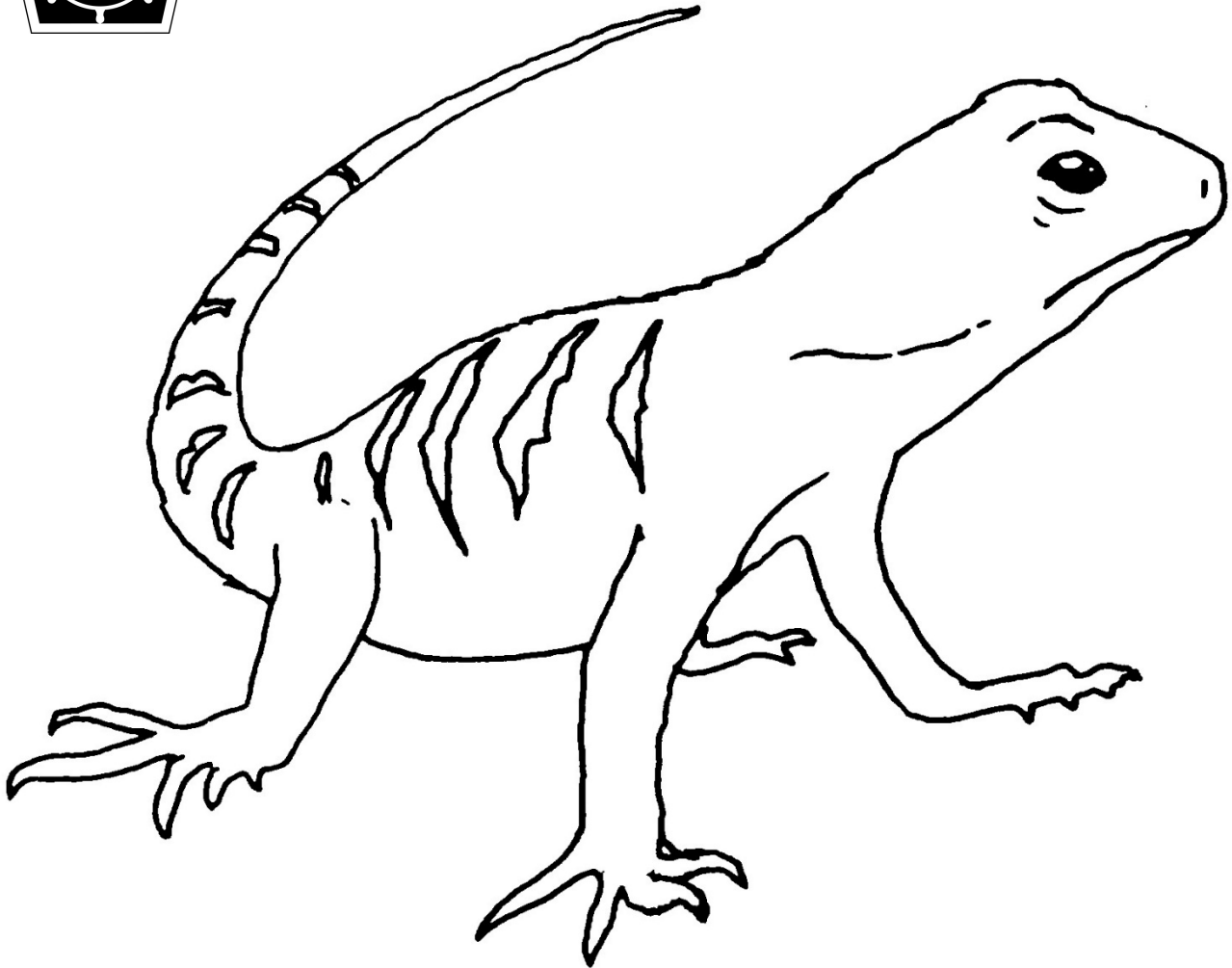




PA's Amphibian and Reptile Coloring Series

Northern Fence Lizard



All About Me: Hello! I am a Northern Fence Lizard! We belong to a group of lizards commonly known as "spiny lizards". We are not large, for lizards, as we only reach lengths from four to seven inches. We are active during the day and can be seen basking in the sun. We vary from gray to brown on our backs. The colors on our belly range from white to green blue to pale blue. We often have dark, wavy crossbars on our back. The crossbars are more obvious on females. Males have a blue patch near the base of their throats. The scales on our backs are pointed, jagged and rough. We are found in the southern two-thirds of Pennsylvania. Our range might extend a bit farther north in the Delaware River Basin. We defend our separate territories from other fence lizards with an elaborate display of head-bobbing and opening our mouths wide. For habitat, we prefer a sunny area of grassy or open woodland. We spend most of our time in trees where we hunt, rest, and find safety when frightened. We like rotting logs and outcrops of rocks. We often sit on a tree stump or fence that not far from a tree where we can flee to safety. When frightened, we scamper up a tree where we remain motionless until we again feel safe. If caught from behind, our tail breaks off as a distraction. In time it grows back. For food, we prefer to hunt beetles, but we will eat other insects, spiders, and even snails. We drink water is taken from small deposits on rocks or droplets found on plants.