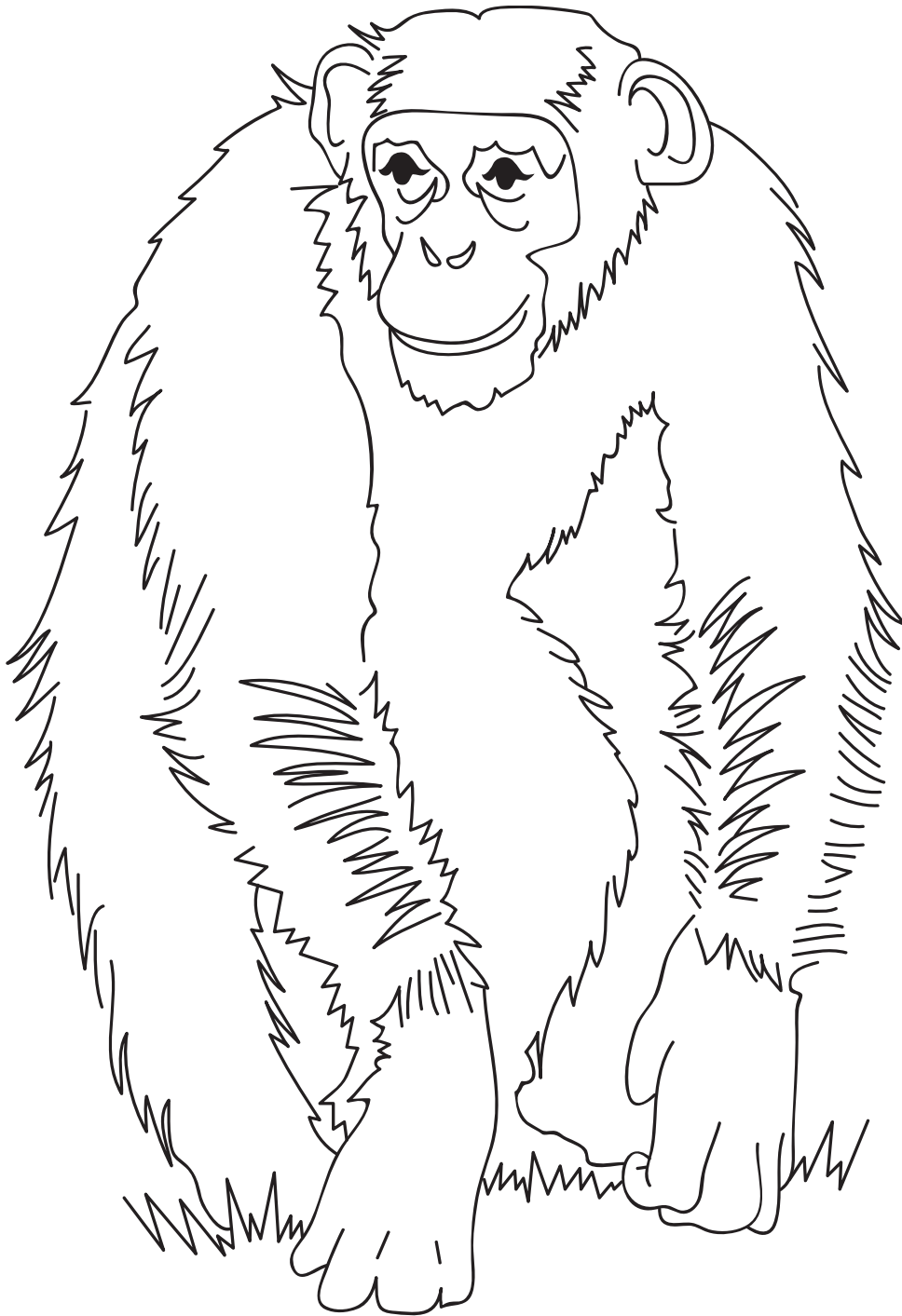
