

Alligator Snapping Turtle

A Turtle Mystery Word

In each set of letters, cross out the letters that appear more than once. Write the remaining letter in the line below each set to discover the mystery word.

J	P	E	M	H	K	T	R	O	L	N	U	B	F	V
R	J	S	I	T	M	R	O	L	Y	Y	J	C	L	V
P	R	E	T	K	I	E	L	T	U	J	N	F	C	B

Turtle Word Search

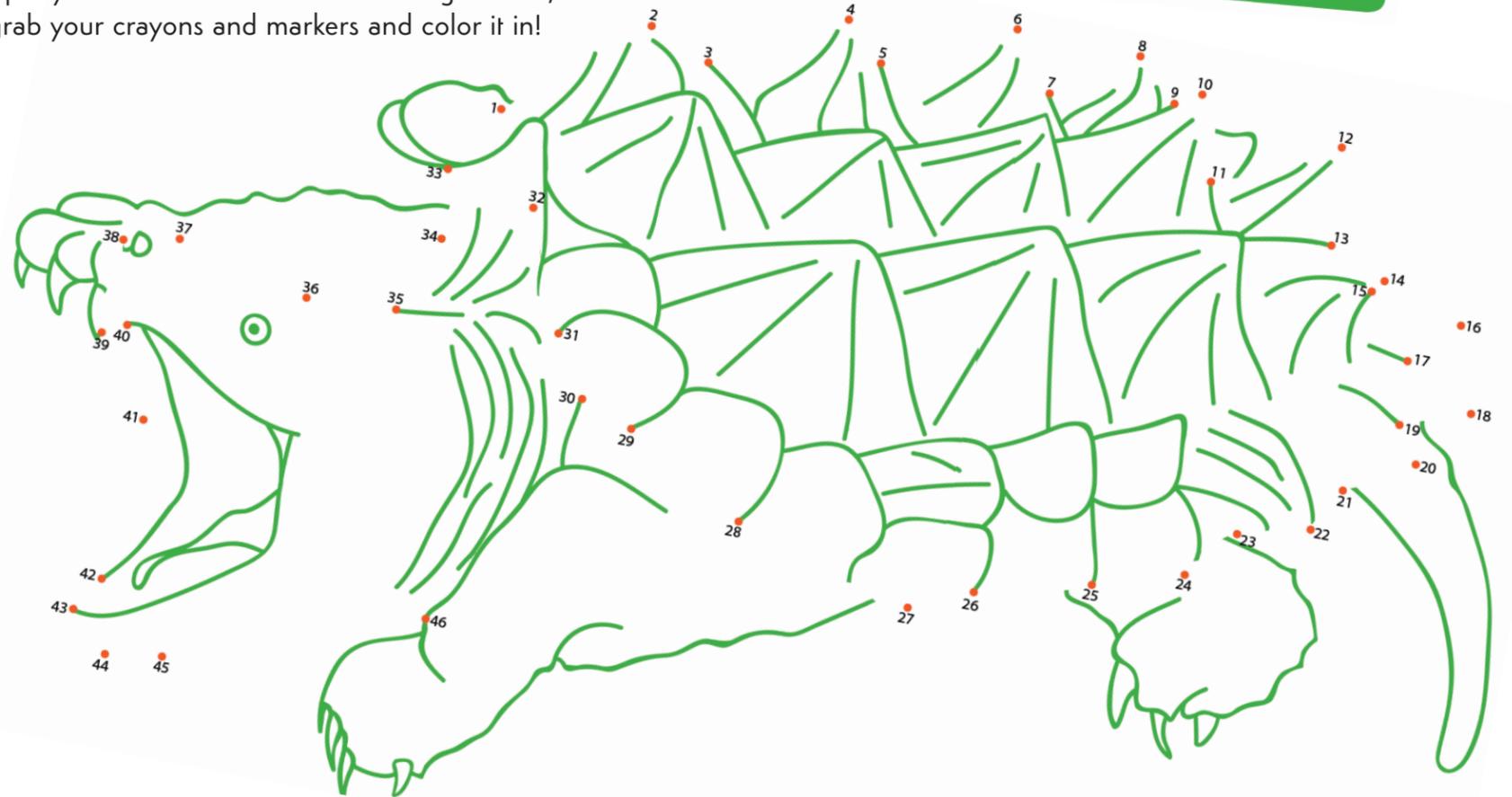
Find the words in the left column in the word puzzle. Words can be diagonal and backwards, too. You can turtle-y do this!

