



*Our Mission: As the nonprofit partner to the St. Louis Aquarium, our mission is to engage the community through providing access and education programs and serving as the region's recognized voice for water stewardship.*

Families and Students,

This packet contains educational activities about animals and conservation, brought to you by the St. Louis Aquarium Foundation. Activities are geared towards youth grade levels Pre-k through 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. We hope you enjoy these activities and learn about some of the animals we have at the St. Louis Aquarium at Union Station!

If you are able, follow the St. Louis Aquarium Foundation on Facebook to watch educational and interactive live videos that provide further information about the animals in our care. Or you can also visit our website ([stlaquariumfoundation.org](http://stlaquariumfoundation.org)) to see videos of our past Facebook Live episodes and access some other activities.

Thank you to KidSmart for supplying school supplies and distributing these activities.

Thank you to our program partner:





## St. Louis Aquarium Foundation Essay Contest

Do you have an interest in marine animals? We want to hear all about it!

The St. Louis Aquarium Foundation is holding a marine animal essay contest! Youth grades K-12 are asked to submit a 1-2 page written response to the question for their age group (drawings, if included, do not count as one of the written pages).

Essays must be hand-**written, in the student's own writing**. Entries may be submitted by emailing photos of the hand-written essay to [info@stlaquariumfoundation.org](mailto:info@stlaquariumfoundation.org) no later than April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Please make the subject of your email "Essay Contest – (student's name) – Age (student's age)".

Essay Topics:

### Kindergarten-2<sup>nd</sup> grade

If you could be a marine animal, which animal would you be and why? You may choose to include a drawing of your animal.

### 3<sup>rd</sup>- 5<sup>th</sup> grade

What do you think is the coolest trait or adaptation of any animal in the ocean and why? You may choose to include a drawing of the animal with this trait.

### 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade

If you had to live in the ocean and were able to borrow 3 adaptations from ocean animals, what 3 existing adaptations would you choose and why? You may choose to include a drawing of yourself with your new adaptations.

### 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade

Plastic pollution in our waterways and oceans is a major conservation issue that is affecting the health of animals and our planet. What can you do to help reduce plastic pollution? Answers may be practical changes in your everyday habits or could include inventions or new processes to help prevent or reduce the problem. You may choose to include a drawing of your new invention.

### *Rules, Entry Instructions, & Prizes*

*Essays will be evaluated based on the use of grammar, spelling, and their skill in answering the question.*

*Essays must be written by hand, by the student in their own words. Please include the student's name and age on the submission. One winner will be selected from each age group. Winners will receive a pass for 2 free aquarium admissions, 2 free tickets to the Wheel and a \$10 gift card to the Aquarium Gift Shop, redeemable after attractions are re-opened. The top two runners up in each age bracket will receive 2 free tickets to the St. Louis Wheel.*

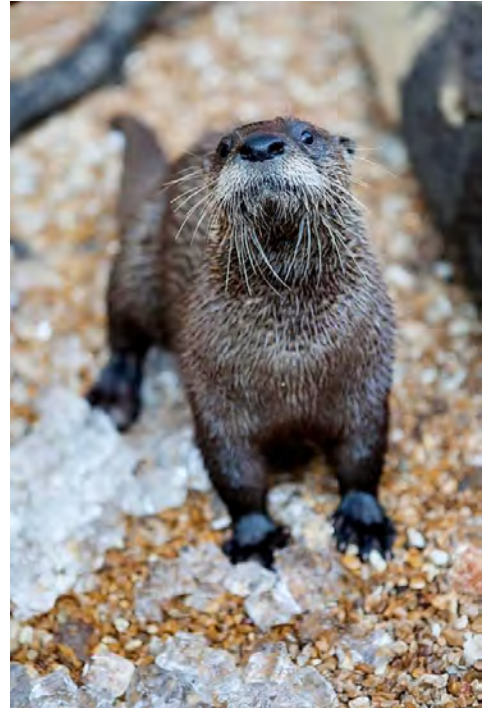
*Essays must be submitted by a parent or legal guardian of any student under the age of 18. By submitting an essay, permission is granted for the St. Louis Aquarium Foundation to use the essays (and any corresponding artwork) on their website, social media pages, or for any publicity/marketing purposes. Visit our website for full terms and conditions: <https://www.stlaquariumfoundation.org/events/>*



