Conservation: Hard At Work On America's Farms and Ranches

20 Years of CRP

America's Conservation Program

FSAKids Activity Book

Greetings from the Farm Service Agency Administrator

Teresa C. Lasseter
FSA Administrator

Can you imagine drinking an ice cold glass of … muddy water?

What if you woke up one spring morning and realized there was only silence - no birds singing, no insects buzzing? Now picture your favorite picnic spot - only now imagine that the grass is dead and the dirt keeps blowing on your food and in your eyes.

Hard to imagine, right? Well, thanks to America's farmers and ranchers, you don't have to worry about it ever happening. Why? Because the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency (FSA), conservation groups, and state and local government agencies have been working side-by-side with farmers and ranchers to take care of the Earth.

And, in recognition of all this hard work, we are celebrating the 20th Anniversary of FSA's Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). It's kind of like a green "Happy Birthday" for America's environment. Celebrate with us!

CRP is America's incredibly large and incredibly incredible conservation program. Best of all, it's been happening since long before you were born. Working together with people from all 50 states, we are making America green by protecting its soil, water, forests, fish, and wildlife.

How do we do it?

Farmers and ranchers enrolled in CRP plant grasses and trees along crop fields and streams. These plantings keep soil in place and prevent it from spilling into streams and lakes or blowing around in the air. This means the air you breathe is cleaner and the water you drink is safer.

Thanks to CRP, there's more wildlife around today than there was when your parents were kids. Millions of acres of CRP grasses, trees, and other plants give food and homes to birds, squirrels, beavers, and plenty of other wildlife. Did you know that some CRP acreage provides homes for bears and alligators?

Even if you don't live on a farm or ranch you can still help take care of the Earth!

You don't have to take care of the whole Earth…just the little parts you live and play in. Taking care of the Earth is called "conservation." Together we must "conserve" – take care of – all the natural things we enjoy. And if you do, just imagine the green "Happy Birthday" your children will enjoy 20 years from now!

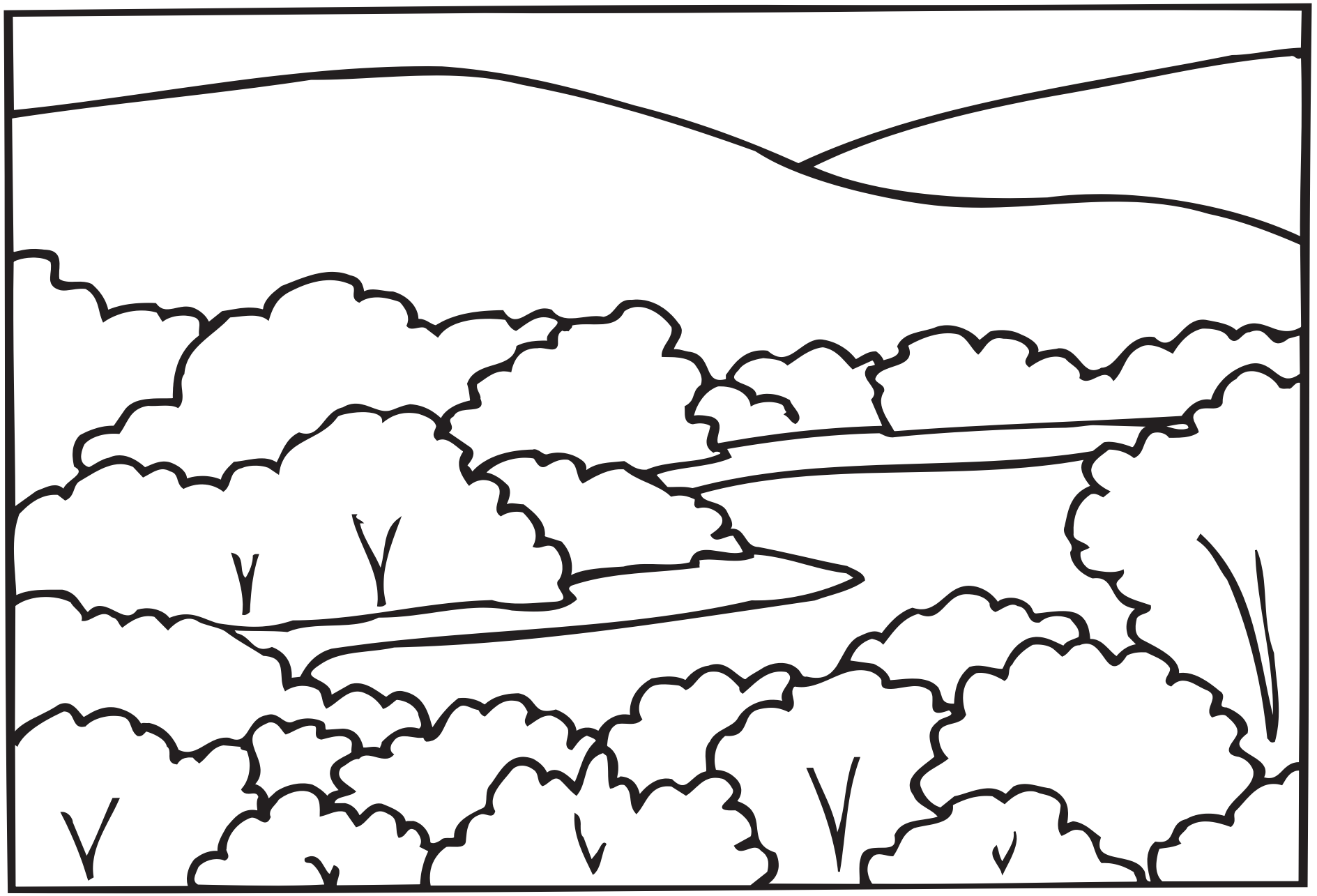
You can start by recycling your soda bottles, soup cans, plastic chip bags, cereal boxes, and papers. If you find any fast-food wrappers on the ground, throw them in the trash can. Turn off your bedroom light when you leave the room. Don't keep the water running while you're brushing your teeth.

Get busy. Put up a bird feeder or ask your teacher how to make a compost pile in your backyard. Start a gardening or conservation project at your school.

I'll bet you can think of a million more ideas that'll help our Earth celebrate a million more birthdays. Conservation is everyone's opportunity. Farmers and ranchers can't do it alone, and neither can FSA. But with your help, we can do it together.

