Creek Unicorn

Why do streams ripple over rocks?



Did you know? A real stream speeds up and swirls when it tumbles over shallow stones. A rocky stretch of fast, rippling water is called a riffle. Farther downstream, the water may slow in a deeper pool.

Forest Hornbird

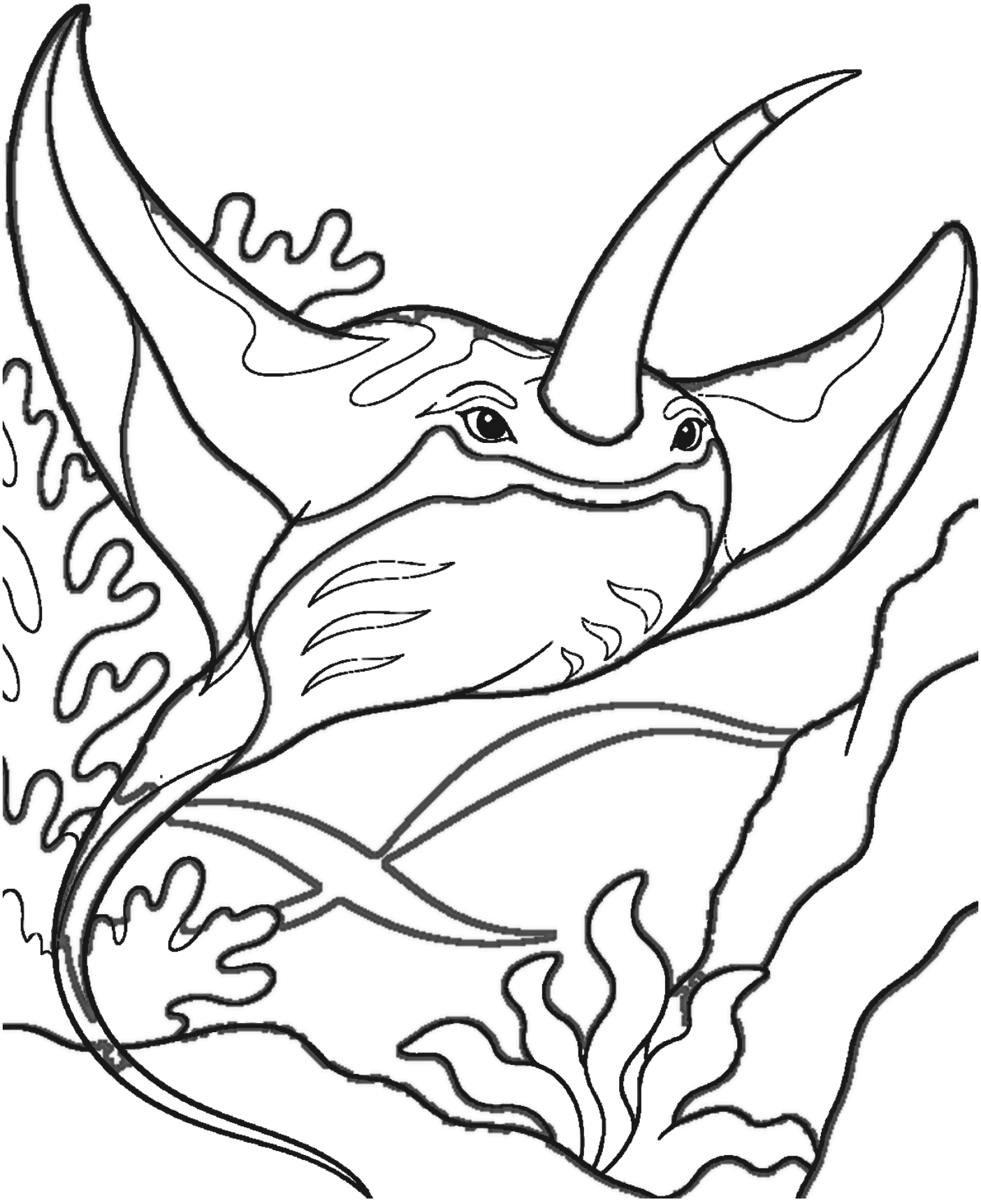
How do real hornbills find food in fallen leaves?



Did you know? Some ground hornbills walk in groups, looking for insects and other small animals. They probe soil and leaf litter with their long bills. This imaginary bird uses its horn to lift leaves as it goes.