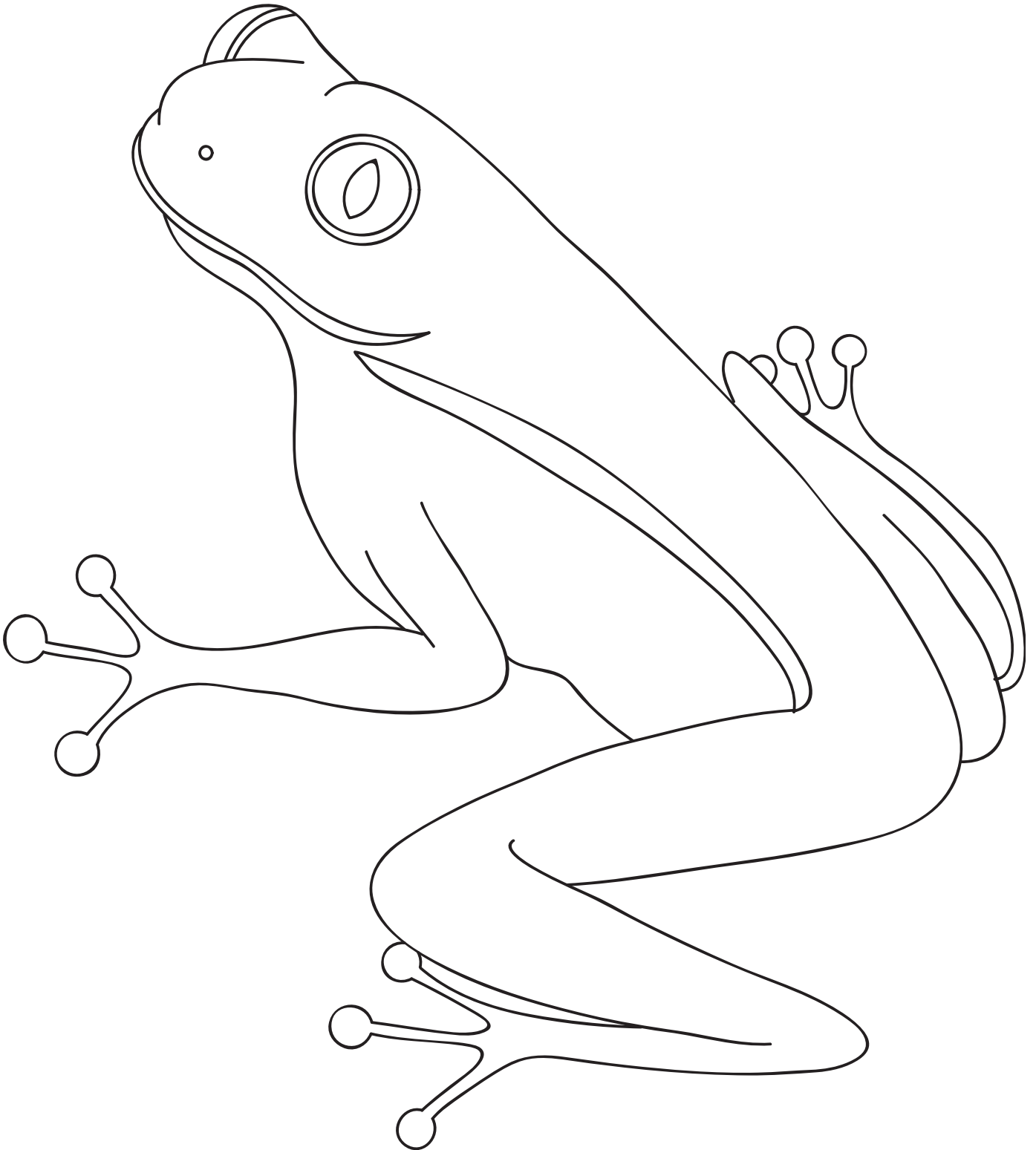