# North American River Otter

*Read the paragraph below about North American River Otters, then complete the otter word search.*

River otters live in our area, along rivers and streams. They are great swimmers and use their long tails and webbed feet to help them move quickly in water. Thick oily fur that keeps water from soaking in helps them stay warm and dry as they swim in cold water. They are most active in the evenings and at night, and eat mostly fish.



This is Finn, one of our river otters at the St. Louis Aquarium!

## Otter Word Search

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

### Word Bank

FISH  
FUR  
NOCTURNAL  
OTTER  
RIVER  
STREAM  
SWIM  
TAIL  
WEBBED FEET



# Sloths

*Read the paragraph below about Sloths and complete the activity below.*

Sloths are known for being very slow moving animals. Spending most of their lives hanging upside down from trees, sloths will go down to the rainforest floor about one time a week to go to the bathroom! Sloths eat leaves, twigs, fruit, and flowers. They spend most of their time eating and sleeping.

Match the words about sloths to the pictures. Draw a line from the word to the matching picture.



This is Coconut, a two-toed sloth at the St. Louis Aquarium!

tree

sloth

leaves

twigs

fruit

flowers







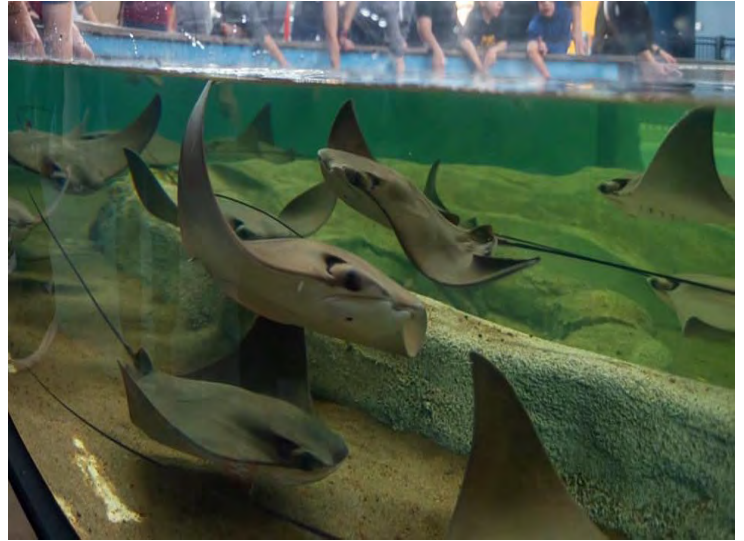
## Stingrays

Read the paragraph below about Stingrays and complete the activity below.