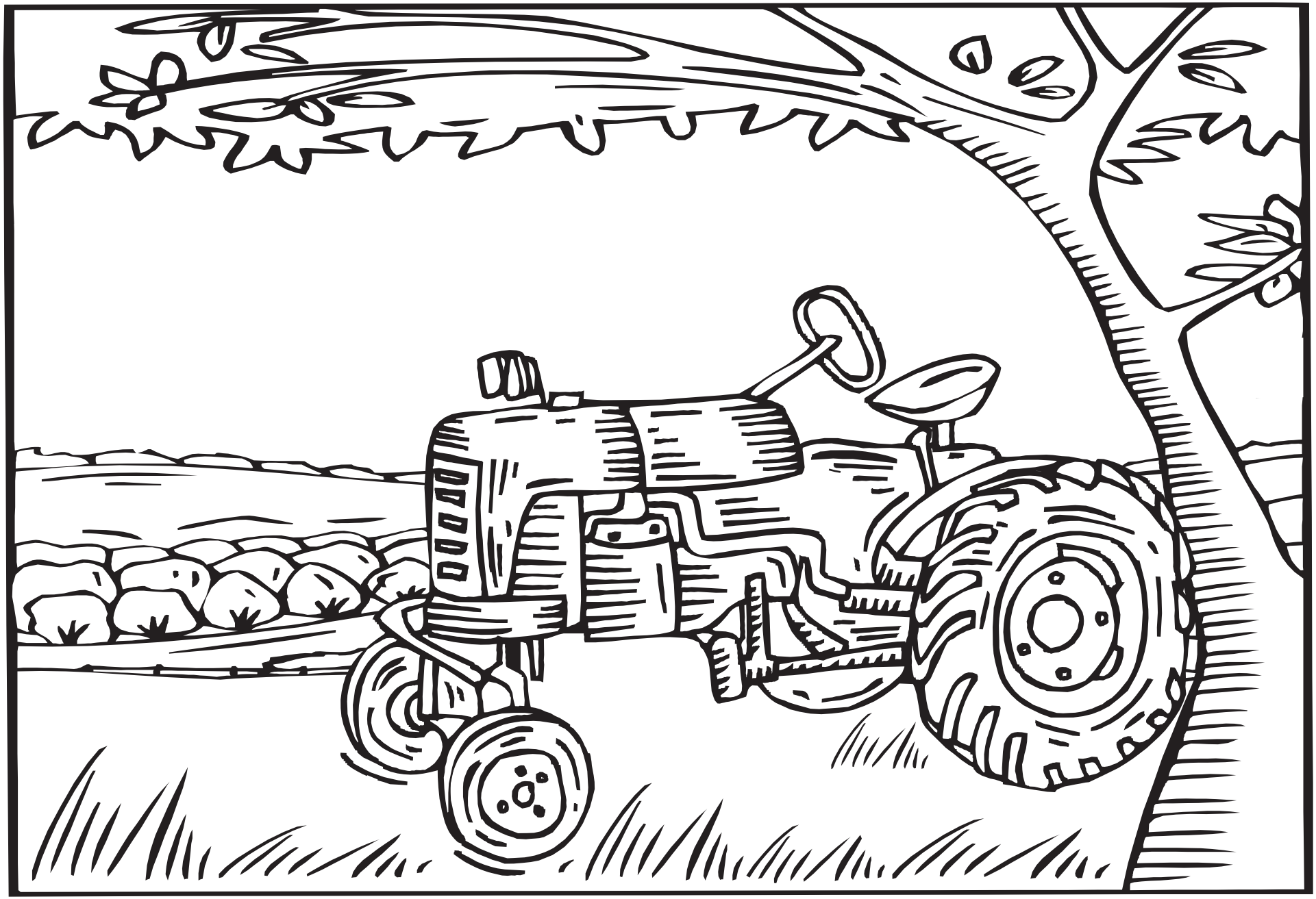
Teresa Lasseter

Did you know that hundreds of different kinds of animals and insects make their homes on farms? Farmers and ranchers, along with other homeowners, provide about 70% (most!) of all the food and habitat for wildlife in the United States.

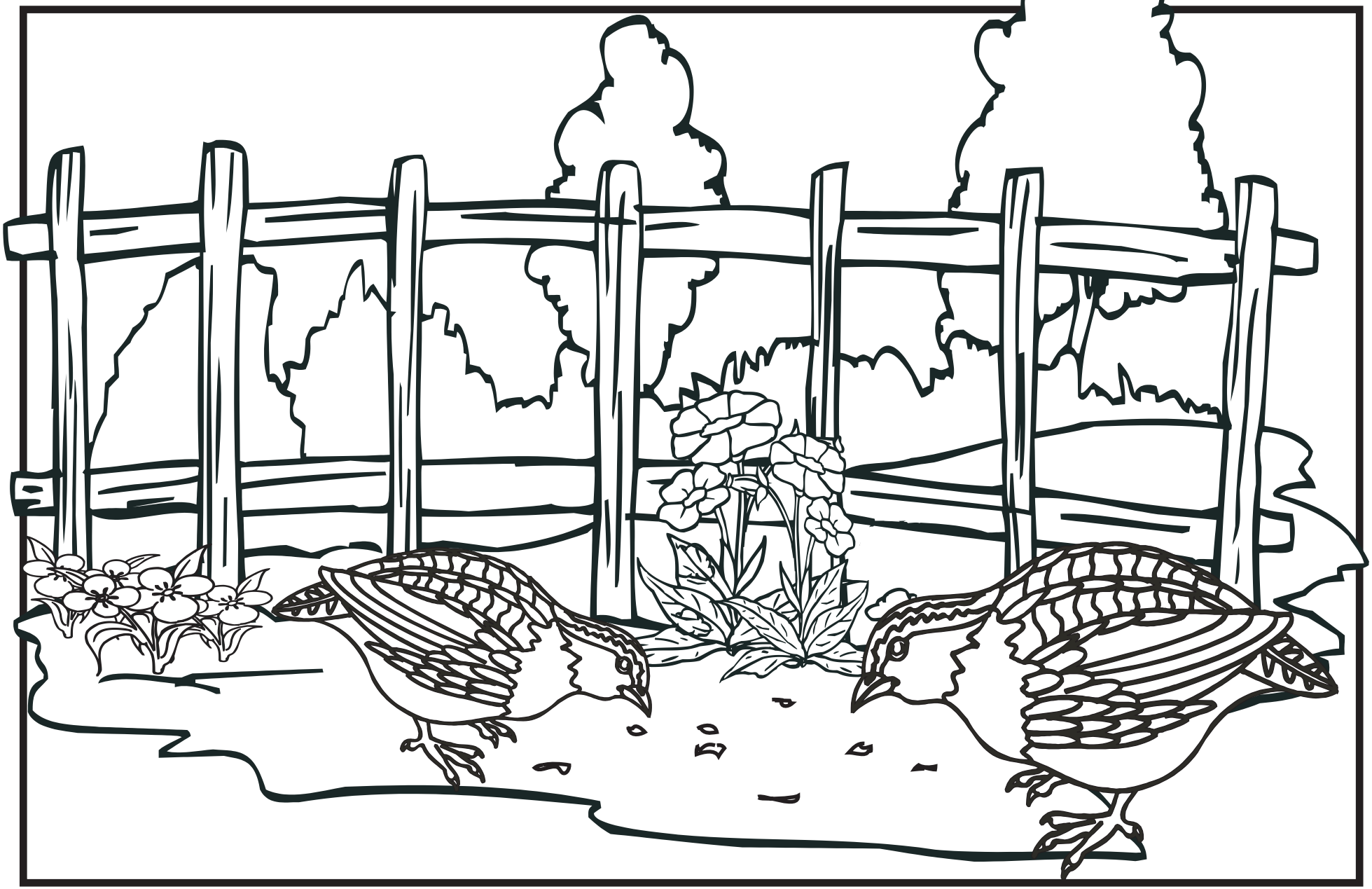


The Conservation Reserve Program - CRP - pays farmers to grow plants that help conserve soil, water and wildlife. More than 36 million acres are now in CRP. That's about the same size as the entire state of Arkansas! Farmers helping the environment - that's what it's all about!

