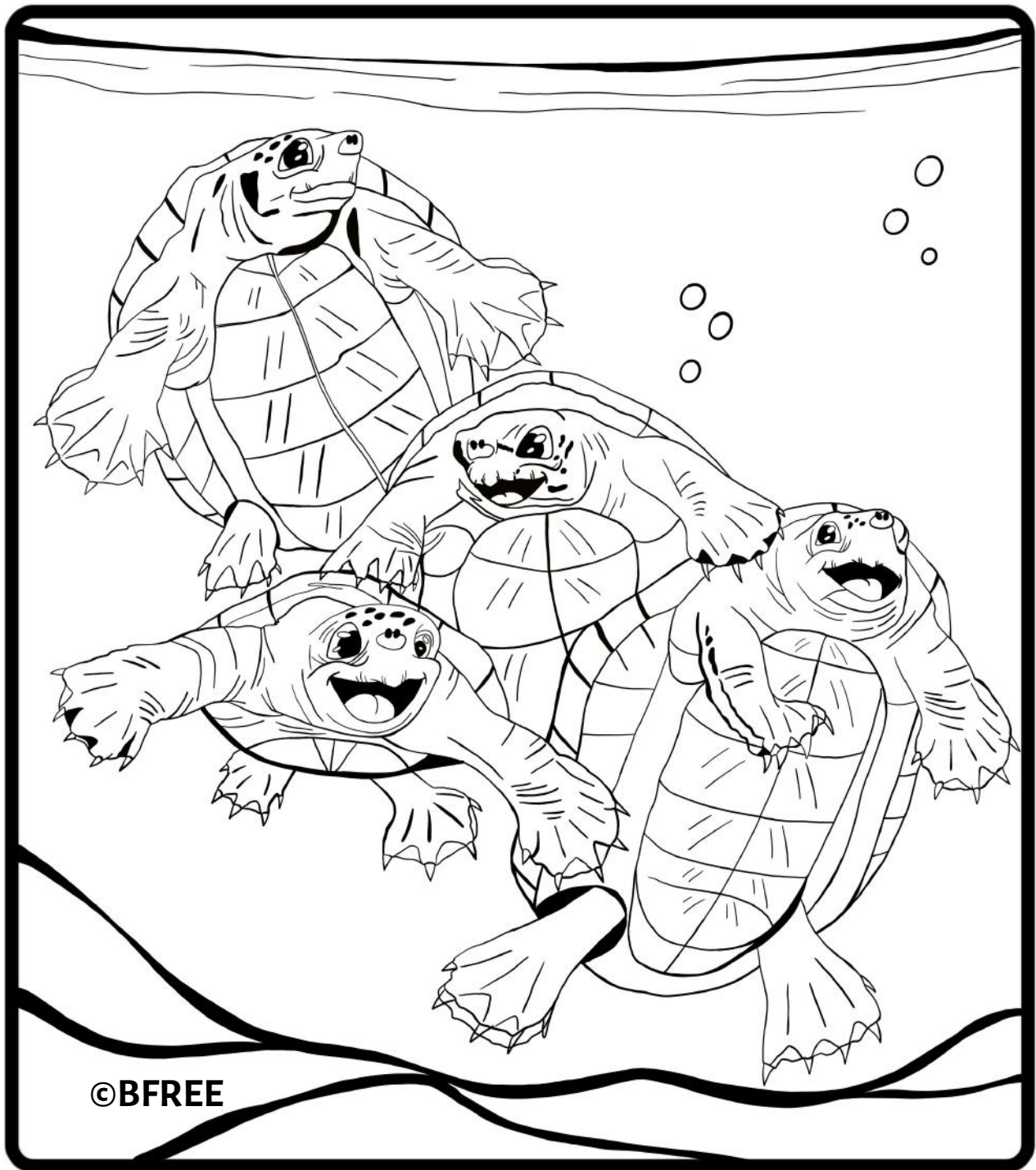
Diet: earthworms, insects, snails, larvae of butterflies and beetles