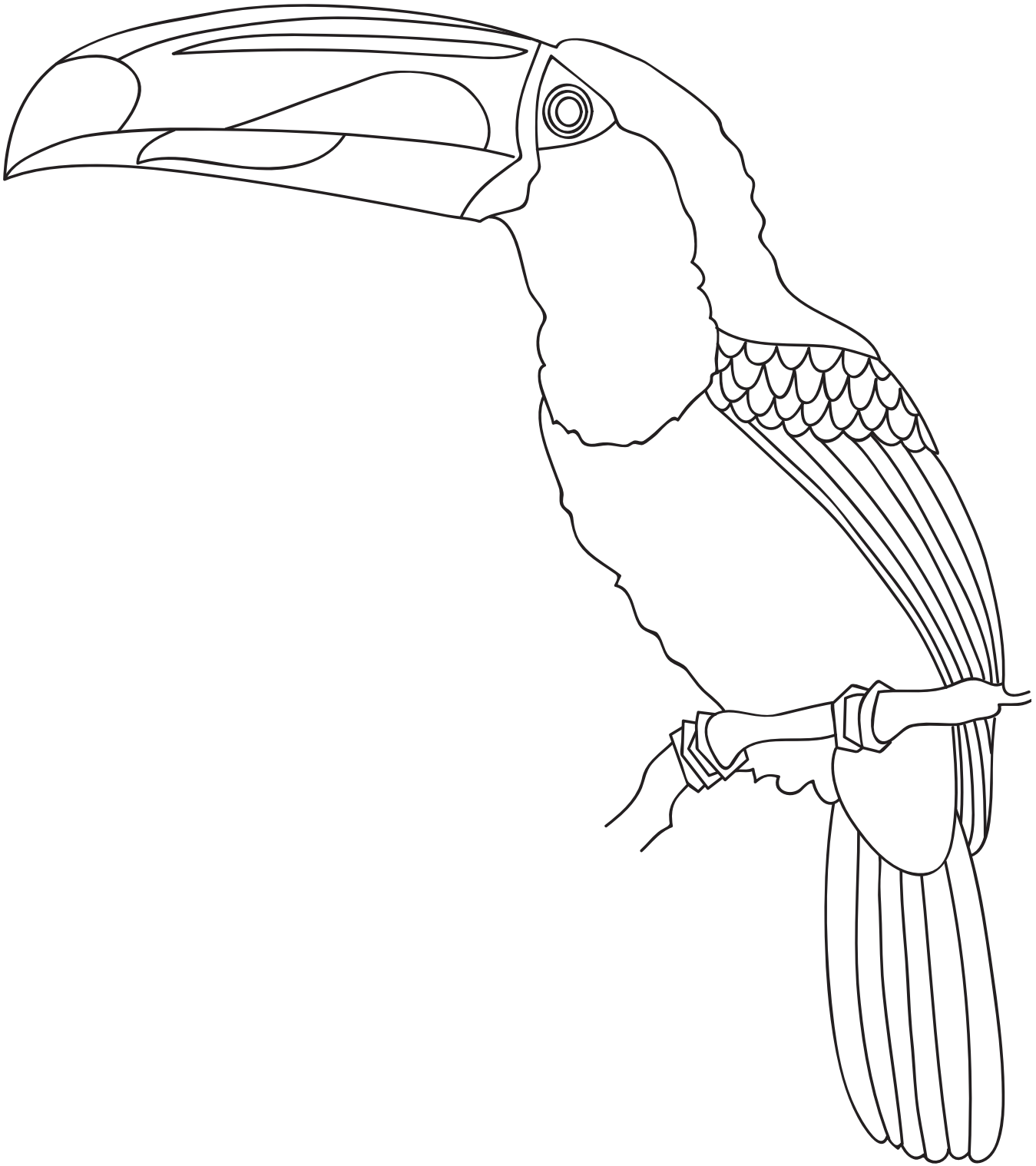
Chimpanzee



Tree Frog



Toucan



Monster Monkeys

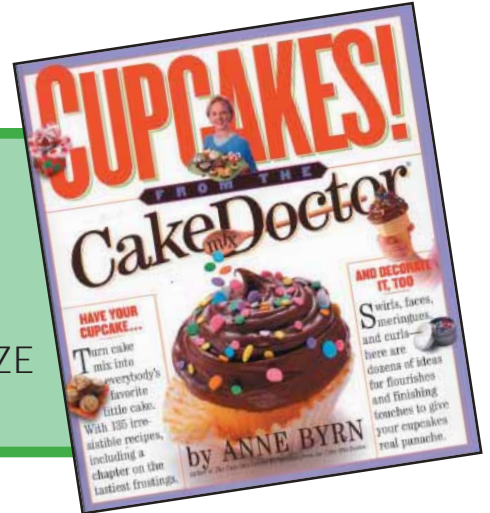
from *Cupcakes! From the Cake Mix Doctor* by Anne Byrn

These fun, big banana-packed cupcakes appeal to all ages, especially if you love the flavor of fresh banana bread. They're called "monster" because they're baked in cupcake pans with 3-inch cups and are larger than the average cupcake. And they're called "monkey" not only because when I bake them children seem to act like monkeys, jumping around the kitchen and trying to grab one of them as soon as it has been frosted. I like to play up the monkey theme by piping a monkey's face on the frosted cupcake (see "the Cupcake Doctor says" for directions). Decorated or not, these cupcakes are moist and inviting.

the Cupcake Doctor says...

Monkey around! To create a monkey's face on top of the frosted cupcake, place two brown M&M candies for eyes and one slightly lower, on its edge and in the center, for the nose. With a squeeze bottle filled with chocolate frosting, or a tube of brown icing from the supermarket, pipe a semicircle for a wide grin. At each end of the grin, anchor a red M&M candy. For ears, secure two mini Oreo cookies in the frosting until they hold (use a little extra frosting if needed). Or use banana chips for the ears. Sprinkle chocolate sprinkles around the edges for fur.

