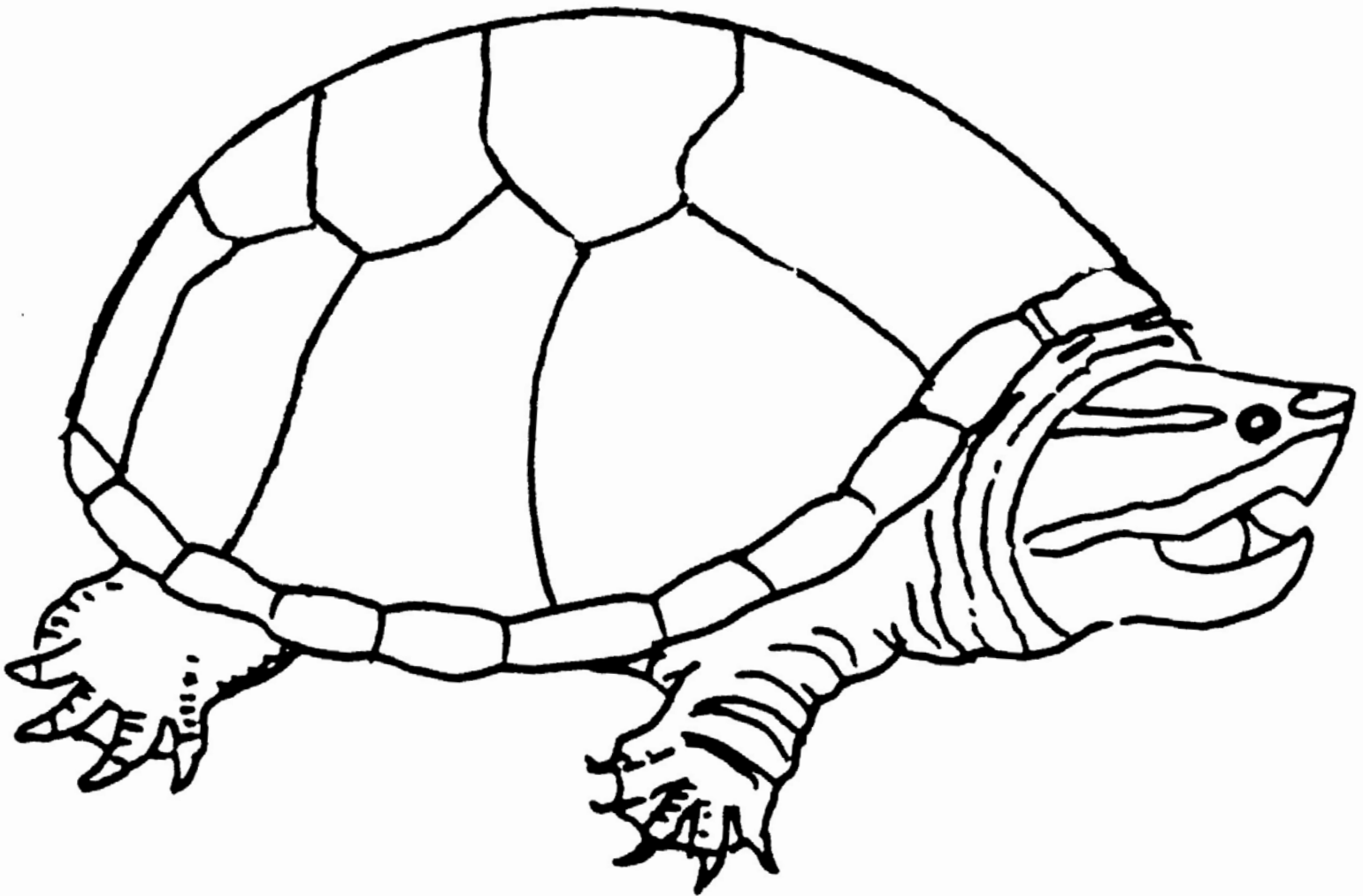




PA's Amphibian and Reptile Coloring Series

# Eastern Musk Turtle



All About Me: Hi! I am an Eastern Musk Turtle. We have also been called stinkpot turtles. We have that name because when disturbed, we can secrete a foul-smelling yellow fluid to deter attackers. We have strong jaws, and sometimes we have bad tempers when handled. We are not seen often by people as we are mostly aquatic and spend our time underwater. We will leave the water and climb nearby slanted logs or branches to bask in the sun. We climb better than other turtles because of our small plastrons (lower shells), which keep our legs flexible. Our carapaces (upper shells) measure from three inches to four inches long. Our carapaces are smooth and highly domed. We are normally olive-brown to dark gray and may be marked with irregular darker streaks or spots. We have small, fleshy barbels on our chins and throats. We often have two light stripes that stand out on our black heads. We have two different ranges in opposite corners of PA. In the northwest, we are found in swampy areas of the Shenango River Watershed and Lake Erie. We are also is found in a larger area of southeastern PA. We prefer quiet, slow-moving, shallow streams and rivers, with a mud bottom. We are known to eat small fish, crayfish, snails, aquatic insects, clams, worms, fish eggs, and we may eat plants occasionally when we are older.