Lantern Ray

How can a real manta ray look like it is flying?



Did you know? A manta ray beats its broad pectoral fins to move through water. The fins extend on either side of its body and work a little like wings. The glowing horn is part of the Lantern Ray story.

Frost Unicorn

Where does the ice inside some caves come from?



Did you know? In some caves, cold air gets trapped. Water that seeps or drips into the cave can freeze and build layers of ice. Even during warmer months, the sheltered ice may take a long time to melt.

Cloud Owl

How does a snowy owl stay warm in the Arctic?



Did you know? Thick feathers insulate the body of a snowy owl. Feathers also cover its legs and feet, where they help keep heat from escaping on the tundra. Look for the feathered feet on this imaginary owl.

Dune Fox

Why does a fennec fox have such big ears?



Did you know? Large ears give a fennec fox a way to release body heat. They also help the fox hear small animals moving, even beneath the desert sand. Its ears do both jobs while it hunts after dark.

Opal Seahorse

Why does a real seahorse curl its tail?



Did you know? A seahorse can wrap its tail around a blade of seagrass or another holdfast. This helps it stay in one place when water moves past. A tail that grips like this is called prehensile.

Orchard Foal

How does an apple start growing?



Did you know? An apple begins as a flower. Bees can carry pollen from one apple blossom to another. After pollination, the base of a flower can grow into a fruit, with seeds protected inside.

Crag Goat

How do mountain goats grip steep rocks?



Did you know? A mountain goat has two toes on each hoof. The hard outer edges catch on little ledges, while soft pads press against the rock. This helps the goat keep its footing on slopes that look nearly vertical.

Tide Kingfisher

How does a kingfisher catch a fish?



Did you know? A belted kingfisher can watch the water from a branch or hover above it. Once it spots prey, the bird dives headfirst and catches it in its bill. It often returns to a perch to eat.

Moss Tapir

Why does a tapir have a short trunk?



Did you know? A tapir can bend its flexible snout to grasp leaves or fruit. When the animal wades or swims, the trunk also lets it breathe with much of its head under water.

Glacier Bison

How does a bison find grass under snow?



Did you know? A real bison swings its big head from side to side to push snow away. The strong muscles around its neck and shoulders do the heavy work. Once the snow moves, the bison can reach the dry grass underneath.

Moon Beetle

Can a real beetle have just one horn?



Did you know? The male American rhinoceros beetle grows a single horn in the middle of its head. The female has a small bump there. Both have hard wing covers over the delicate wings they use to fly.

Dusk Stallion

Why do some wild horses stay together?



Did you know? Przewalski's horses live in small groups. They graze and travel together, and the young stay with the group as they grow. Several horses can keep watch while others eat.

Willow Otter

How do a river otter's feet help it swim?



Did you know? Skin stretches between the toes of a river otter. This webbing makes each paw wider when it pushes water. Its long, strong tail also helps it move and steer underwater.

Cliff Pangolin

What are a pangolin's scales made of?



Did you know? Pangolin scales are made of keratin, the same material as human fingernails. When a pangolin curls into a ball, the overlapping scales protect the softer parts of its body.

Reef Lionfish

How does a real lionfish use its broad fins?



Did you know? A lionfish can spread its large pectoral fins as it approaches a small fish. The fins help corner the prey, while its mouth makes a quick gulp. The tall spines along its back serve for defense.

Marsh Unicorn

Why does water rise and fall in a salt marsh?



Did you know? A salt marsh forms beside the coast where tides can flood it. Water spreads through little channels when the tide rises, then drains away as it falls. Marsh plants are adapted to this changing mix of water and mud.

Moon Lynx

How does a Canada lynx walk on deep snow?



Did you know? A Canada lynx has big, furry paws that spread its weight across the snow. These paws work a bit like snowshoes. This is handy when it follows snowshoe hares through the forest.