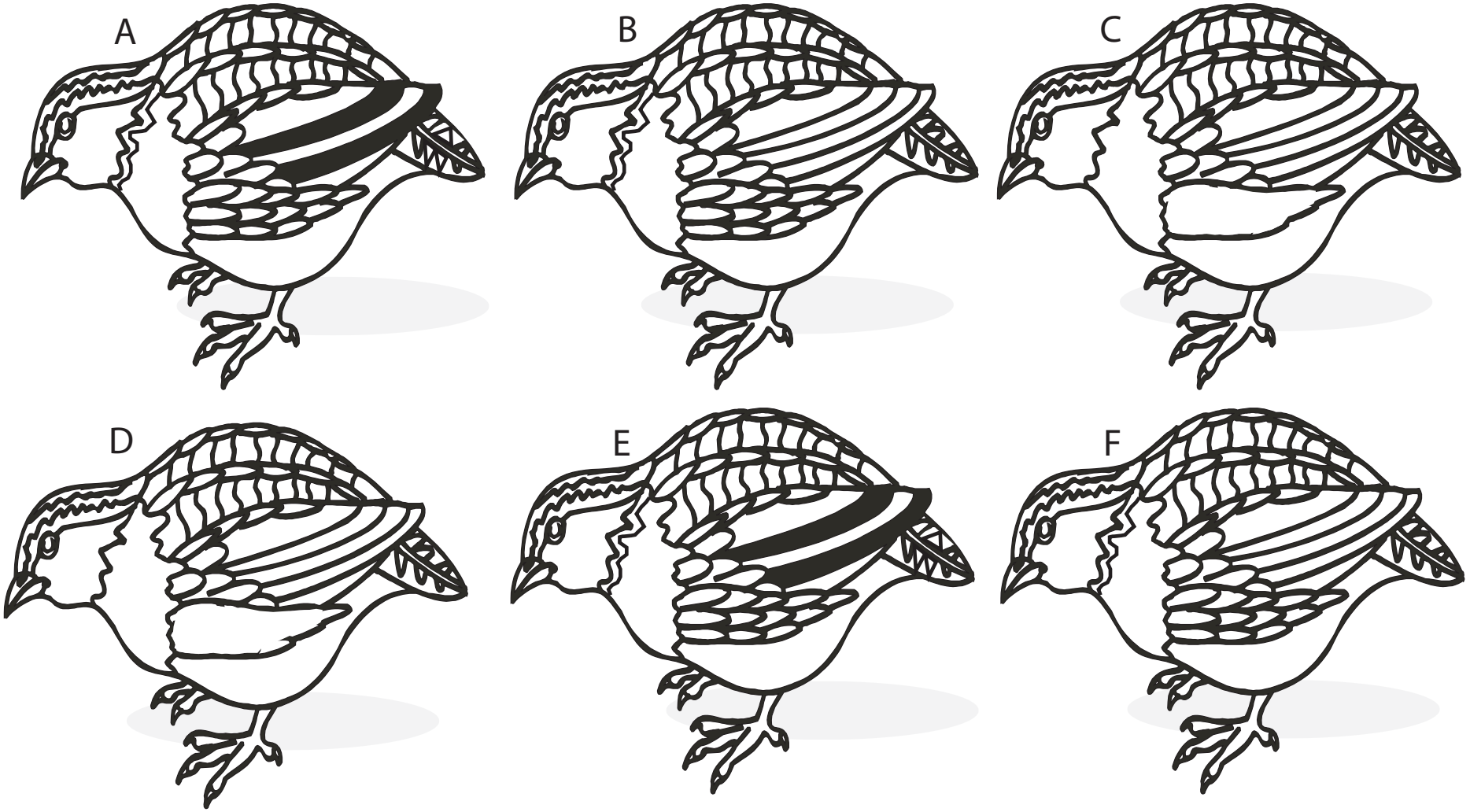
Farmers and ranchers were the very first conservationists! They maintain and improve natural resources to pass on to future generations.



CRP lands provide homes for Northern Bobwhite Quail. Each year more than 750,000 Northern Bobwhite Quail are born and thrive as a direct result of farmers' Conservation Reserve Program efforts.



Each quail on the top row has an exact match on the bottom row.
Can you find which pairs match?

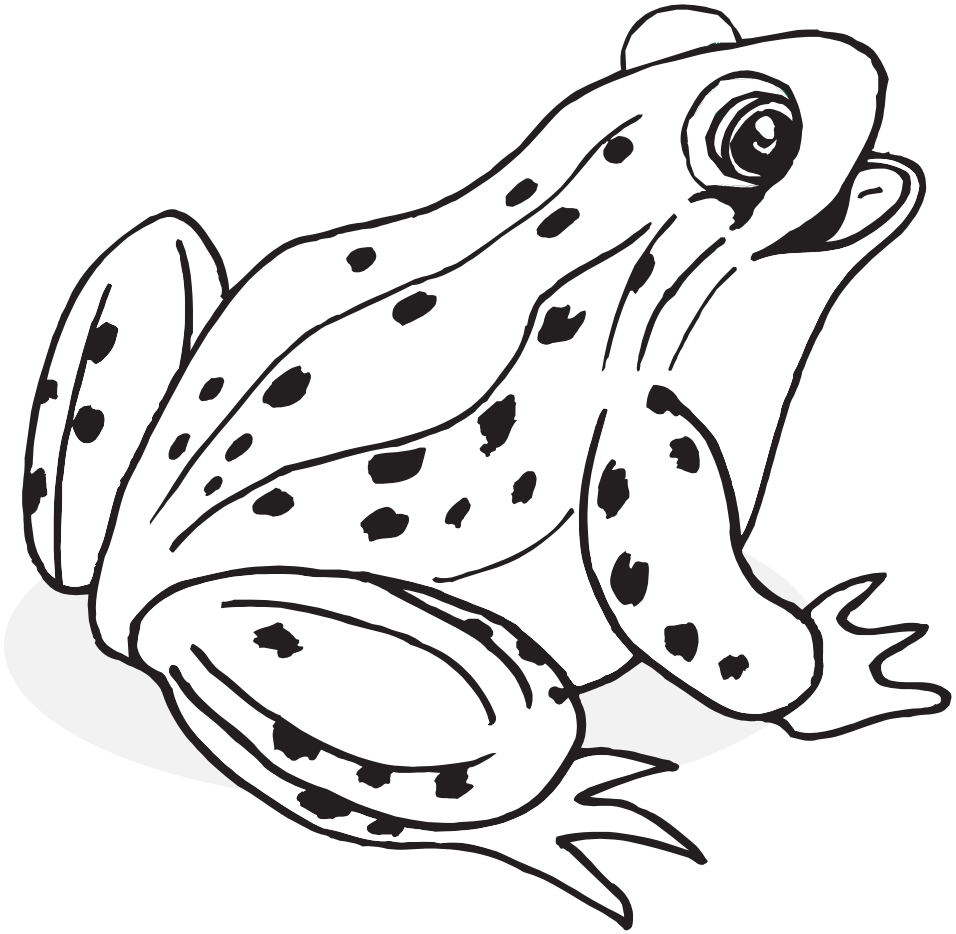


A group of quail is called a covey. They eat, sleep, and build their nests on the ground, and typically take to the air only when threatened by predators. Quail chicks mainly eat small insects, while adult birds like plant seeds, such as wheat, millet, sorghum, and corn.

Answers on last page.