- CARAPACE
- DINOSAUR
- LURE
- PLASTRON
- REPTILE
- SCALES
- SCUTE
- SHELL
- SNAPPING
- SPIKES
- TERRAPIN
- TORTOISE
- TURTLE

V N L O S S S L E B A S B K T
 L Z L X H E N S U S P C N C E
 M H V L K G I A K R D A S A R
 O W B I C O E M P F E L H R R
 D A P K T T Y W B P I E E A A
 I S N R U Y W P P E I S L P P
 N V O C P E G H L K N N L A I
 O T S J Y R K T A T R D G C N
 S R E P T I L E S P P H F E Z
 A V S Y V F V Y T E I J Z Q V
 U R X F D S F K R O X M G I V
 R F A F P X A B O Y N K U J T
 Q R H E V U A E N S P I H N A
 V T G O T U R T L E H L G U G
 U W D W G Q Q F V J J N W U S

Connect the Dots

After you connect the dots on the image below, grab your crayons and markers and color it in!



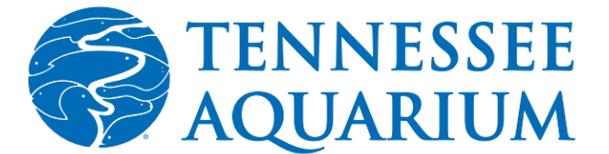
Maze With a Mission

Start

Help the female Alligator Snapping Turtle get to land and lay her eggs.



ALLIGATOR SNAPPING TURTLE



A Southeastern Behemoth

Alligator snapping turtles live in rivers whose water drains into the Gulf of Mexico, and are the largest freshwater turtle species in North America. The adults hunt in the deep water of rivers, lakes, swamps, ponds and bayous where plants and algae enhance their camouflage. The Alligator snapper is a bottom dweller best known for an adaptation that allows it to lure fish into its mouth. To catch a fish, the turtle will sit very still in the depths of a pond or river for up to 50 minutes. There it waits patiently, holding its mouth open and wiggling the small, pink, worm-like appendage on its tongue to lure passing fish. And if a fish sees the fake worm and swims in to eat it...WHAM!

Once heavily collected for its meat, the alligator snapping turtle is protected in all of the states where it lives. Populations have been seriously impacted due to overharvesting. Alligator Snapping turtles are a long-lived and slow-reproducing species that cannot handle even a light harvesting pressure. For example, after 15 years, a population of White-tailed Deer could reach nearly 2000 individuals; while an Alligator Snapping Turtle population would still consist of one individual.



The Tennessee Aquarium in Action

In order to conserve and protect a species, scientists need to understand where a species occurs and how many individuals exist. Since 2016, scientists from the Tennessee Aquarium Conservation Institute — in collaboration with Southeast Missouri State University and Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency — have been studying Alligator Snapping Turtles in west Tennessee to answer these questions. The data being collected will provide managers with valuable information to help in the protecting this iconic turtle. Additionally, Aquarium Scientists are studying the movement ecology of juvenile Alligator Snapping Turtle to understand space use.

TRUE or FALSE

1. The Alligator Snapping Turtle is the largest freshwater turtle in North America.
2. Alligator Snapping Turtles can live to be up to 40 years old!
3. Males can weigh as much as 175 pounds, but have been known to even exceed 220 pounds!

1. True 2. False—Alligator Snapping Turtles can live to be 50-100 years old. 3. True

How do you know its an Alligator Snapper?



Alligator Snapping Turtle
Macrochelys temminckii

- Alligator Snappers have 3 distinct ridges on the carapace and an extra row of marginal scutes.
- Alligator Snappers have star-shaped, fleshy “eyelashes.”
- Alligator Snappers have a triangular shaped head while common Snappers have an oval shaped head.



Common Snapping Turtle
Chelydra serpentina