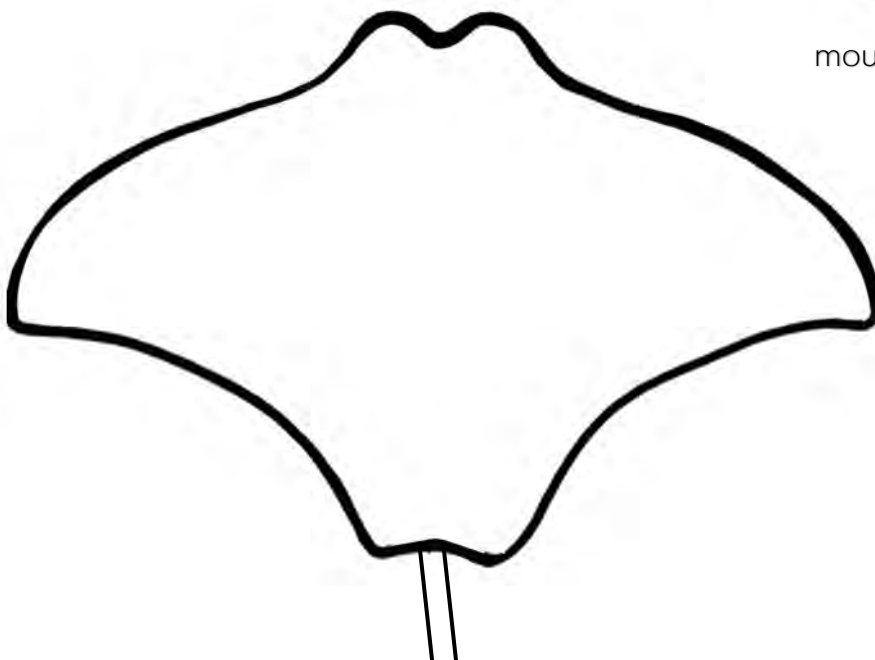
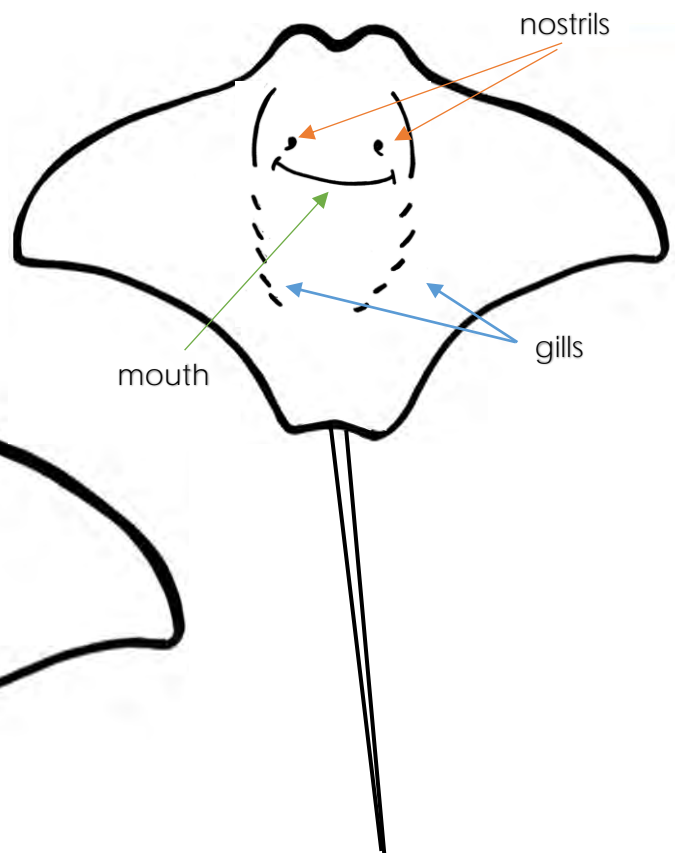
Stingrays are related to sharks. They have no bones! Their bodies are made of cartilage (the same thing our ears are made of!). Most stingrays have eyes on the top of their bodies, and their mouths are on the bottom of their bodies. Stingrays breathe through gills.

The picture to the right is the bottom side of a stingray. The two dots above the mouth are actually nostrils! The eyes are on the top side of the stingray, which you can't see from this drawing.

Draw in the nostrils, mouth, and gills on the blank stingray outline below.



Cownose stingrays at the St. Louis Aquarium



# PAPER BAG RIVER OTTER



## MATERIALS NEEDED:

- River Otter Template (next page)
- Brown paper lunch bag
- Newspaper/scrap paper (to stuff lunch bag)
- Rubberband
- Scissors/glue/tape
- Art supplies

## DIRECTIONS

1. Stuff a brown paper lunch bag with newspaper or scrap paper.
2. Tie the rubber band around the bottom of the bag, just below the stuffing.
3. Cut the bottom of the bag into two, creating the two river otter feet
4. Color/decorate your river otter & cut out the head, two arms, two feet, and the rock.
5. Attach the pieces to the brown paper lunch bag to create your river otter.



