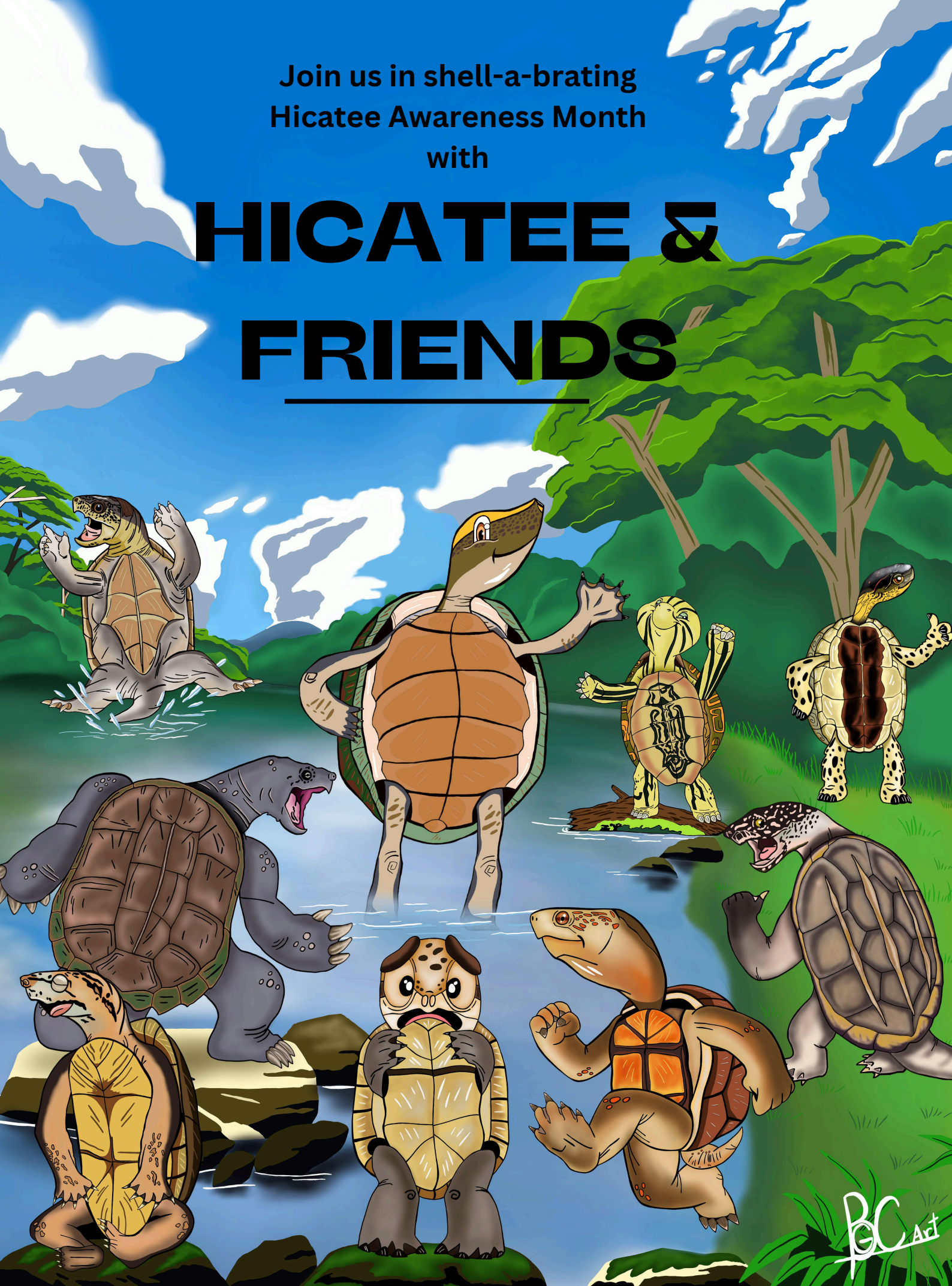


Join us in shell-a-brating  
Hicatee Awareness Month  
with

# HICATEE & FRIENDS

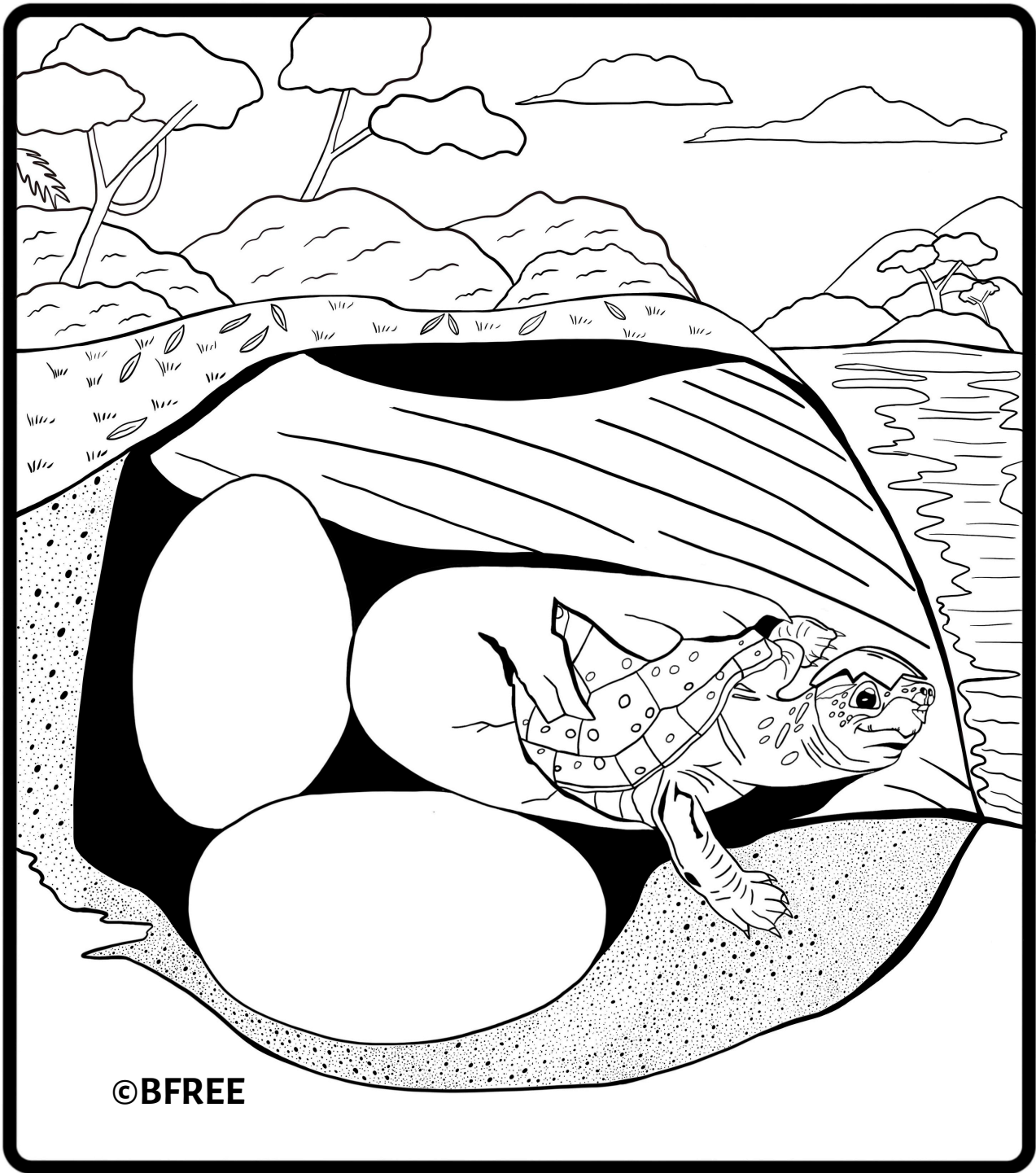
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BC Art



