East African Leopard Tortoise Fact Sheet

What is it?

The East African Leopard Tortoise is a large, slow-moving reptile known for its beautiful, spotted shell. It's named after the leopard due to the black spots and patterns on its yellow-tan shell.

Habitat

Found in grasslands, savannas, and scrublands across eastern and southern Africa, from Sudan to South Africa. These habitats give the tortoise space to graze and hide from predators.

Size

Average length is 1220 inches, and weight ranges from 2040 pounds. Some can grow as large as 28 inches and weigh over 100 pounds!

Diet

Herbivorous: Eats grasses, weeds, succulents, and thistles. Sometimes gnaws on bones or animal droppings for extra calcium.

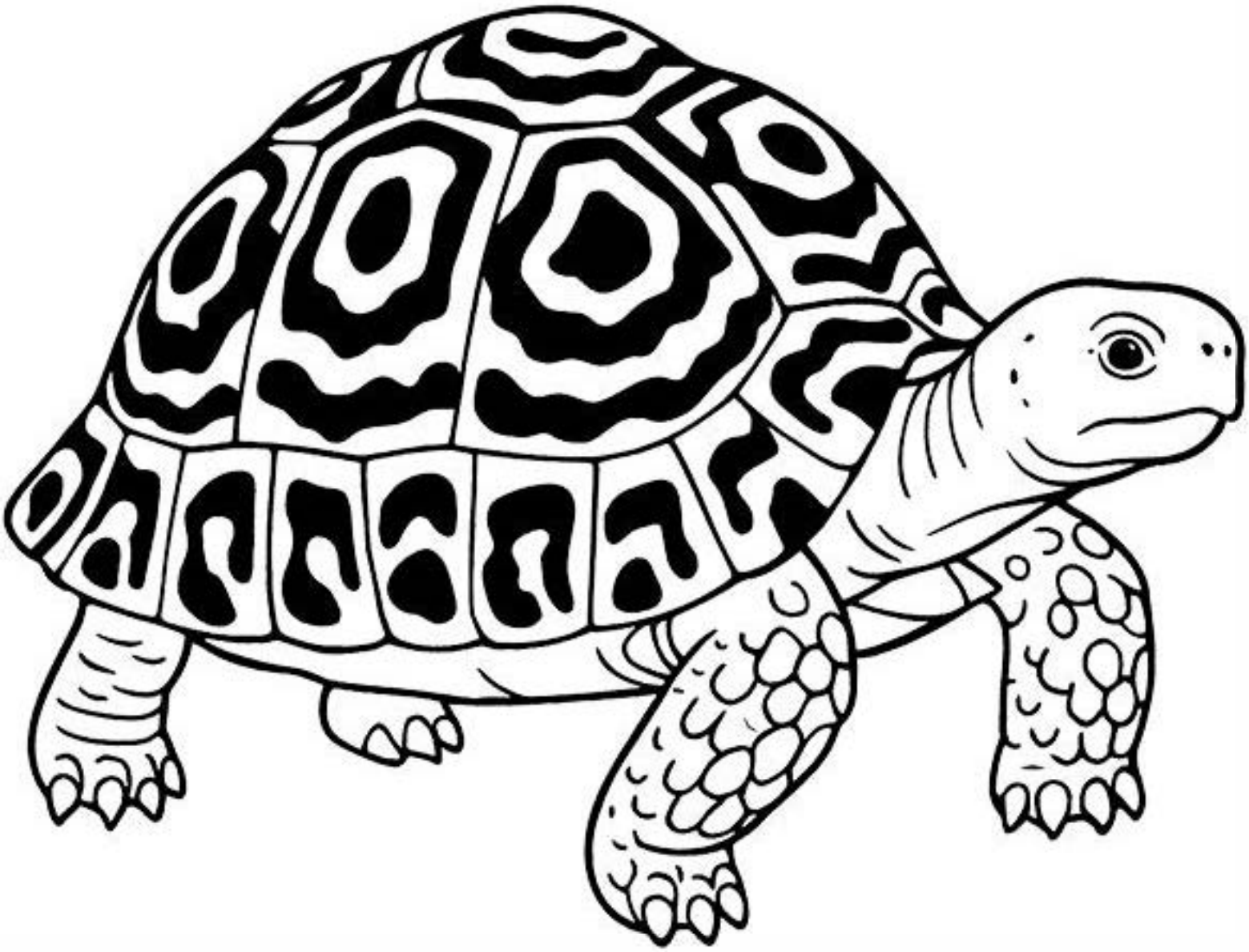
Reproduction

Breeding season is May to October. Females lay 530 eggs per clutch, and the eggs hatch after 815 months. Baby tortoises are independent from birth.

Fun Facts

- They are diurnal (active during the day).
- They can swim and stay underwater for up to 10 minutes.
- They help spread seeds through their droppings.
- They use their noses to smell and detect food.

Conservation

Listed as Least Concern on the IUCN Red List. Protected under CITES Appendix II. Threats include habitat destruction and illegal pet trade, but captive breeding helps conservation.

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