## STEP ONE

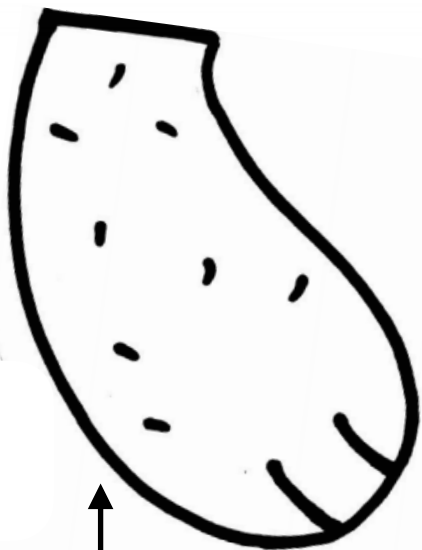
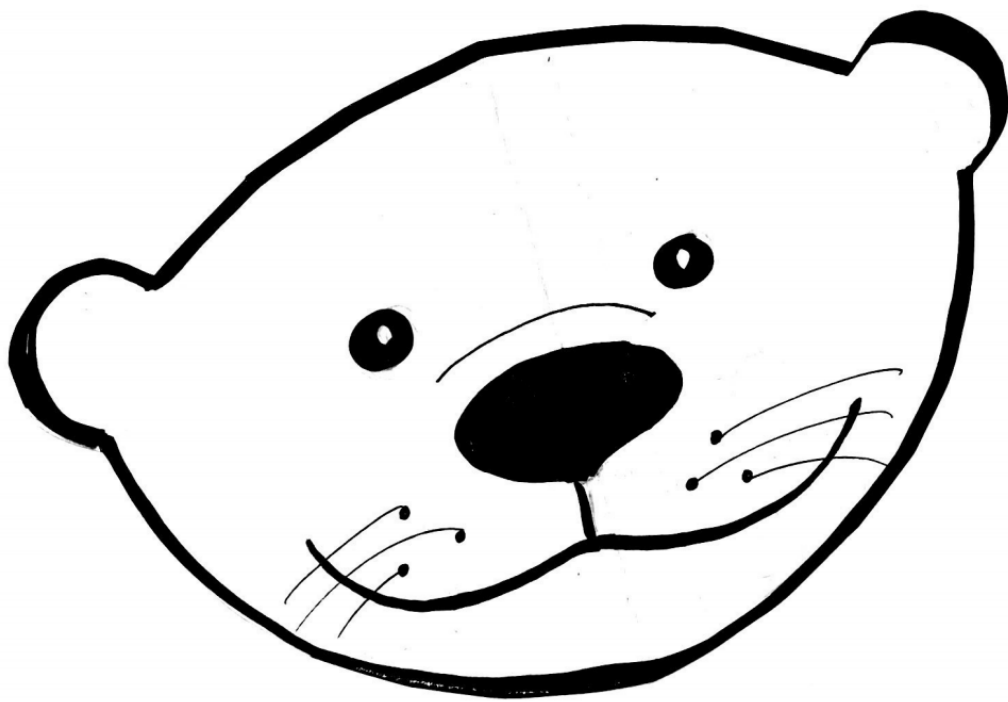