# HAPPY HICATEE AWARENESS MONTH!

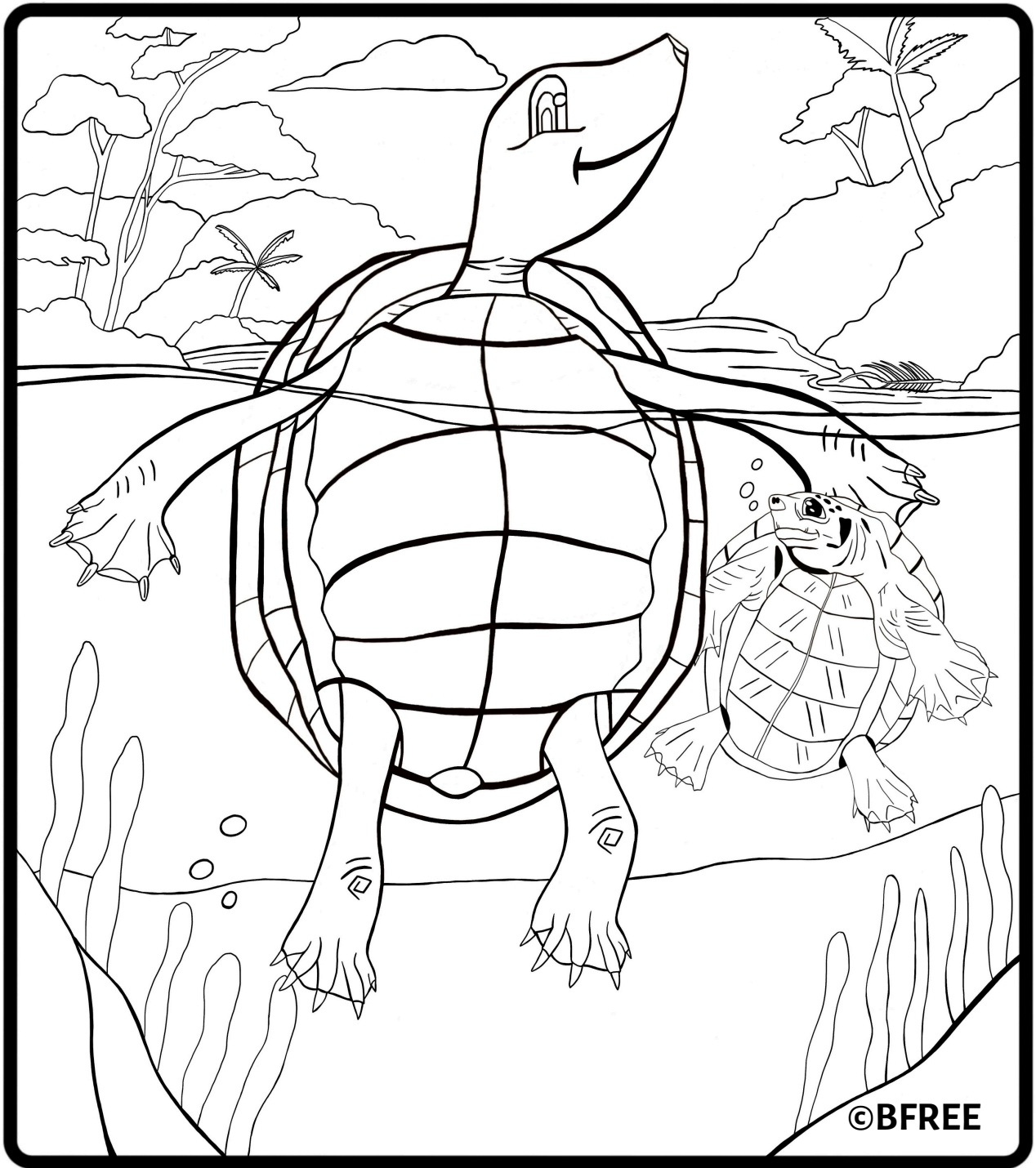


The Hicatee is the **only critically endangered turtle in Belize**. At the Hicatee Conservation and Research Center at the BFREE Field Station in Toledo, we are working with local and international partners to save this turtle from extinction.