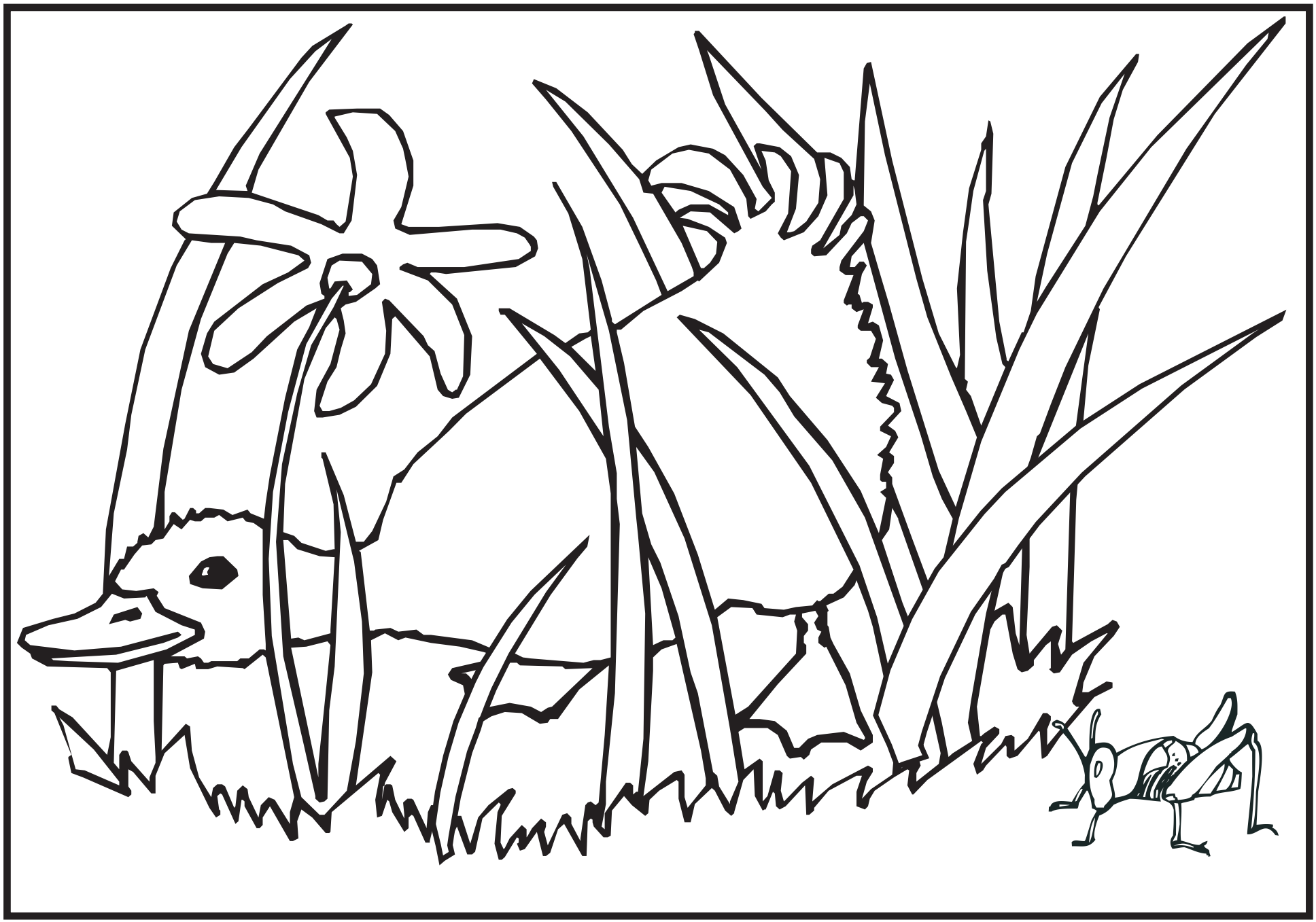
On-The-Farm Animal Match Game

These animals and their babies live in areas protected by the Conservation Reserve Program. Can you match the name of the adult with the name of its baby?

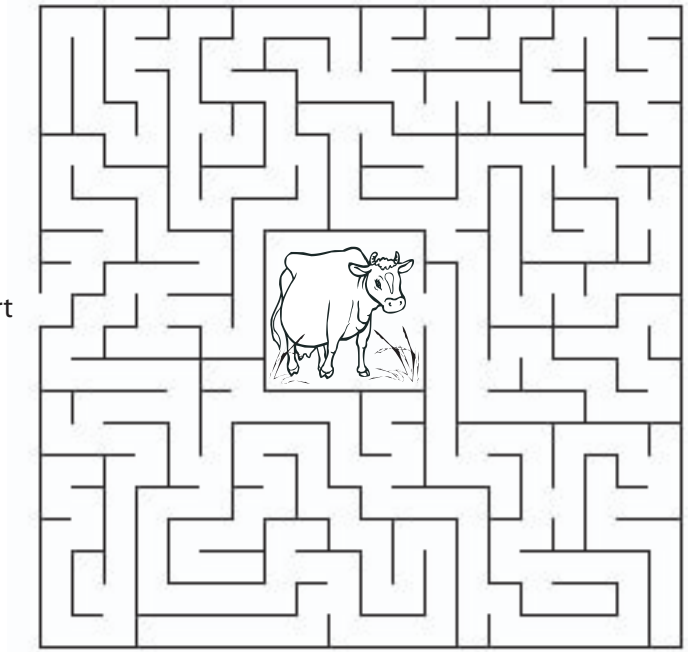


duck	fledgling
eagle	cheeper
fish	chick
fox	kit
frog	poult
grouse	squeaker
guinea fowl	bunny
hawk	eaglet
owl	owlet
pigeon	duckling
rabbit	fawn
turkey	polliwog
pheasant	pup
deer	calf
wolf	cub
moose	fry
raccoon	keet
bird	eya

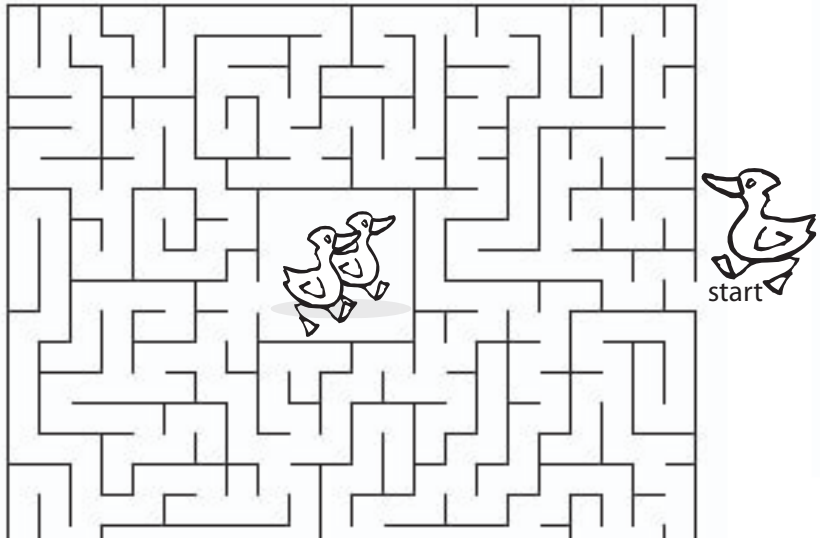
Answers on last page.



