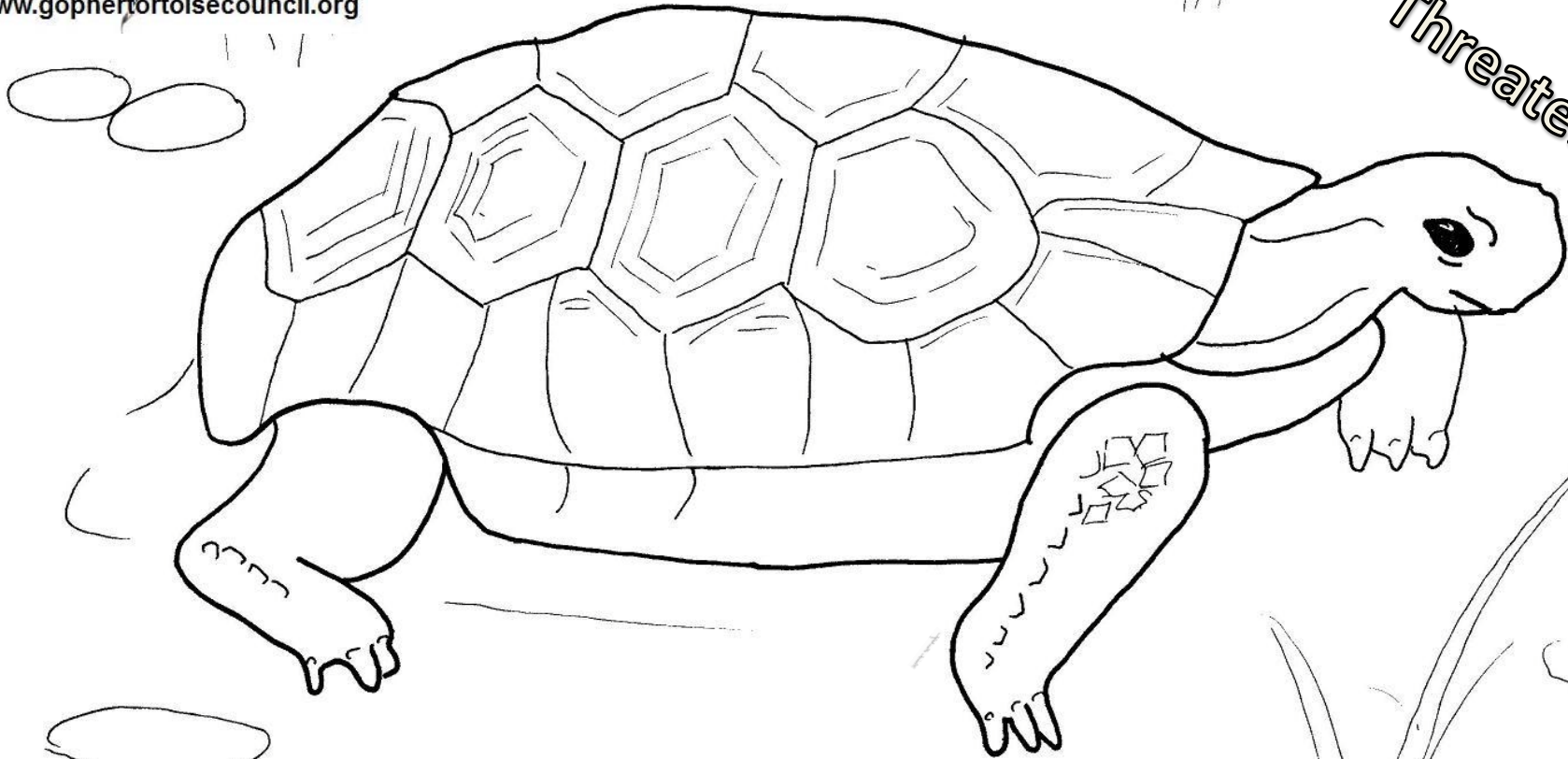




[www.gophertortoisecouncil.org](http://www.gophertortoisecouncil.org)

# *Gopher Tortoise* (*Gopherus polyphemus*)

Threatened



Gopher tortoises occur in upland habitats throughout the coastal plain of the southeastern United States. Gopher tortoises are found in longleaf pine sandhills, xeric oak hammocks, scrub, pine flatwoods, dry prairies, and coastal dunes. Tortoises can also live in man-made environments, such as pastures, old fields, and roadsides.

Grasses and legumes make up the bulk of their diet. They also eat a large variety of herbaceous plants including gopher apple, pawpaw, blackberries, saw palmetto berries, and other fruits.

The life of a gopher tortoise revolves around a tunnel-like burrow that is excavated using its shovel-like front feet. Burrows can be up to 40 feet in length and 10 feet in depth. Gopher tortoises are thought to live in excess of 60 years.