**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.

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# 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

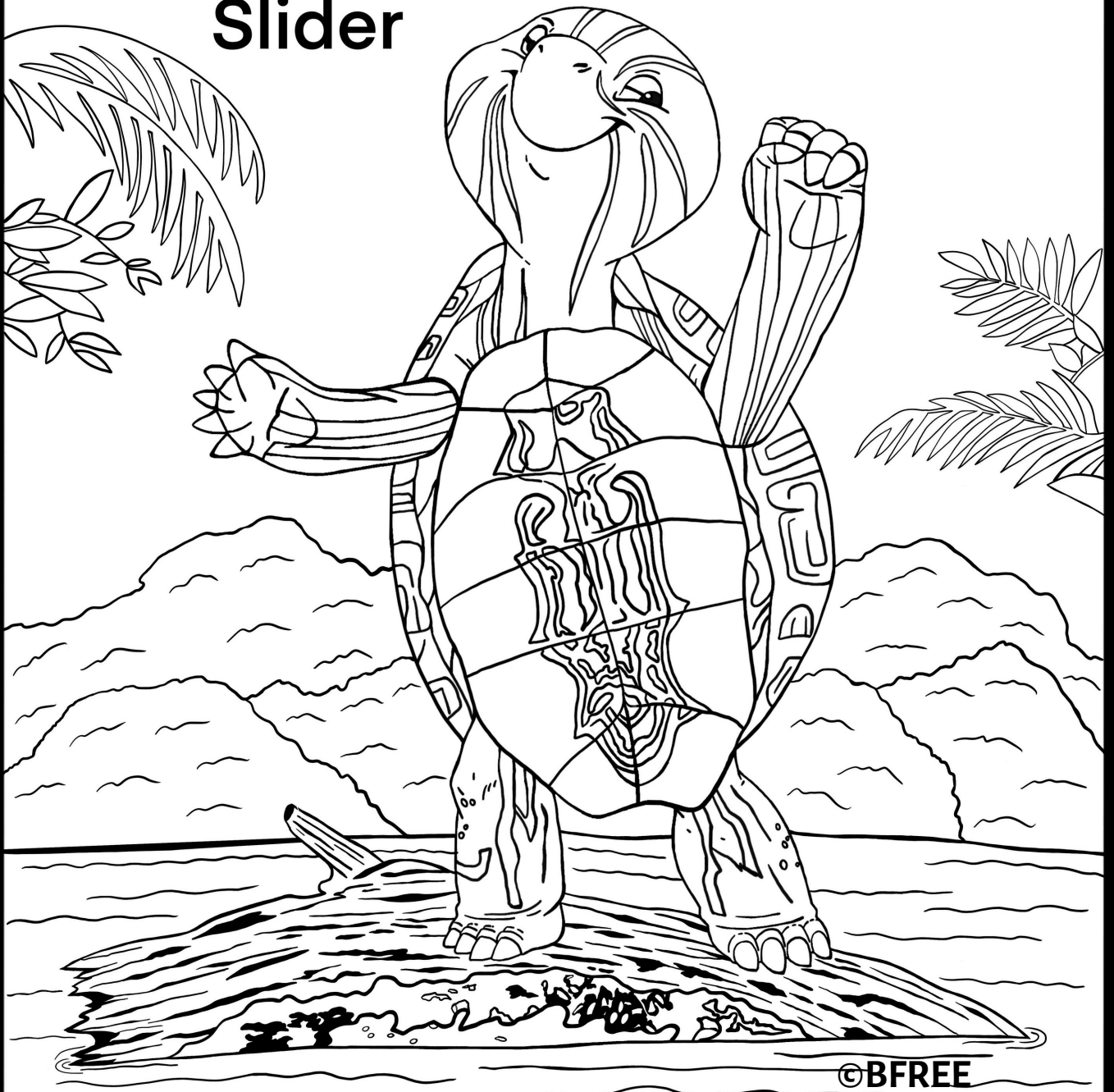
**Range:** southern Mexico, northern Guatemala, and Belize