## STEP TWO



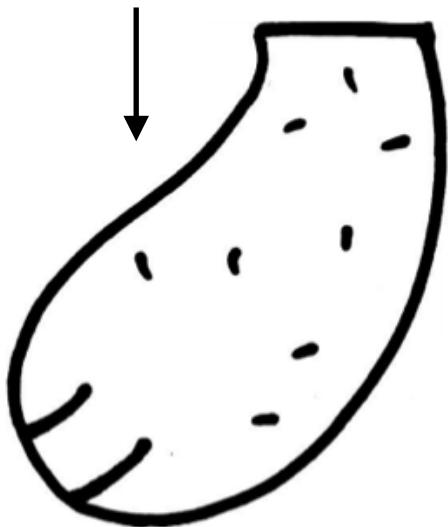
## STEP THREE



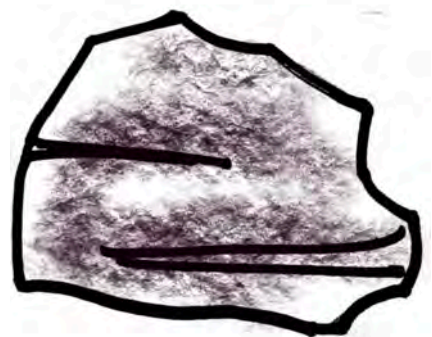


↑  
**OTTER'S ARMS**

↑  
**OTTER'S FEET**

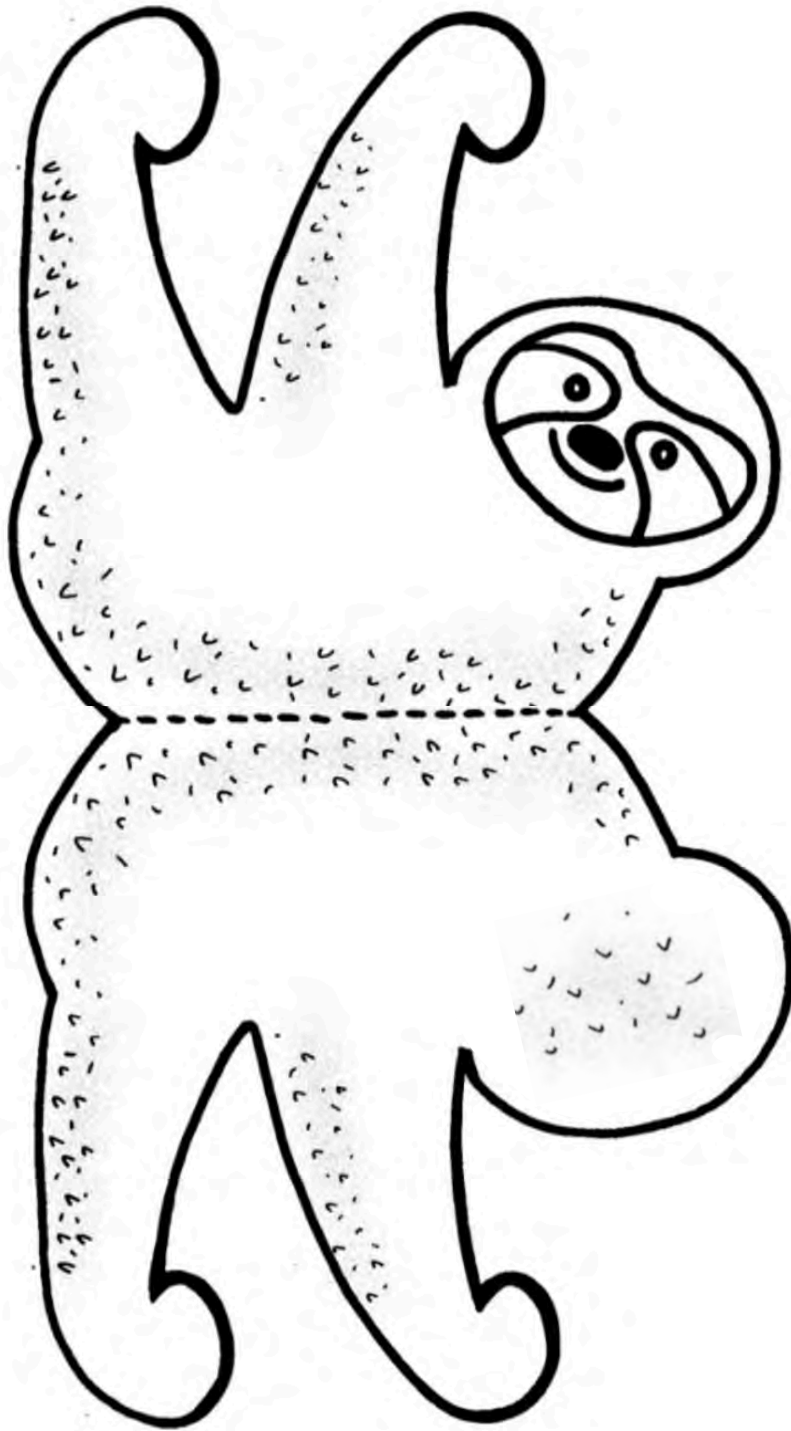


**ROCK**



**EVA Ahh**  
Designs

# COCONUT THE SLOTH PENCIL PAL



1. Color
2. Cut out along solid black line
3. Fold at dotted line
4. Glue or tape feet together
5. Hang sloth friend on a pencil or stick