MAKES: 12 LARGE (3-INCH CUPCAKES OR 20-24 REGULAR 2 ½ INCH CUPCAKES
PREPARATION TIME: 15 MINUTES
BAKING TIME: 24 to 28 MINUTES FOR LARGE CUPCAKES, 19 to 20 MINUTES FOR REGULAR SIZE
ASSEMBLY TIME: 10 MINUTES



CUPCAKES:

Vegetable oil spray for misting the pans
All-purpose flour for dusting the pans
1 package (18.25 ounces) plain yellow cake mix
1 ½ cups mashed bananas from 3 medium or 4 small bananas
½ cup water
½ cup vegetable oil
3 large eggs
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
Cinnamon Cream Cheese Frosting (See Below)

1. Place a rack in the center of the oven and preheat the oven to 350° F. Mist the pans with vegetable oil spray and dust with flour. Shake out the excess flour and set the pans aside.
2. Place the cake mix, mashed bananas, water, oil, eggs, and cinnamon in a large mixing bowl. Blend with the electric mixer on low speed for 30 seconds. Stop the machine and scrape down the sides again if needed. The batter should look thick and well combined. Spoon or scoop ½ cup of batter (for the large cups) or ⅓ cup batter (for the regular cups) into each prepared cup, filling it three quarters of the way full. Place the pans in the oven.
3. Bake the cupcakes until they are golden and spring back when lightly pressed with your finger, 24 to 28 minutes for large cupcakes, 18 to 20 minutes for regular size. Remove the pans from the oven and place them on wire racks to cool for 5 minutes. Run a dinner knife around the edges of cupcakes, lift the cupcakes up from the bottoms of the cups using the end of the knife, and pick them out of the cups carefully with your fingertips. Place them on a wire rack to cool for 15 minutes before frosting.
4. Meanwhile, prepare the Cinnamon Cream Cheese Frosting.
5. Place 2 to 3 tablespoons of frosting on each cupcake and swirl to spread it out with a short metal spatula or spoon, taking care to cover the tops completely. Place, uncovered, in the refrigerator and chill until frosting sets, 20 minutes. The cupcakes are ready to serve.

Store the cupcakes in a cake server or under a glass dome, at room temperature for up to 3 days or in the refrigerator for up to 1 week. Or freeze them, wrapped in aluminum foil or in a cake saver, for up to 6 months. Thaw the cupcakes overnight in the refrigerator before serving.

CINNAMON CREAM CHESSE FROSTING:

- 1 package (8 ounces) reduced-fat cream cheese, at room temperature
- 4 tablespoons (½ stick) butter, at room temperature
- 3 cups confectioners' sugar, sifted
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

the Cupcake Doctor says...

If the cream cheese is too cold, unwrap the package and soften it on a plate in the microwave oven on high power for 20 seconds.

MAKES 3 CUPS, ENOUGH TO FROST 24 (2-1/2 INCH SIZE) CUPCAKES GENEROUSLY
PREPARATION TIME: 5 MINUTES

1. Place the cream cheese and butter in a large mixing bowl. Blend with an electric mixer on low speed until combined, 30 seconds. Stop the machine. Add the confectioners' sugar, a little at a time, blending with the mixer on low speed until the sugar is well incorporated, 1 minute. Add the cinnamon, then increase the mixer speed to medium and blend the frosting until fluffy, 1 minute more.
2. Use to frost the cupcakes.

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Monster Monkeys

From Cupcakes! From the Cake Mix Doctor

Reading Rain Forest Snacks

Sticky Bamboo Rods

Long pretzel rods
Caramels
Crushed nuts



Melt caramels in top of a double boiler. Dip half of the pretzel rod in caramel and roll in crushed nuts. Let harden on wax paper that is coated with non-stick spray.

Rain Forest Punch

1-12 oz. can frozen lemonade
1-12 oz. can frozen orange juice
1 Large can pineapple juice
6 Ripe bananas
4 Cups of sugar
1 Liter of lemon-lime soda

Boil sugar in 6 cups of water until dissolved. Cool. With a mixer, beat bananas into 2 cups of the pineapple juice. Add remainder of pineapple juice while mixing. Add frozen juices, 6 cans of water; and cooled sugar base. Pour into bags and freeze for 24 hours. Remove from freezer 1 hour before you are ready to serve. Pour thawed punch into a bowl and pour lemon-lime soda over slush and serve.

Cracker Jeeps

For each jeep, you'll need:

8 Whole cinnamon graham crackers
1 Whole chocolate graham cracker
Marshmallow cream
4 Round chocolate cookies
Gumdrops and licorice strips