**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

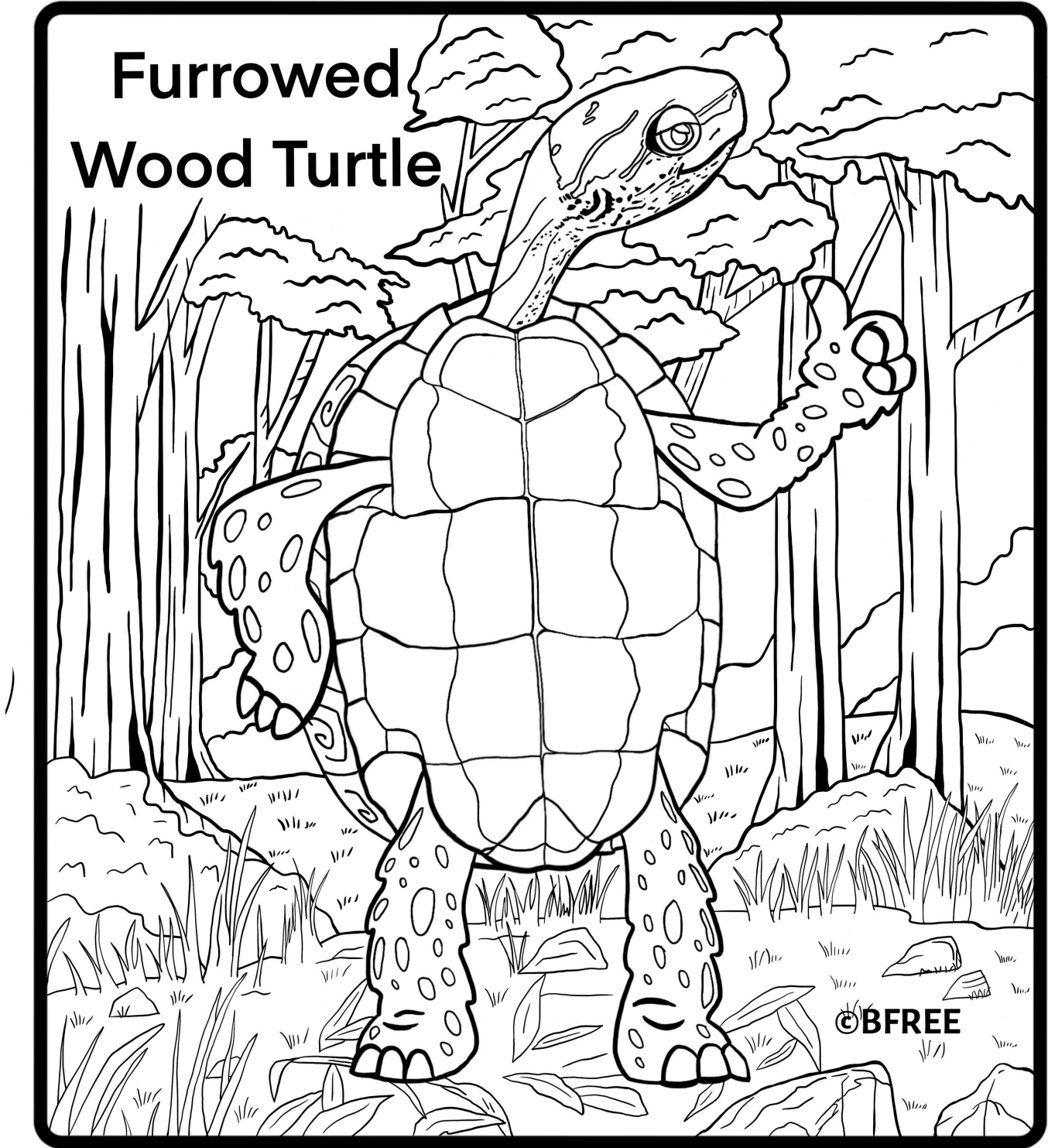
**Range:** Mexico, Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, and Colombia