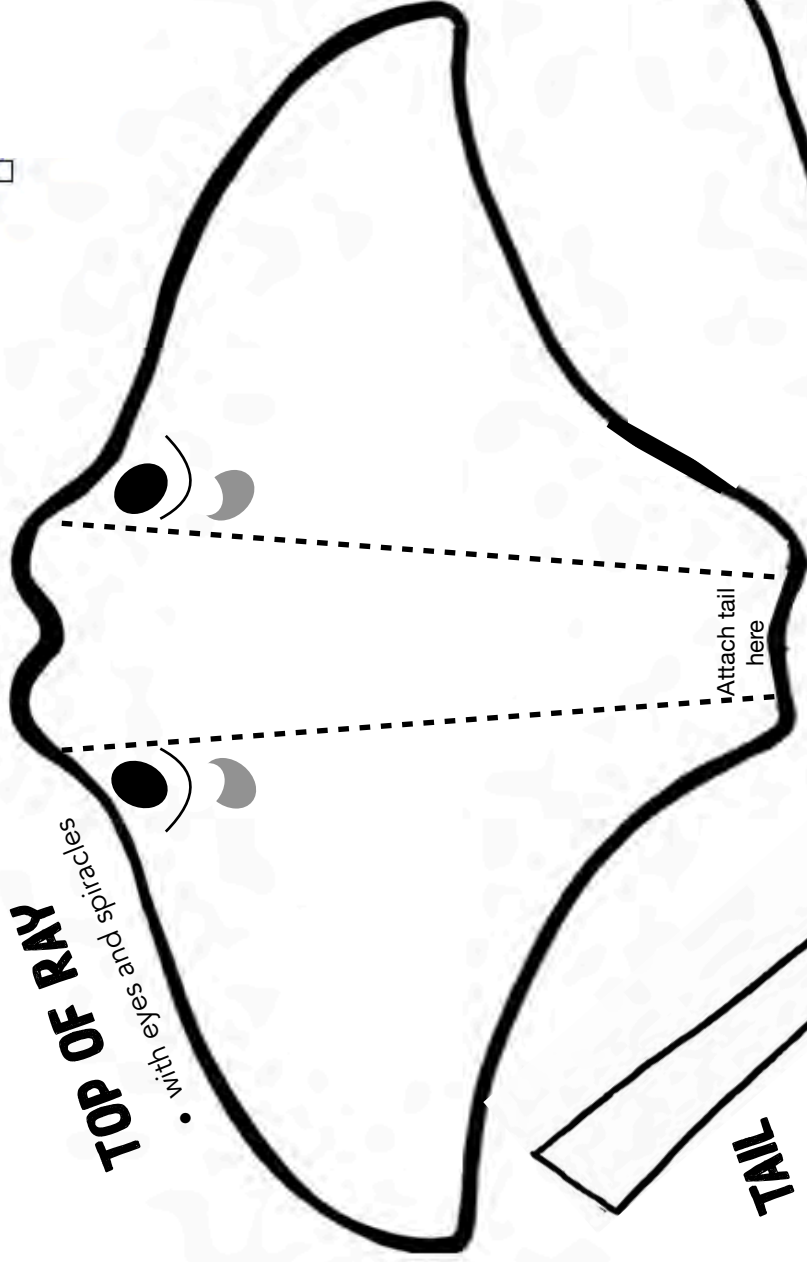




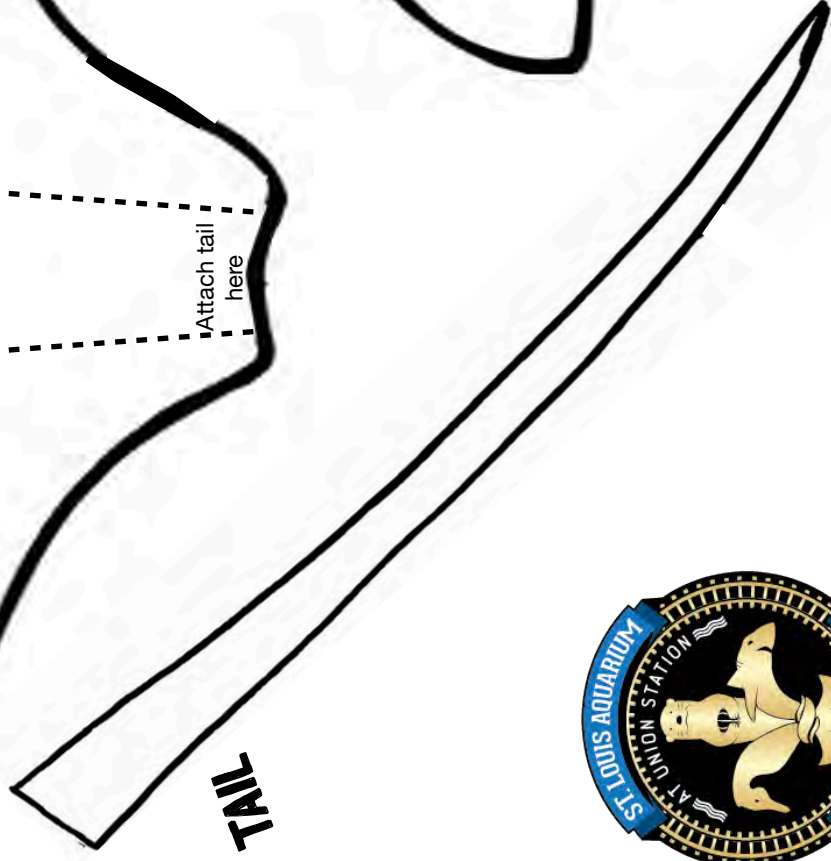
# COWNOSE RAY PUPPET



**TOP OF RAY**  
• with eyes and spiracles



**TAIL**



- Color the top of the ray & the tail (usually are a brownish-green color)
- Color the bottom of the ray (usually a white/pale color)
- Cut out the top, bottom, & tail pieces
- Gently fold on the dotted lines (top only)
- Glue or tape the tail where marked on the top of the ray
- With the colored sides facing out, tape or glue the top & bottom pieces together, only on the edges, leaving an opening around the tail for your hand to fit in to use as a puppet

**BOTTOM OF RAY**  
• with nostrils, mouth, & gills





# ZEBRA SHARK

★ ZEBRA SHARKS ARE BORN DARK BROWN WITH YELLOWISH STRIPES. BUT WHEN THEY GET OLDER THEIR STRIPES FADE AND THEY GET BLACK SPOTS ON THEIR TAN BODY.

★ ZEBRA SHARKS CAN GROW TO BE ABOUT 12 FEET LONG.