Habitat: prefer semi-terrestrial habitat, shallow pools, hides in leaf litter

Range: Mexico, Guatemala and Belize

Conservation Status: Near Threatened

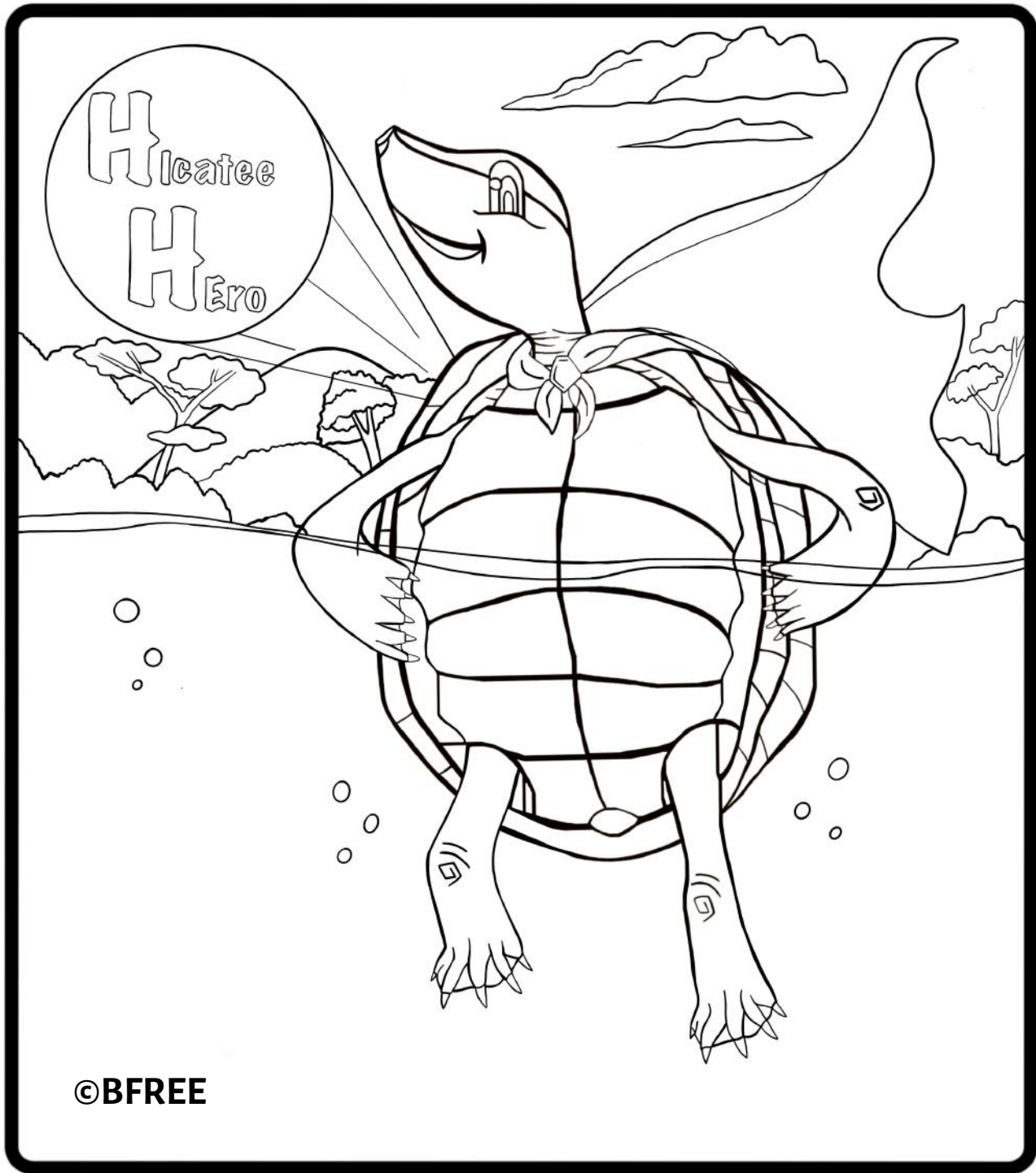
HICATEE CONSERVATION & RESEARCH CENTER



The Hicatee Conservation and Research Center (HCRC) was established by BFREE and Turtle Survival Alliance in 2014 at the BFREE Field Station in Toledo. The goal was to create a safe place to raise and study the critically endangered Hicatee turtle.

Here, we observe the Hicatee's behaviour and learn about their natural history because they are very difficult to study in the wild. Turtles hatched at the HCRC are raised by a team of caring staff and volunteers. Together, we work to ensure that hundreds of healthy happy turtles are released into the wild every year.

BE A HICATEE HERO!



TAKE ACTION TO SAVE THE HICATEE

Lead a river clean up campaign: Keep your rivers clean for turtles and people!

Share info on social media: Your voice matters!

Follow NGOs like BFREE and Turtle Survival Alliance on social media to stay up to date on current opportunities: @bfreebz and @turtlesurvival

Make a presentation for Hicatee Awareness Month: Tell your classmates and family about why it is important to protect Hicatee turtles and other wildlife.

Remember wildlife aren't pets: Wildlife like turtles are meant to stay wild!



Photograph of the Bladen River and Maya Mountains by Jorge Silva



BFREE is a biological field station and privately protected area in the Toledo District. Since its founding in 1995, BFREE has focused on our mission “to conserve the biodiversity and cultural heritage of Belize.” Our work to save the critically endangered Hicatee turtle from extinction is one of our many conservation programs. We invite you to take action to protect turtles and other wildlife. *The Hicatee is disappearing but together we can save it!*

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SPECIAL RECOGNITION TO THE ARTIST, BELIZARIO GIAN CARBALLO, FOR HIS CREATIVITY AND ENTHUSIASM IN ILLUSTRATING BELIZE’S FRESHWATER TURTLES.