**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*

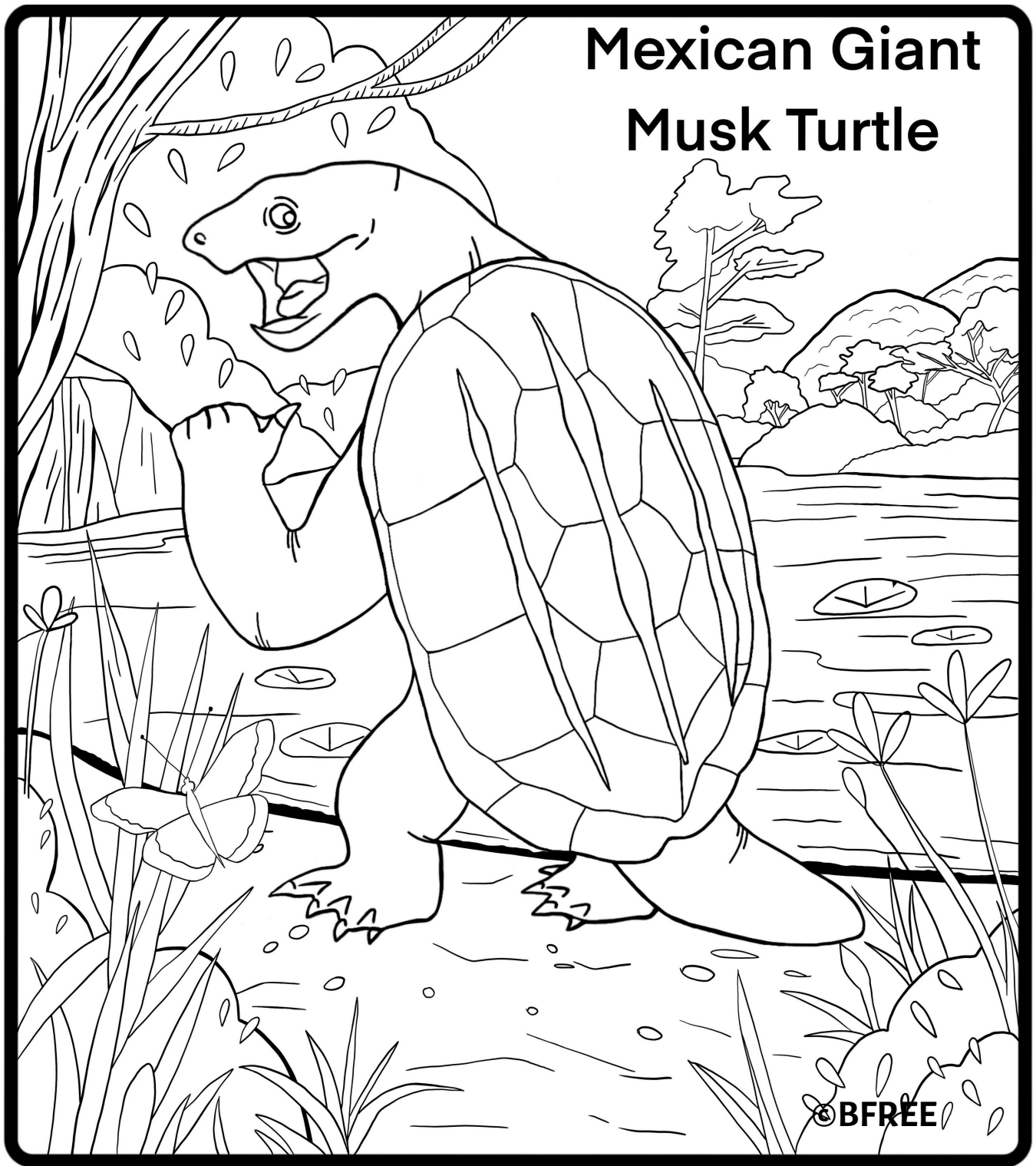
**Diet:** leaves, plants, fungi, legumes