Paper Nautilus

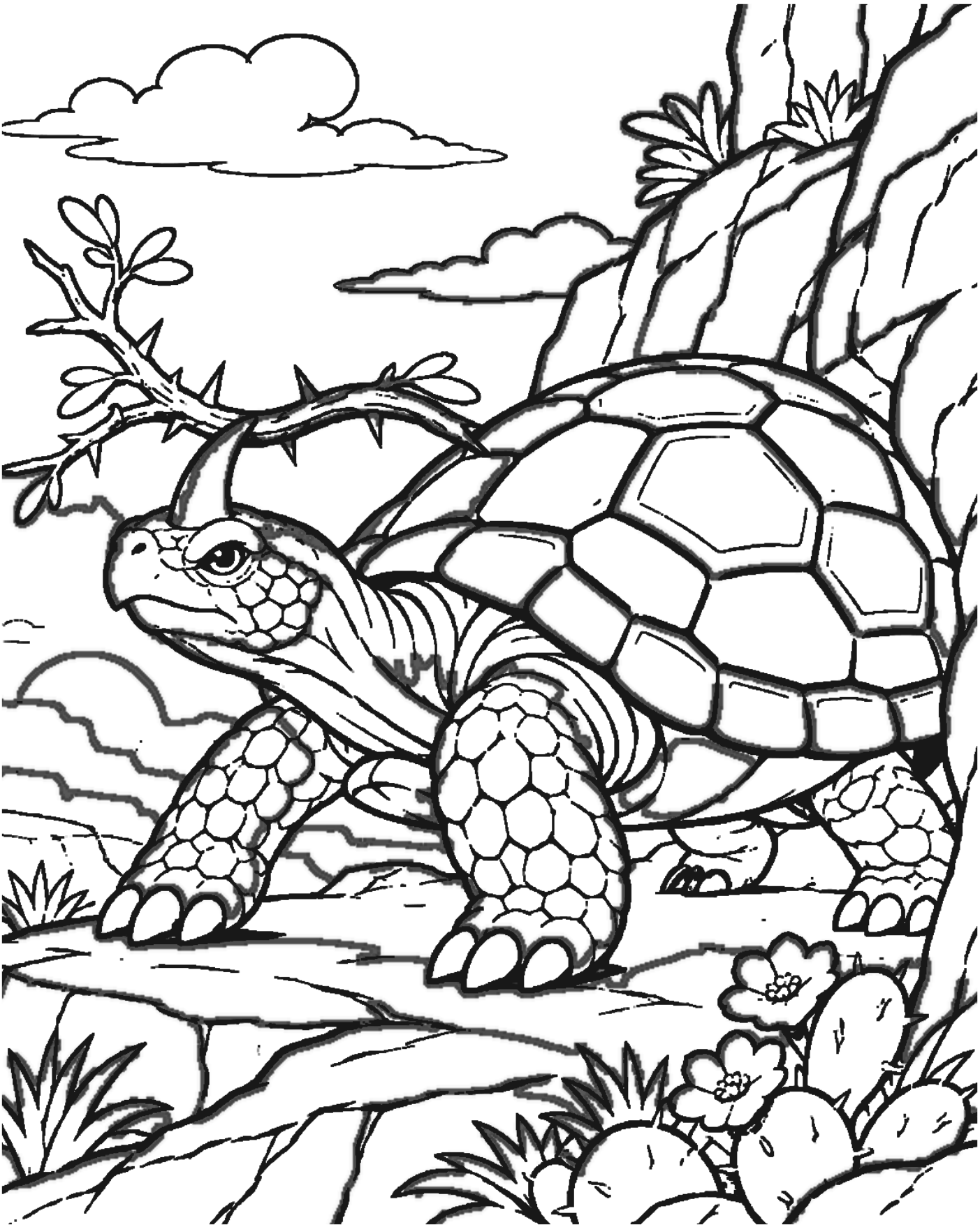
Why is a nautilus shell divided into rooms?



Did you know? A nautilus lives in the newest and largest chamber of its shell. It can adjust the mix of gas and liquid in the older chambers. This helps it stay buoyant as it moves through water.

