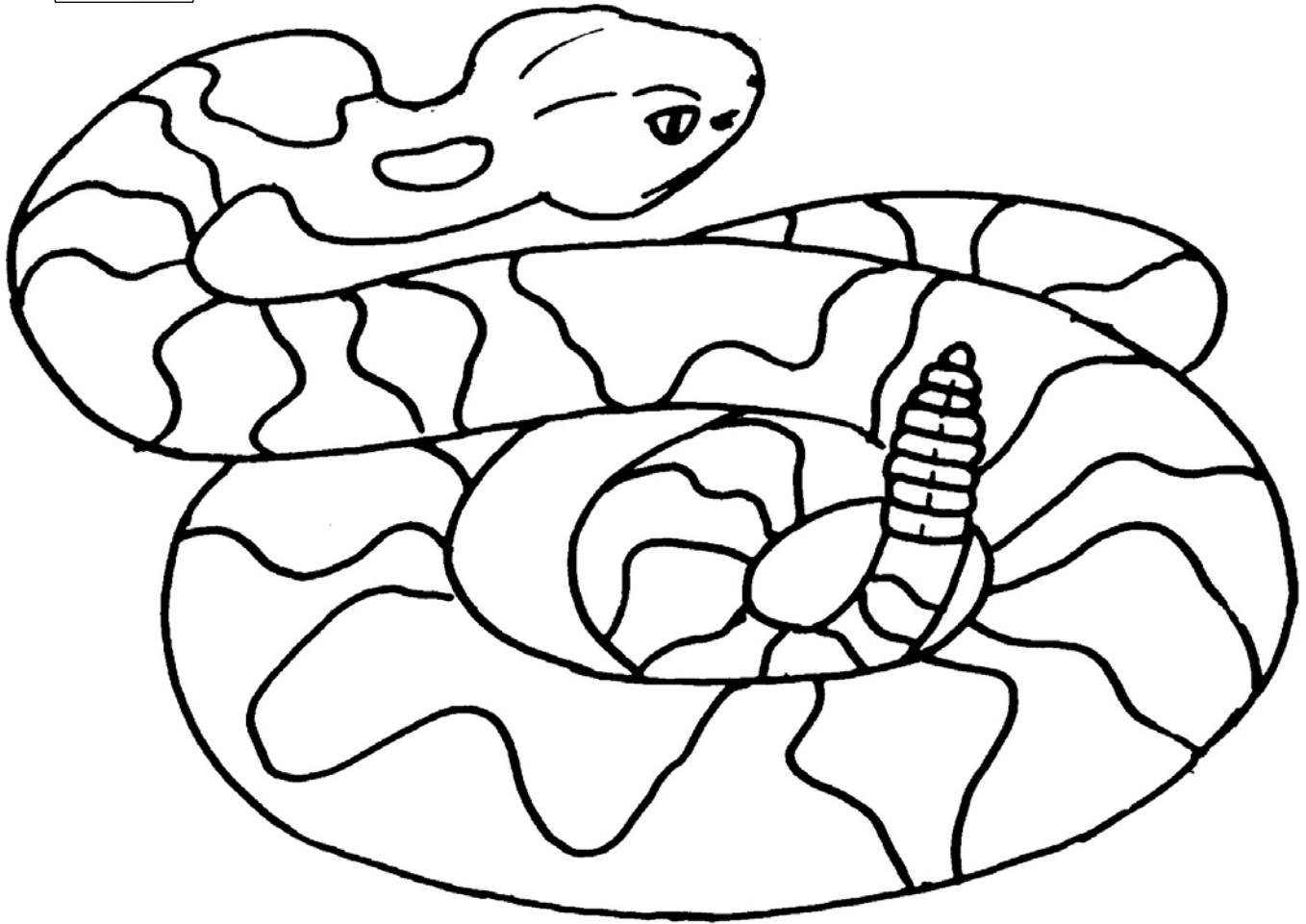




PA's Amphibian and Reptile Coloring Series

Timber Rattlesnake



All About Me: Don't be rattled! I'm a Timber Rattlesnake. We're not the largest snake found in Pennsylvania; but we are the largest of PA's three venomous snakes. We can reach lengths up to 54 inches! When approached by people, we prefer to lie quietly or crawl away to safety if we can, but we will stand our ground if we feel threatened and can't escape. We don't always use our famous rattle when we are in a defensive pose. Our rattle is an organ of hollow, button-like segments fastened to the tail. Rapidly vibrating the tail causes the unmistakable buzzing sound. We are found in two different color phases - yellow and black. On a yellow phase snake, black or dark brown crossbands contrast against a yellow background that might range from a deep lemon to even brownish or grayish, but always lighter than the black phase snakes. A black phase snake has dark brown or black flecking that covers the yellowish pigments. We all have facial pits located between the eye and nostril, since we are pit vipers. Our eye pupils are elliptical, not rounded. Our range in PA mostly follows the major mountain ranges that move diagonally across PA. We love to live on wooded hillsides with rocky outcrops and stone ledges for basking. We eat rodents like mice, squirrels and chipmunks. We also eat rabbits, small birds, and frogs and lizards on occasion.