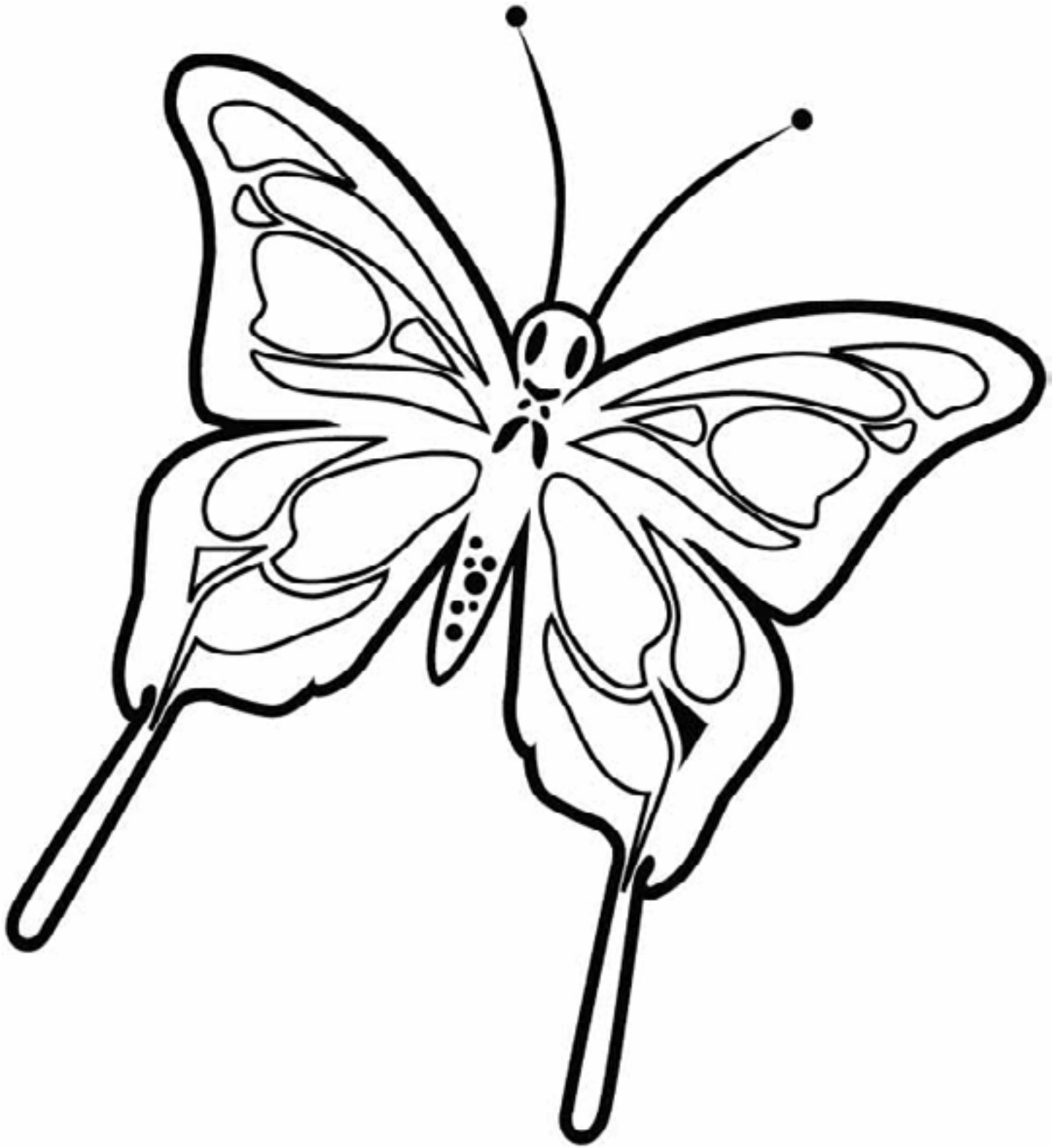


Body: Using marshmallow crème, paste together a stack of 5 whole cinnamon graham crackers. Layer and paste 3 cinnamon graham cracker halves in front. Layer and paste 3-quarter cinnamon graham crackers in back. Bumpers: Paste on licorice strips. Wheels: Paste on 4 round cookies. Lights: cut gumdrops in half. Seats: Layer and paste chocolate graham pieces. Windshield: Coat quarter piece of chocolate graham cracker with marshmallow crème and carefully paste onto hood. Let harden before serving.