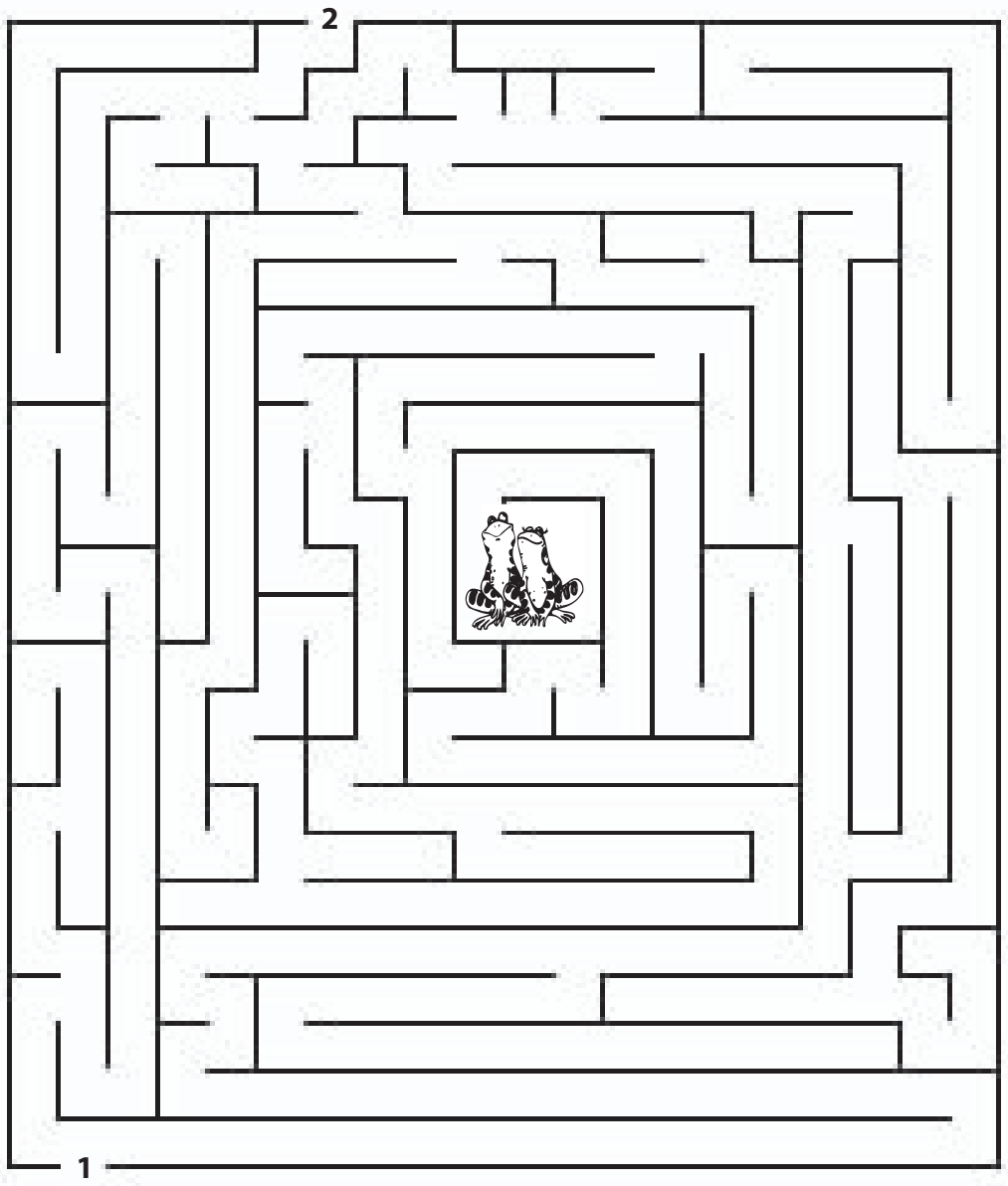
Trees, shrubs and grass plantings sometimes do not offer enough food or protection for wildlife, so farmers often plant food especially for wildlife. They also construct nesting boxes for geese, ducks and other birds.



Cows are not allowed to graze on Conservation Reserve Program lands. How did Bessy get into the CRP grass?



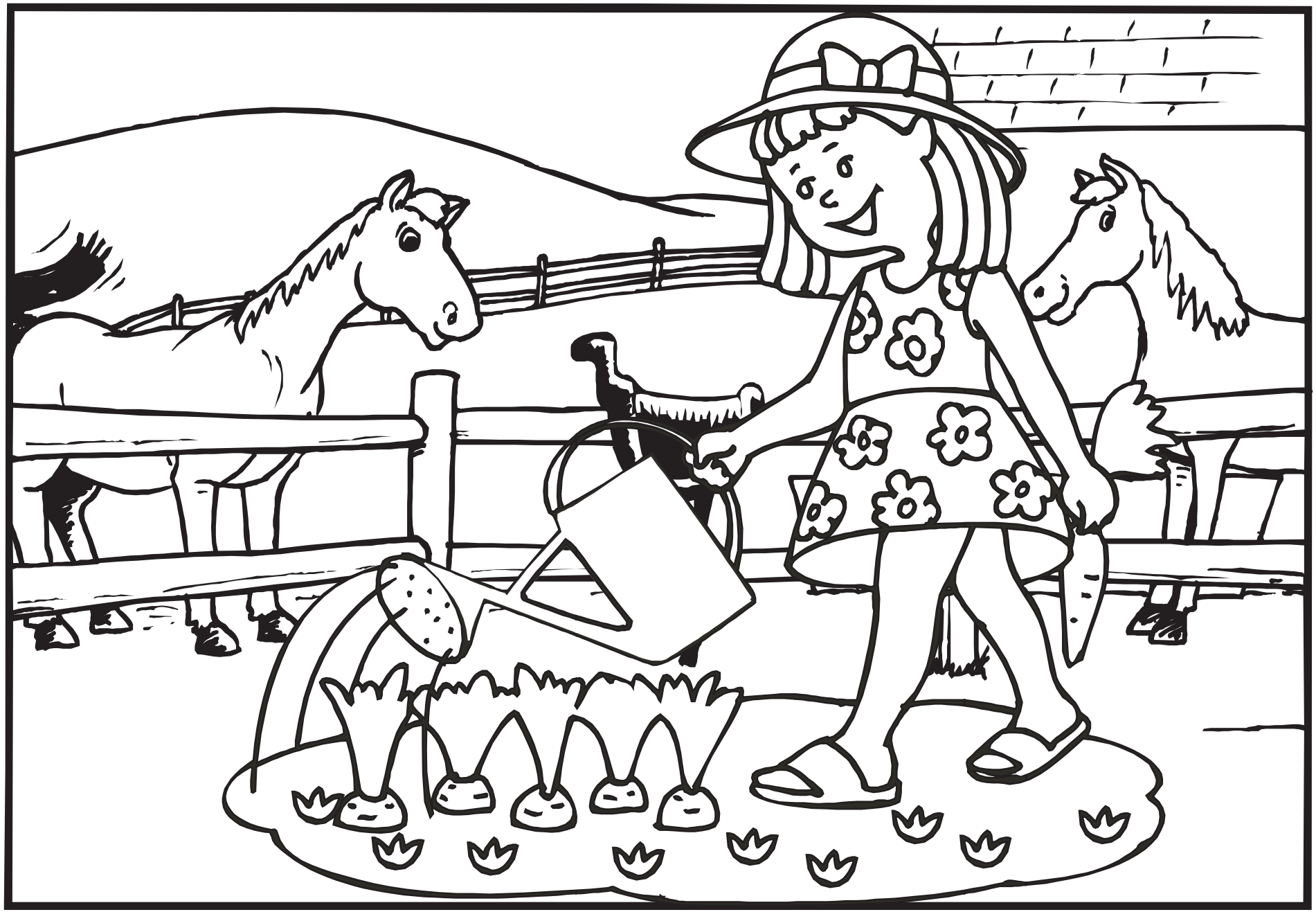
Mama duck has lost her chicks. Can you help her find them?



A-MAZE-ING RACE. Race a friend through Farmer Jone's conservation buffer zone to get to the stream. First one there may find some frogs along the stream bank.

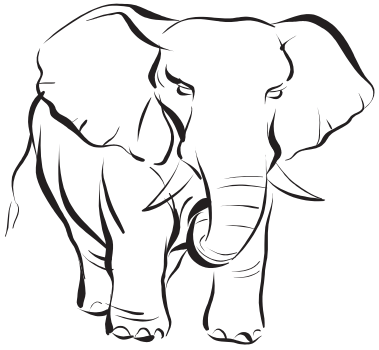
Answers on last page.

Did you know that only 1% of all the water on Earth can be used for drinking? The rest is too salty, or polluted, or exists as snow and ice. This is why it is important to never waste water!