**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

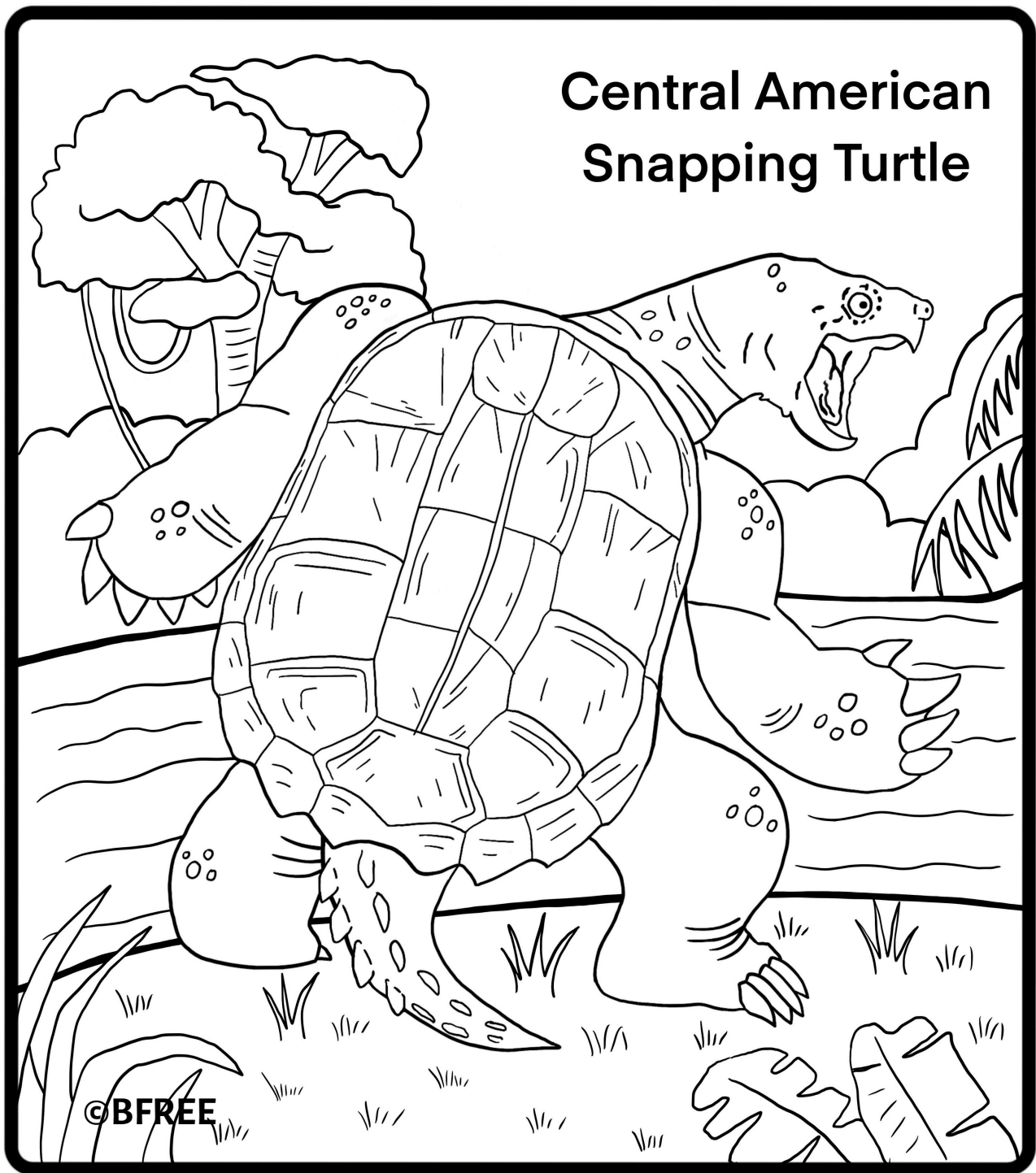
**Habitat:** lakes, ponds, rivers, oxbows, mangrove swamps, and marshes

**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



©BFREE

**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

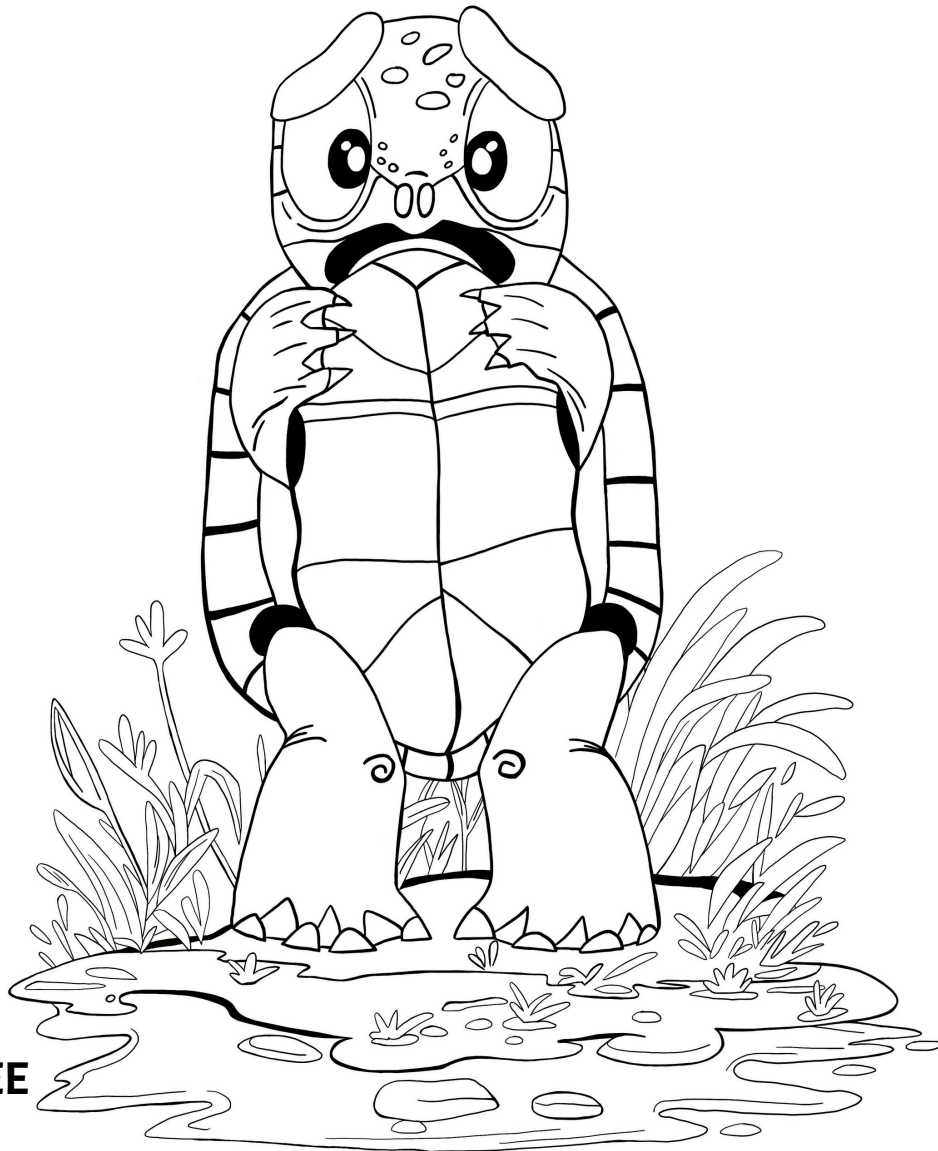
**Habitat:** small streams, oxbows, marshes, and ponds