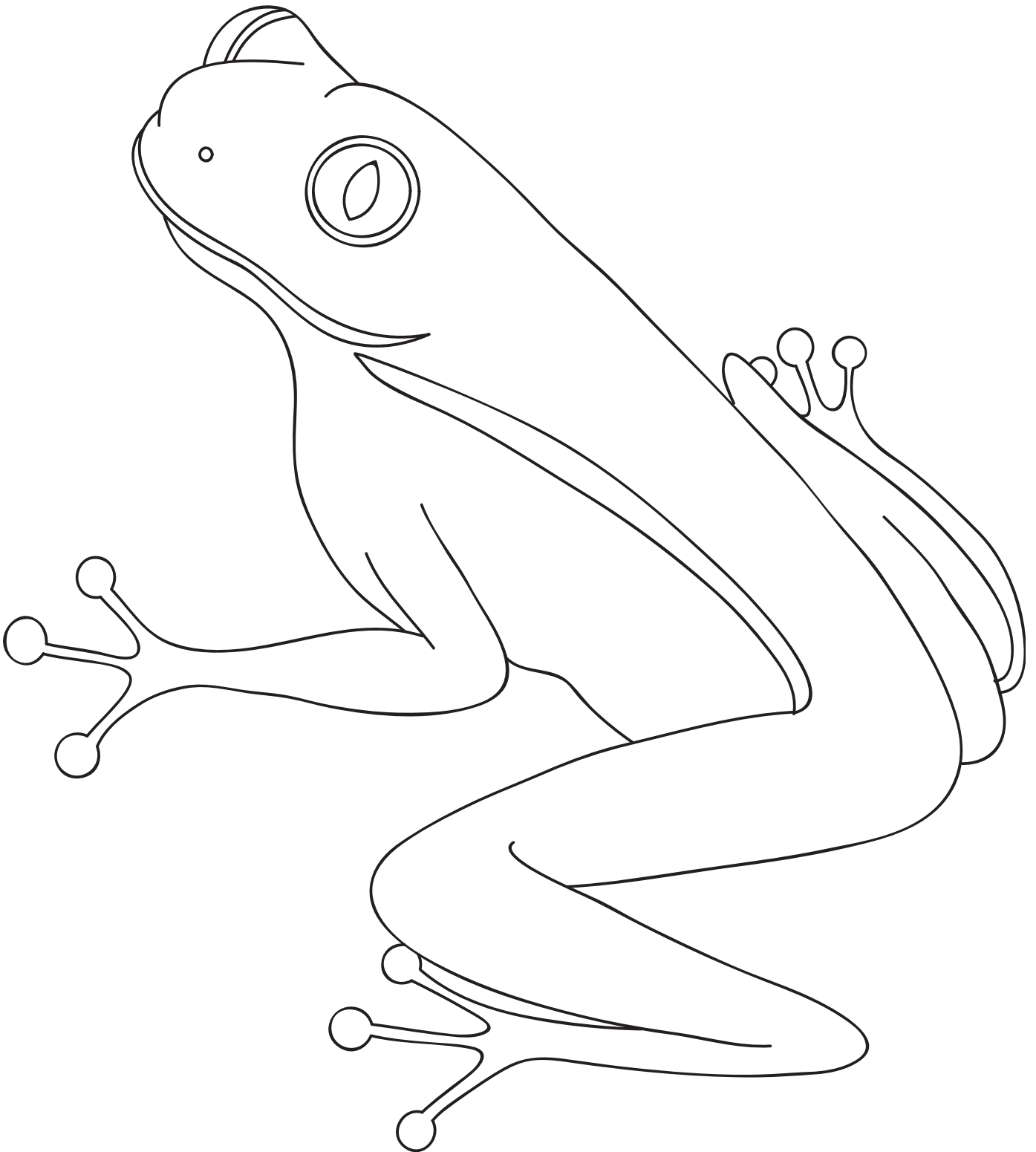
Ants on a Log

Celery
Peanut butter
Raisins

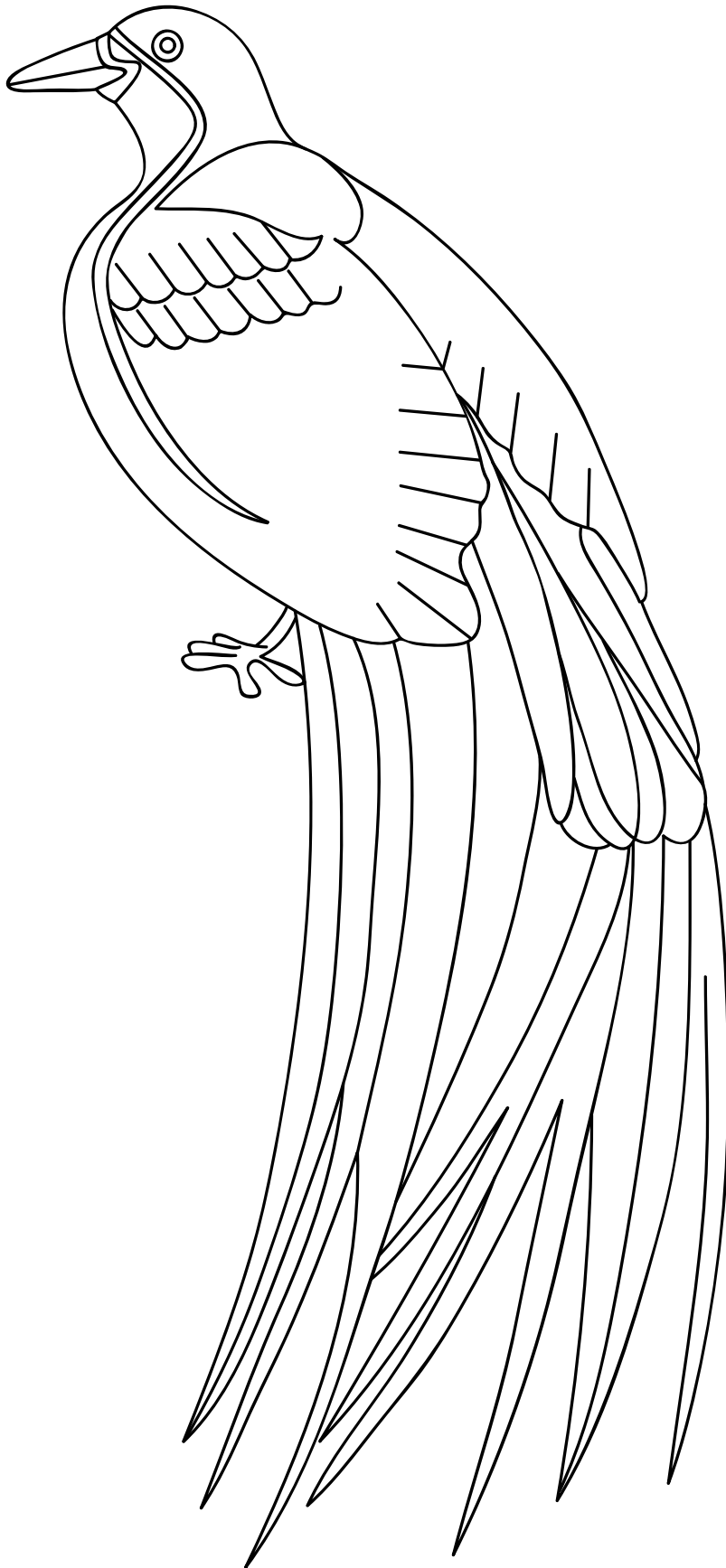
Remove leaves from several stalks of celery. Spoon peanut butter in the grooves of the stalks and garnish peanut butter with raisins to create your "ants."