Wildlife build homes in Conservation Reserve Program areas. Name all the animals and then circle those that you will NOT find living in CRP protected acreage.

K - - - - B - - -



E- - - - - - -

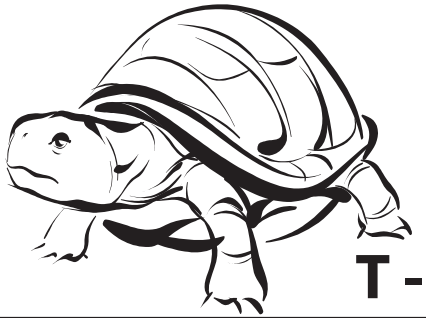
D - - - - - -

P - - - - B - - -

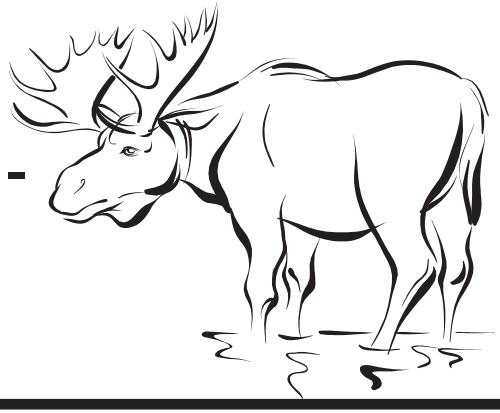
A- - - - - - - -

S - - - - - - -

G - - - - -



T - - - - -



M - - - -

We use natural resources faster than the Earth makes them, so it's important to use only what we need and to save what we can. Farmers and ranchers work to protect the environment by recycling - everything from irrigation water to old tires. By learning how to recycle glass, cans and old newspapers, you can help conserve our natural resources.

Conservation Reserve Program Word Search

BEARS
BEES
BENEFIT
BUFFER
CONSERVATION
CROPLAND
CULTIVATION
DEER
DROUGHT
EASEMENT
ENHANCEMENT
ENVIRONMENT
FISH
GRASSLAND
HABITAT
IRRIGATION
MANAGEMENT
MARSH
PLANTING
PROGRAM
RESERVE
RIPARIAN
RUNOFF
SEDIMENT
SEEDBED
SHRUBS
SNAKES
SOIL
STREAM
SWAMP
WEEDS
WETLANDS
WILDLIFE
ZONE

The Conservation Reserve Program uses words that have a very specific meaning to the farmers and ranchers who participate in the program. Some of those words are here. Can you find them?

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

note: some words share letters.

Conservation and Ecology - Build Your Own Wormery

Worms are fascinating, and they're an essential part of the environment. Worms help to increase the amount of air and water that gets into the soil. They break down organic matter, like leaves and grass, into things that plants can use. Earthworms are like free farm help. They help to "turn" the soil by bringing down organic matter from the top and mixing it with the soil below. When they eat, worms leave behind castings that are a very valuable type of fertilizer. You can learn a lot from a worm, and studying them at home is easy.

Supplies: A clear jar, sand, soil, a piece of old pantyhose, three elastic bands, food for the worms, and a strip of thick brown or black paper.

Directions: Fill the jar with layers of damp **(not wet)** sand and soil. Try not to mix the layers or get them too wet.

Place some worm food on top of the top layer. Worms love old potato peelings, carrots, lettuce, cabbage, celery, apple peelings, banana peels, orange rinds, and grapefruit. They also like cornmeal, oatmeal, crushed eggshells, coffee grounds with the filter, and tea bags

Find no more than 3 or 4 worms and carefully put them into the jar.

Place the pantyhose over the top of the jar and hold in place with a rubber band.

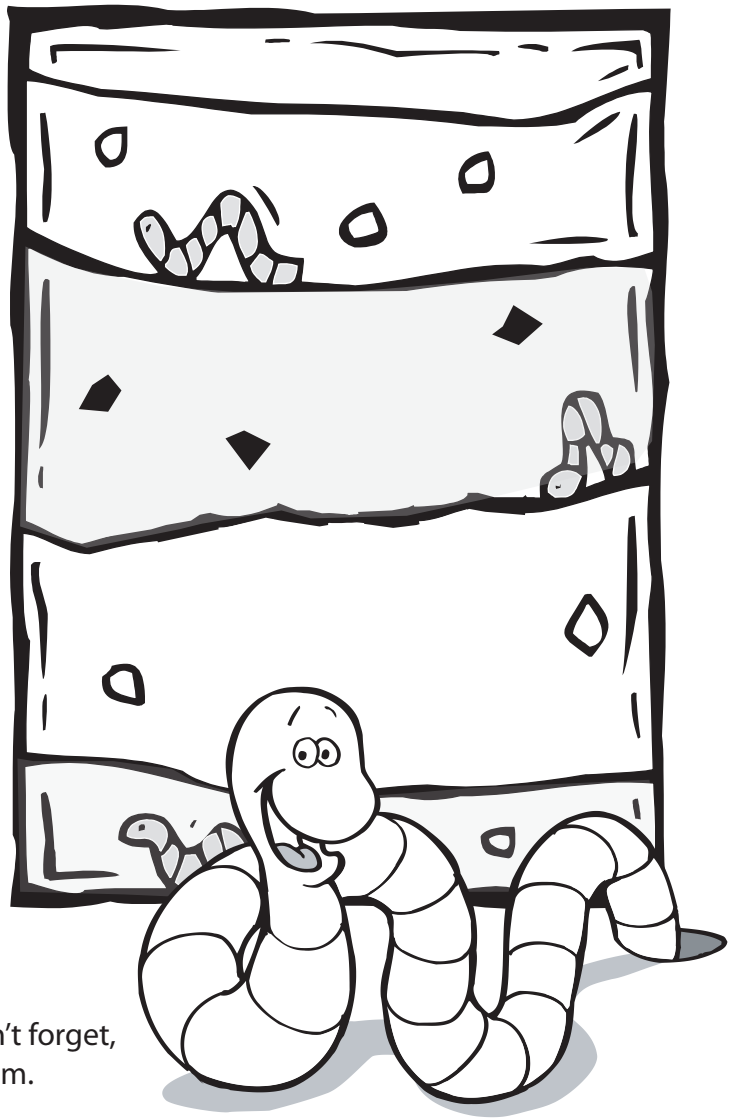
Worms like damp, dark places so use two elastic bands to hold the brown paper around the outside of the jar in order to keep out the light.

Put the jar in a cool, dark place.