**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



©BFREE

**Local name:** swanka/swanca

**Common name:** Tabasco mud turtle

**Scientific name:** *Kinosternon acutum*

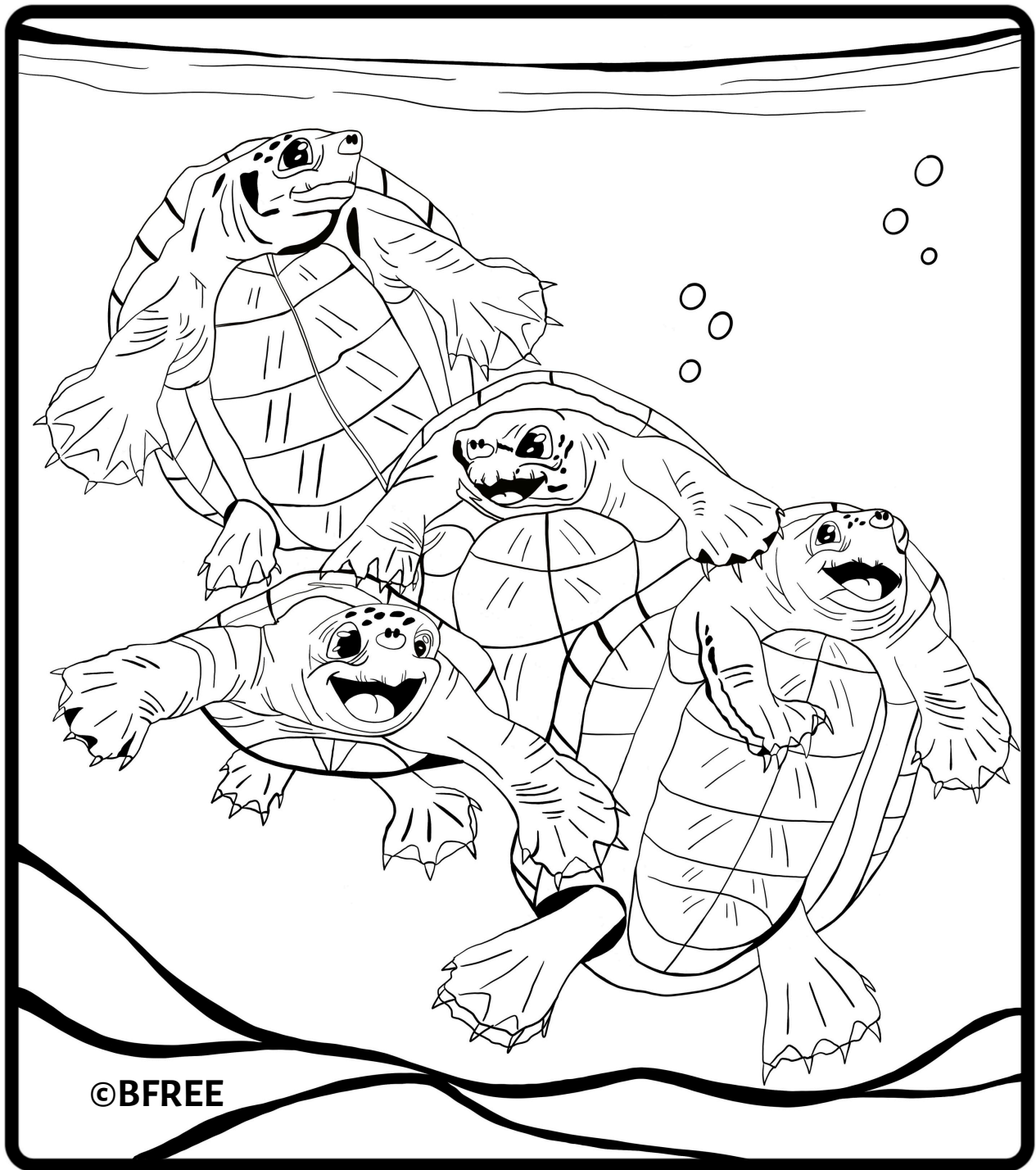
**Diet:** earthworms, insects, snails, larvae of butterflies and beetles