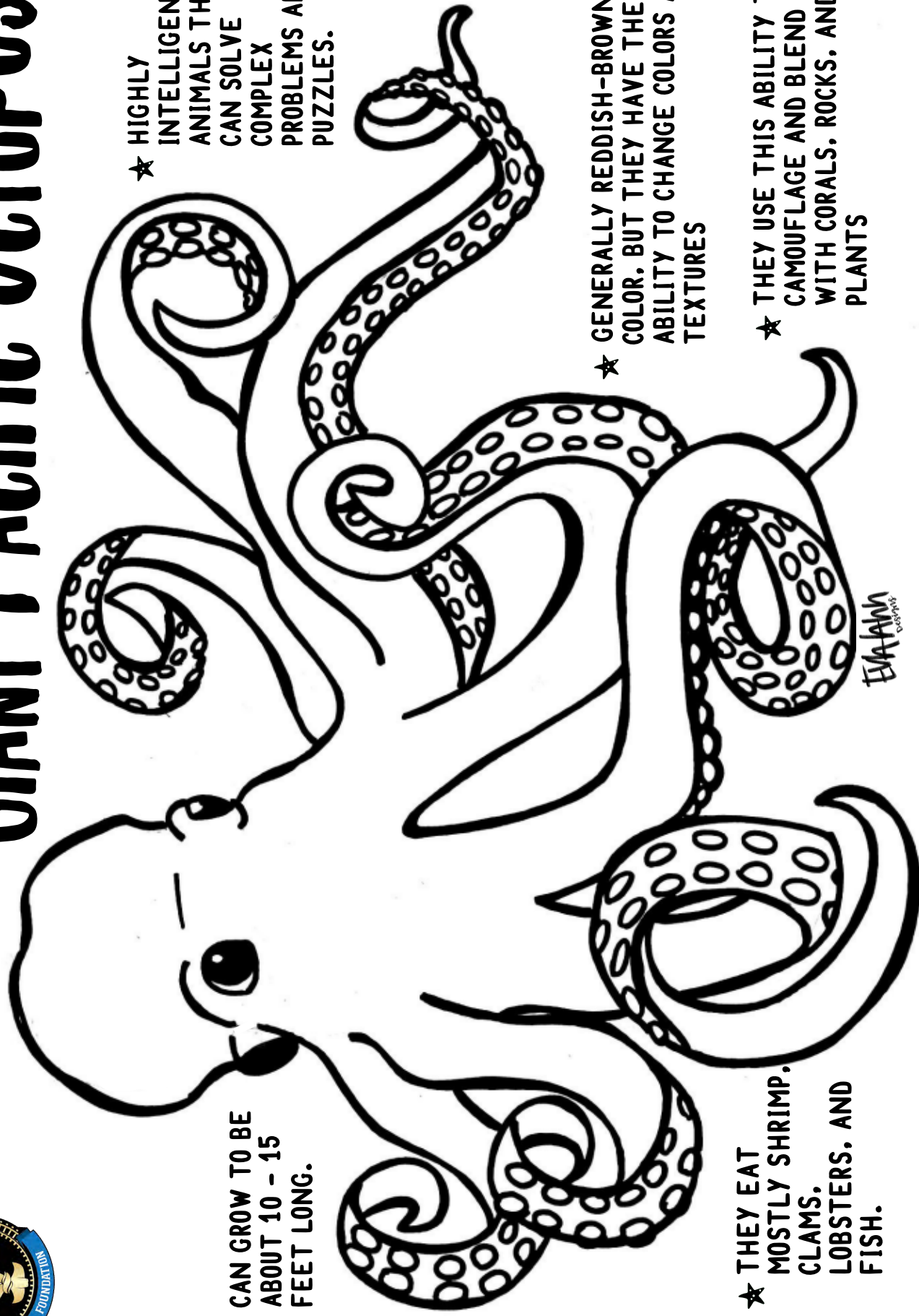
★ THEY ARE NOCTURNAL, MEANING THEY ARE MOST ACTIVE AT NIGHT.

★ THESE SHARKS ARE OFTEN OVERFISHED AND CONSIDERED ENDANGERED IN MOST AREAS OF THE WORLD.

EVANH  
BOOKS



# GIANT PACIFIC OCTOPUS



★ HIGHLY INTELLIGENT ANIMALS THAT CAN SOLVE COMPLEX PROBLEMS AND PUZZLES.

★ CAN GROW TO BE ABOUT 10 - 15 FEET LONG.

★ GENERALLY REDDISH-BROWN IN COLOR, BUT THEY HAVE THE ABILITY TO CHANGE COLORS AND TEXTURES

★ THEY EAT MOSTLY SHRIMP, CLAMS, LOBSTERS, AND FISH.

★ THEY USE THIS ABILITY TO CAMOUFLAGE AND BLEND IN WITH CORALS, ROCKS, AND PLANTS