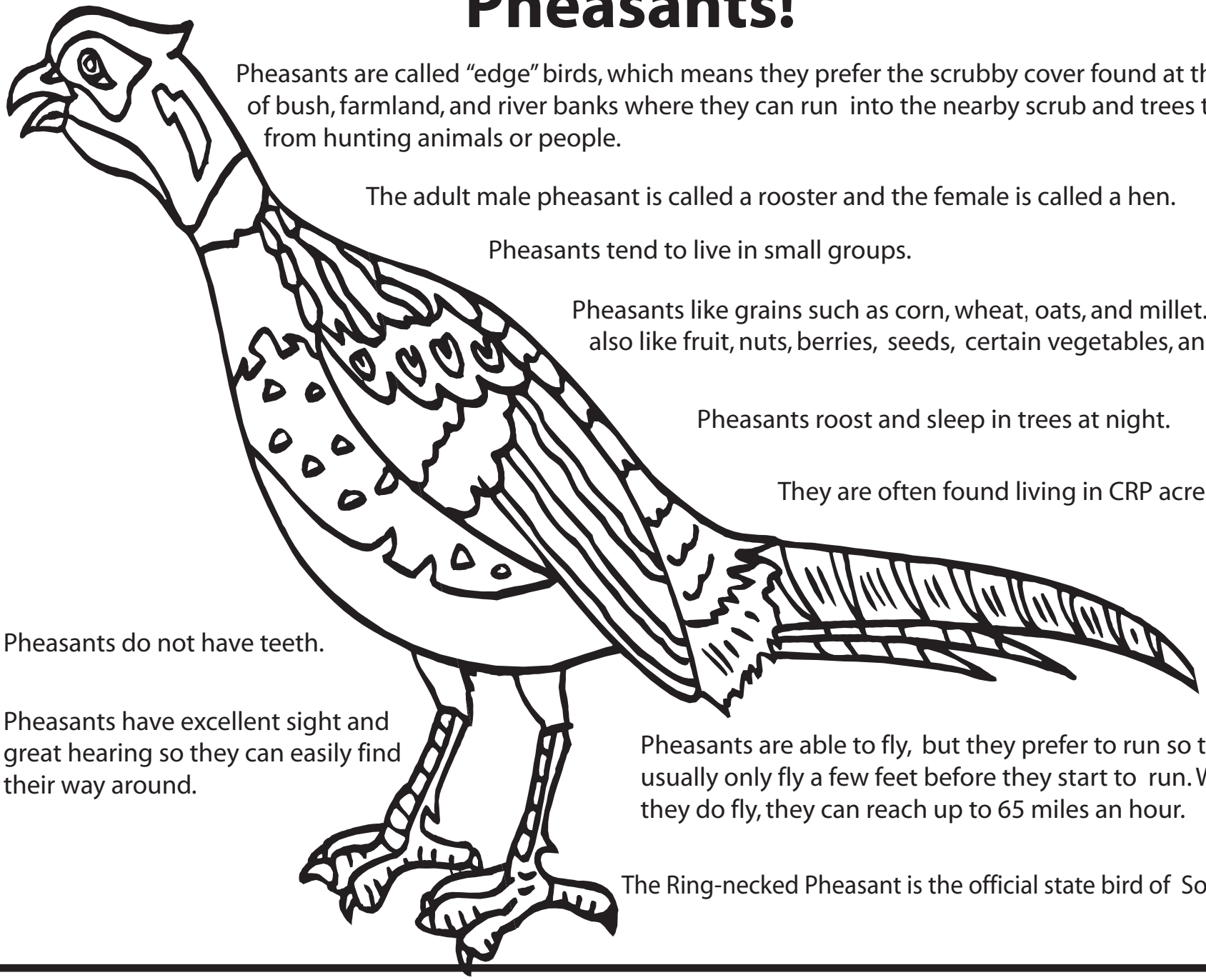
Check your wormery every day to make sure that the soil is still damp, and the food still fresh. Throw away any food that is rotting.

After about a week, remove the paper from around the jar so you can see what has happened. Have the layers of soil changed? Can you see any worm tunnels?

Always put the paper back around the jar when you have finished looking. And don't forget, after a couple of weeks, please return your worms to the place where you found them.



Pheasants!



Pheasants are called "edge" birds, which means they prefer the scrubby cover found at the edge of bush, farmland, and river banks where they can run into the nearby scrub and trees to hide from hunting animals or people.

The adult male pheasant is called a rooster and the female is called a hen.

Pheasants tend to live in small groups.

Pheasants like grains such as corn, wheat, oats, and millet. They also like fruit, nuts, berries, seeds, certain vegetables, and bugs.

Pheasants roost and sleep in trees at night.

They are often found living in CRP acreage.

Pheasants do not have teeth.

Pheasants have excellent sight and great hearing so they can easily find their way around.

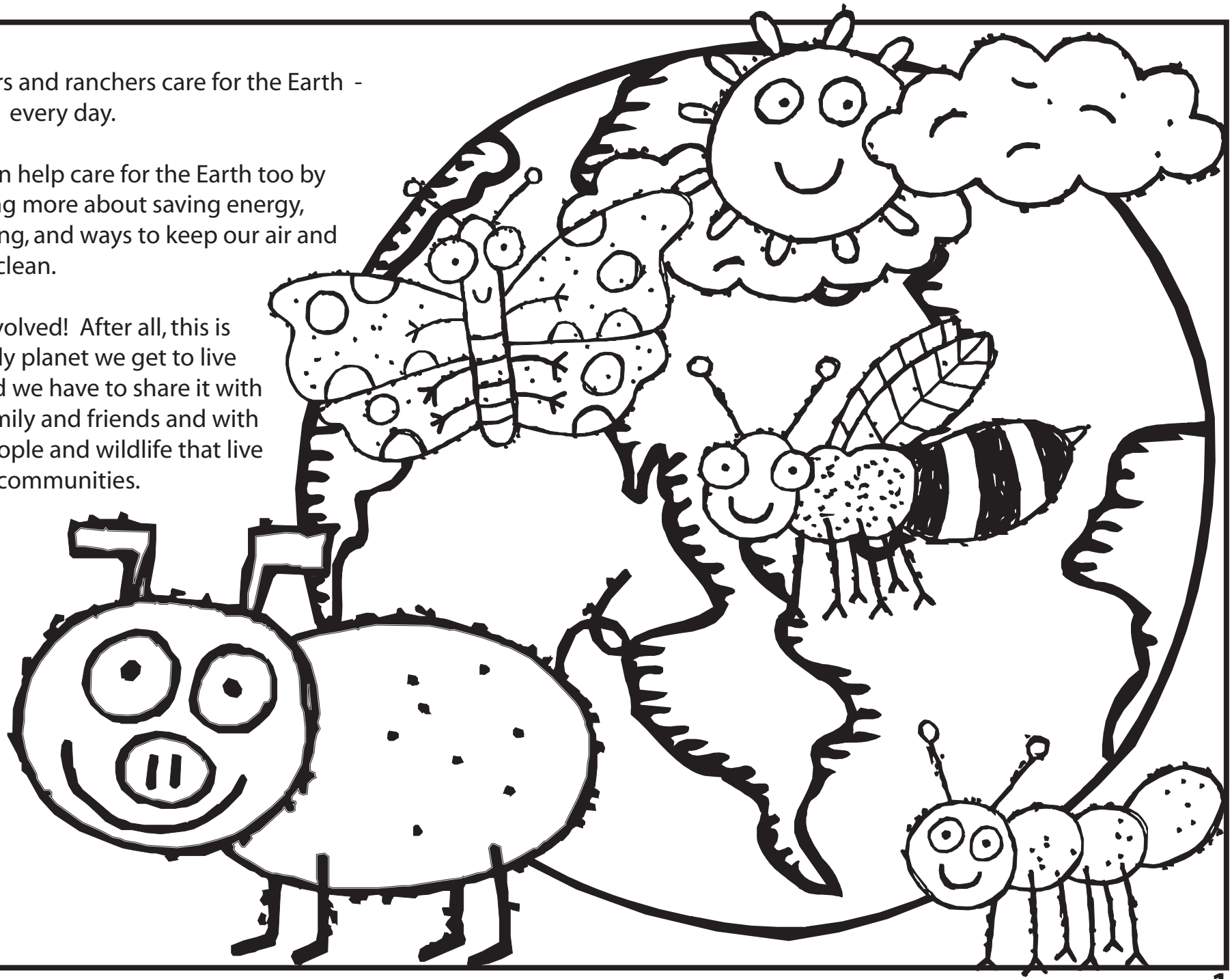
Pheasants are able to fly, but they prefer to run so they usually only fly a few feet before they start to run. When they do fly, they can reach up to 65 miles an hour.

The Ring-necked Pheasant is the official state bird of South Dakota.