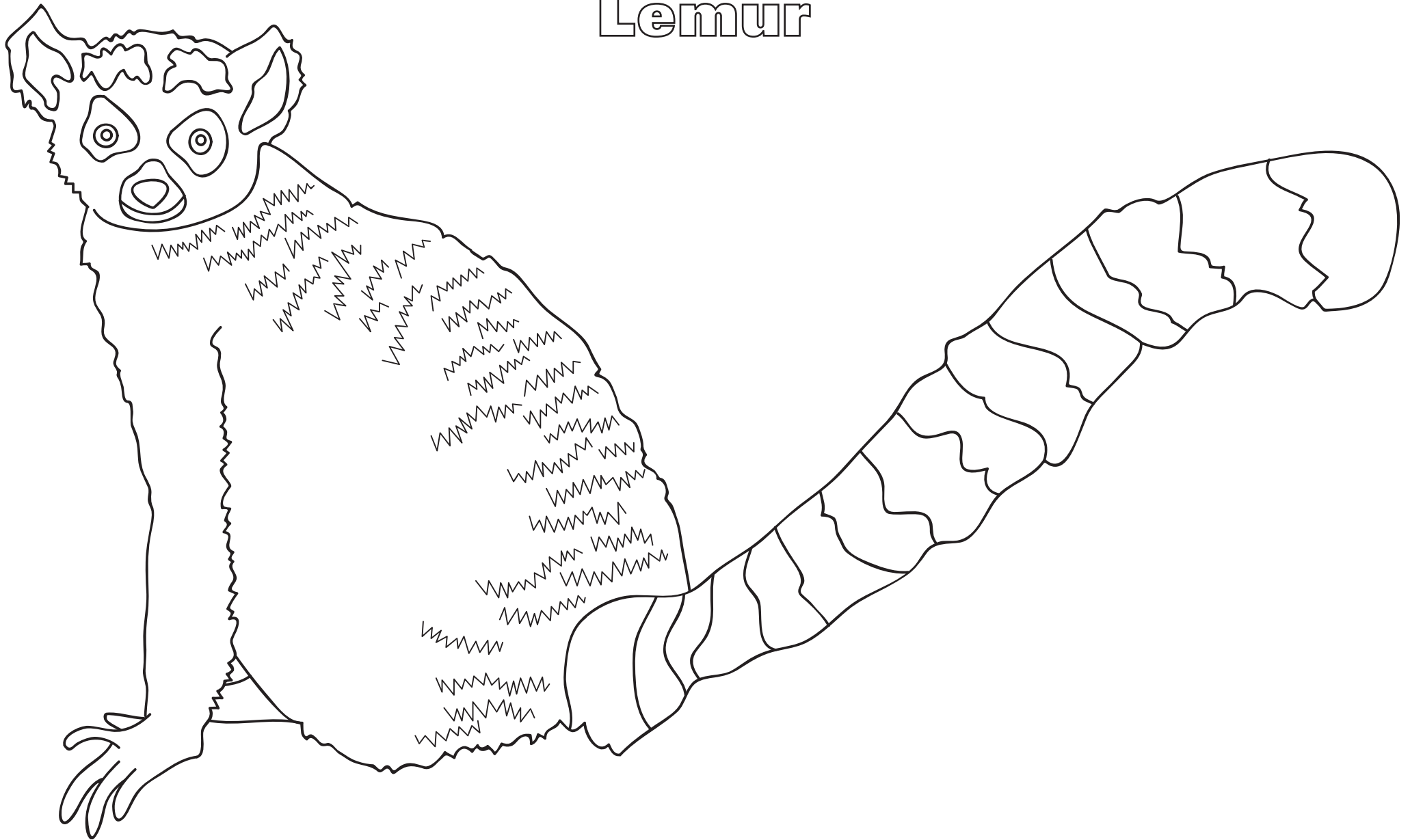
Tree Frog



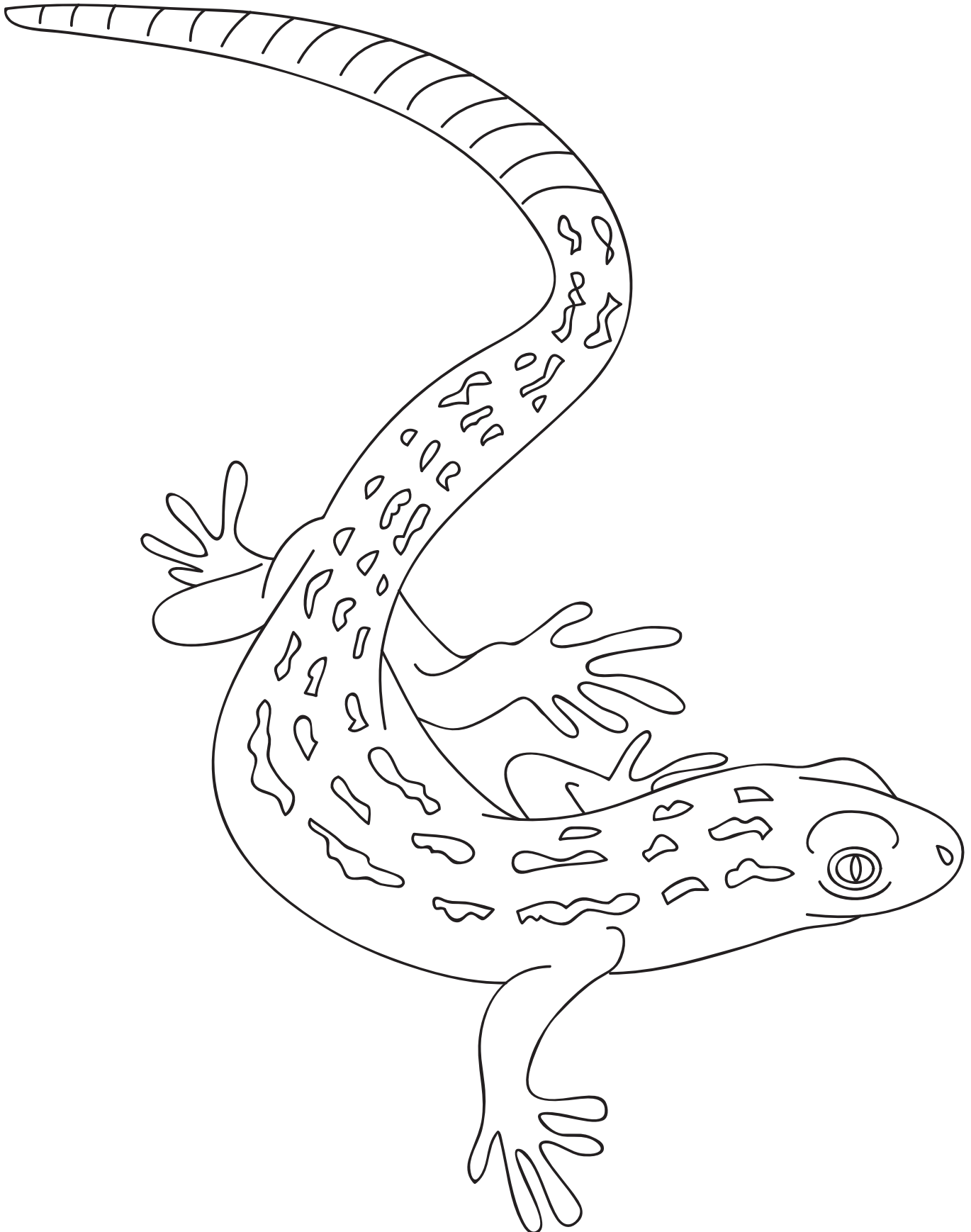
Bird of Paradise



Lemur



Lizard



Sloth



Parrot