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

**Range:** Mexico, Guatemala and Belize

**Conservation Status:** Near Threatened

# HICATEE CONSERVATION & RESEARCH CENTER

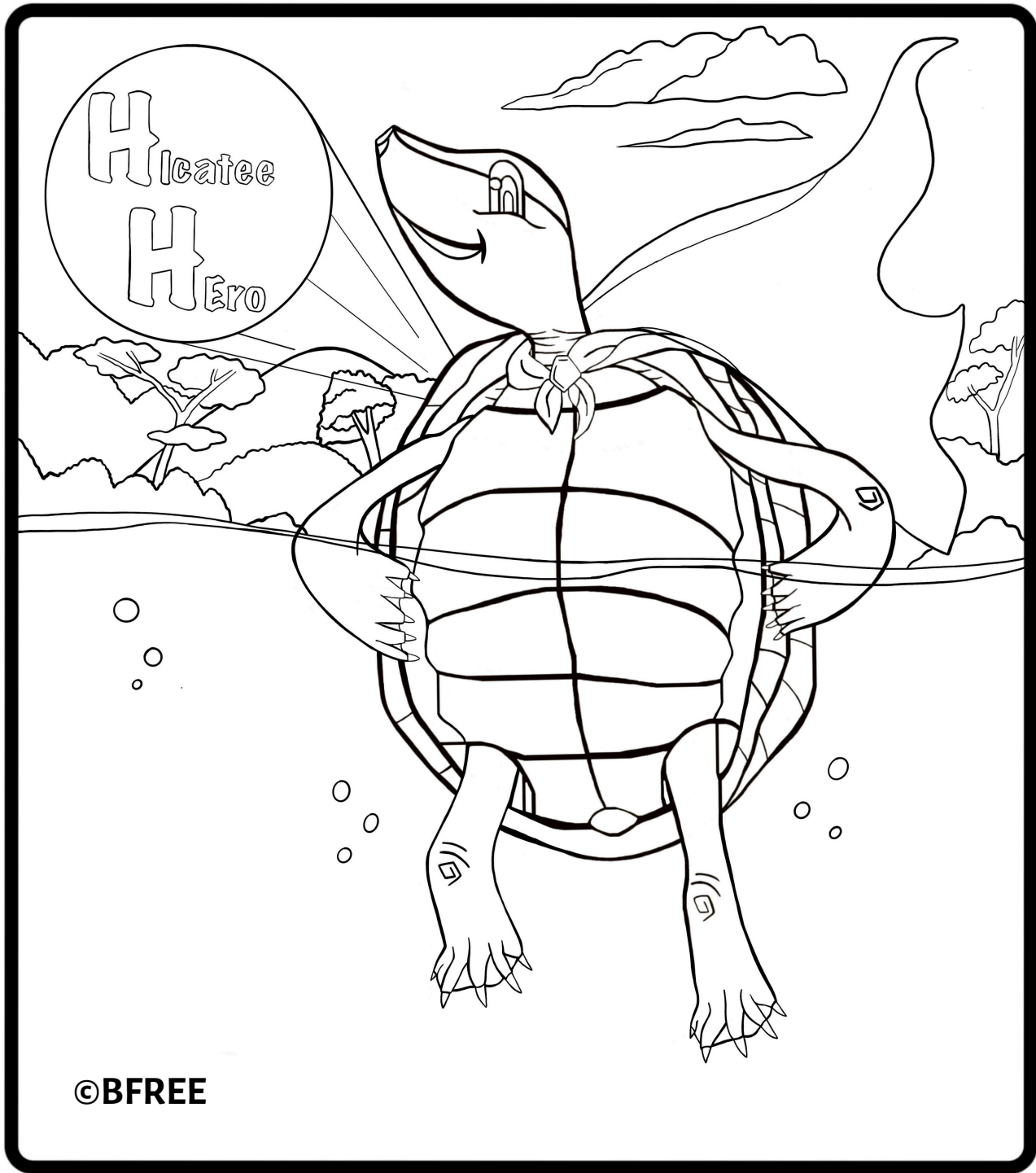


**The Hicatee Conservation and Research Center (HCRC)** was established by BFREE and Turtle Survival Alliance in 2014 at the BFREE Field Station in Toledo. The goal was to create a safe place to raise and study the critically endangered Hicatee turtle.

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!



©BFREE

## 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!*



[WWW.BFREEBZ.ORG](http://WWW.BFREEBZ.ORG)

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