Farmers and ranchers care for the Earth - all day, every day.

You can help care for the Earth too by learning more about saving energy, recycling, and ways to keep our air and water clean.

Get involved! After all, this is the only planet we get to live on, and we have to share it with our family and friends and with the people and wildlife that live in our communities.



On The Farm Animal Match Game.

duck - duckling	pigeon - squeaker
eagle - eaglet	rabbit - bunny
fish - fry	turkey - poult
fox - cub	pheasant - chick
frog - polliwog	deer - fawn
grouse - cheeper	wolf- pup
guinea fowl - keet	moose - calf
hawk - eyas	raccoon - kit
owl - owlet	bird - fledglings

The Quail Match Game - page 5

A and E ; B and F; C and D

Conservation Reserve Program Word Search.

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M C + W + + S + E + T + + + + + S + + + + S + + + + + H + S
A + U + E W + F + N + + + + + + + E + + + E + + Z + + A + E
E + + L A E I + E + E N H A N C E M E N T D + + O + + B + D
R + + M T L D M S D N A L T E W + A V D + I B E N E F I T I
T D P + D I N S + + + + + + + + + R R + B M + + E + + T + C
S + O L + O V N O I T A G I R R I S E D E E R + + + + A + I
+ + I O R N + A + + N + S R A E B H S D + N D + H + + T + T
+ W + I W F A + T + + O B U F F E R E + L T + S D + + + + C
+ + V + + N F I + I + + I + + + + + + R + + A I R + + + + + E
+ N + + + + O O R + O + + T P + + + + + + + F O + + + + + + S
E + + + + + + + T N A + N + + A L + + + S B U R H S + S + + N
E A S E M E N T T U P + + + + V A + + + G + + + + E + + + I
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+ + + + + O + + + + + + + + + + + + + S I + + N + + H + + + +
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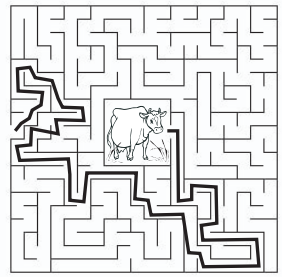
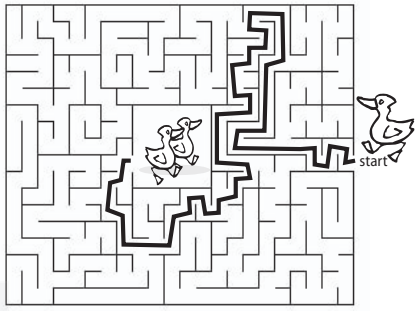
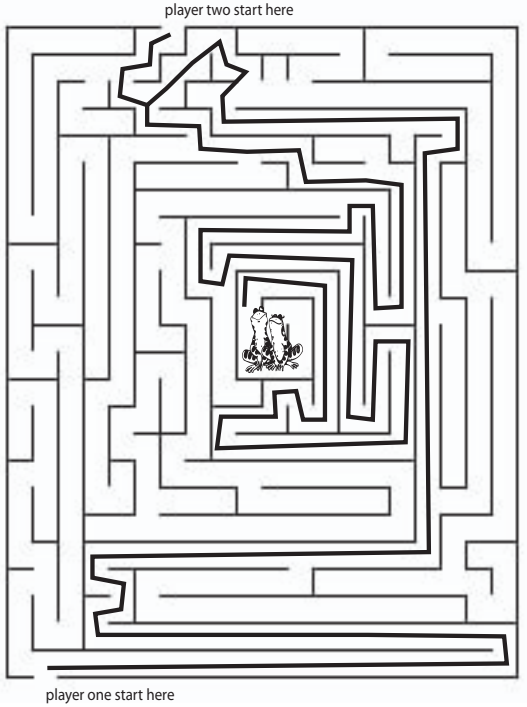
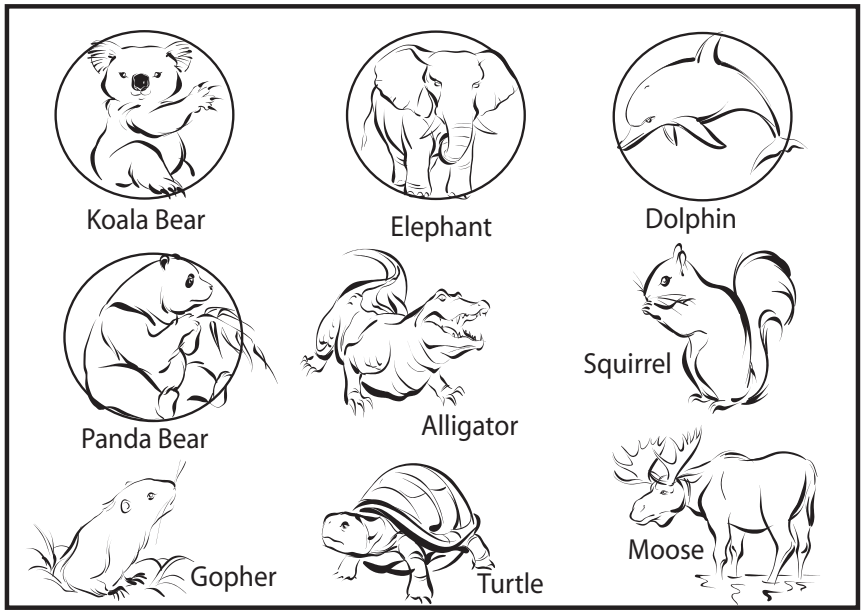






Wildlife Homes - The circled animals do not live on CRP acerage.



Plentiful Food, Clean Water, Fresh Air: The Conservation Reserve Program Does It All

A Parent's Guide to FSA and CRP

USDA Farm Service Agency's (FSA) Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is America's largest and most effective conservation program on private lands. In 2006, FSA observes CRP's 20th Anniversary, and honors the commitment of America's farmers and ranchers to protect our natural resources for all future generations.

Through CRP, farmers and ranchers plant native grasses, trees, and other vegetation next to crop fields and streams. They also install wetlands, grass waterways, and other conservation structures on their land. CRP plantings and structures keep soil from eroding into streams and rivers, and it also improves water quality by filtering out agricultural nutrients. Air quality is also improved by removing carbon from the atmosphere. CRP means we can breathe fresher air. It means that drinking water is safer for millions of people, lakes are cleaner for swimming and fishing, and soil is held in place to help grow our diverse and abundant food supply.

CRP vegetation provides excellent habitat for thousands of wildlife species. Because of the fresh water, cover and food CRP provides, populations of many wildlife species are increasing. Some of these species include ducks, pheasants, quail, wild turkeys, elk, deer, and pronghorn antelope.

Farmers and ranchers voluntarily enroll their land in CRP and receive rental payments and cost-share assistance to establish CRP plantings and structures. Besides CRP and the closely-related Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program partnerships, CRP offers various initiatives that target the most pressing environmental needs. More information on CRP and its initiatives is available at: http://www.fsa.usda.gov/dafp/cepd/default.htm

In addition to CRP and other conservation programs, FSA offers a multitude of assistance that helps farmers and ranchers produce crops and livestock. FSA commodity programs stabilize farm income, while farm loans help people buy and operate farms. When a natural disaster strikes, farmers turn to FSA for recovery funding. FSA also supplies food to the needy at home and abroad by purchasing surplus and forfeited commodities. More information on FSA is available at local nationwide FSA offices and online at: www.fsa.usda.gov

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Riparian buffer in Maryland

Quail chicks in Nebraska

Bison and deer in Montana

Alligators in Louisiana

USDA Farm Service Agency celebrates

20th Anniversary of the Conservation Reserve Program