Dune Tortoise

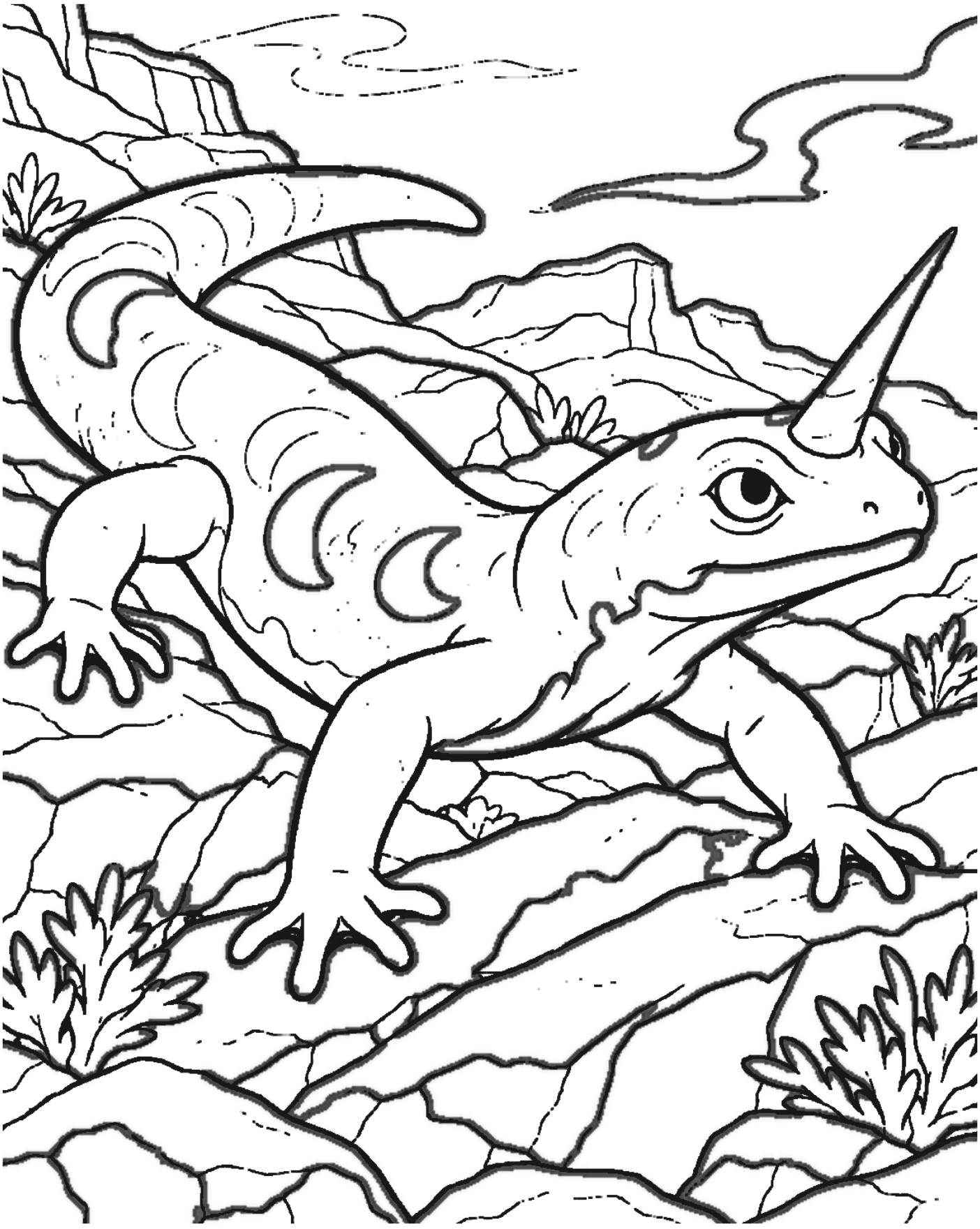
Where does a desert tortoise go on a hot day?



Did you know? A desert tortoise shelters in a burrow when the surface gets too hot. The ground around its burrow keeps the air cooler and slows changes in temperature. The tortoise can come out to look for food when the weather cools.

Cinder Salamander

Why do fire salamanders have bright markings?



Did you know? The black and yellow pattern of a fire salamander acts as a warning. Its skin can release a substance that tastes bad or irritates a predator. Bright colors help the animal advertise that defense.

Thunder Boar

What does a wild boar find with its snout?



Did you know? Wild boars have a good sense of smell. They use their snouts to turn over soil and leaves while hunting for roots, insects, and other food. This search method is called rooting.

Rain Tree Frog

How can a tree frog hang upside down?



Did you know? The round pads on a tree frog’s toes have tiny flexible structures that fit against the surface of a leaf. A thin layer of mucus helps the pads grip. With those sticky toes, the frog can hold on even underneath the leaf.

Sunfield Hare

Why are a snowshoe hare's back feet so long?



Did you know? Long, wide hind feet help a snowshoe hare spread its weight and stay above soft snow. The hare can dart across snowy ground, and its fur also changes from brown to white as winter comes.