

## The Turtle

### Interesting Information:

- The Turtle is considered to be the oldest, most sacred symbol of some tribes who believed that North America was created on the back of a turtle. Because of this the turtle was referred to as "Mother Earth"
- Most Aboriginal peoples refer to North America as "Turtle Island"
- The turtle shell was also used as a calendar, with the thirteen large patterned squares counting out all the full moons of the year
- The turtle also represents a long and meaningful life, a protector with patience and great focus



## The Inukshuk

### Interesting Information:

- The Inukshuk is a symbol with deep roots in the Inuit culture and is represented on the flag of Nunavut
- The Inukshuk is used as a directional symbol made of stone and represents a guardian for the traveler, bringing a safe journey over land and water
- Shaped to represent a person and is actually the Inuktitut word meaning "to look like a person"



## The Beaver

### Interesting Information:

- As Canadians, the beaver is a very important symbol. It helped build Canada to what it is today through the trading of beaver pelts
- Most of Canada's towns were discovered and built as fur trading posts
- The beaver is a master of builders and carvers and is known as resourceful, hardworking, determined and creative



## The Loon

### Interesting Information:

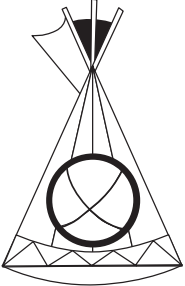
- The Loon is the best swimmer of all birds in North America and is always around water
- Loons have solid bones, unlike other birds who have hollow bones, and can stay under water for up to five minutes by emptying their lungs
- The call of the Loon is distinguishable by its haunting sound. Many Aboriginal People believe that the Loon calls to them to think of their dreams and deepest thoughts
- Loons mate for life and represent loyalty, companionship and the importance of family



## The Caribou

### Interesting Information:

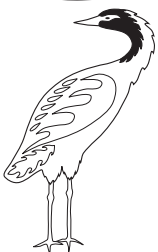
- The Caribou were used as a source of food and warm clothing by the Inuit. Their hide was made into blankets and shelter; their antlers were made into tools, toys and weapons. When hunted, the Caribou were celebrated, respected and treated as a gift
- The Caribou is the only member of the deer family to migrate twice a year and can be found in Canada, Russia, Greenland and Alaska



## The Teepee

### Interesting Information:

- Teepees are temporary, portable dwellings made by Aboriginals of the Great Plains and moved with the community
- Teepees were originally made of hides from the Bison
- Teepees were built by the women of the tribe as traditionally the men were the hunters
- Women took great pride in the building of their Teepee and would decorate the outside with colourful images of animals and meaningful symbols
- Teepees are very strong structures that do not blow down, allow for a fire to be built within and are well ventilated



## The Crane

### Interesting Information:

- The Crane is an elegant bird with a long neck and legs, representing poise, balance, proper posture and strength
- Two species of Crane call North America home, the very rare Whooping Crane, which was once almost extinct due to over-hunting of the bird, and the more abundant Sandhill Crane
- The Crane has three different unique calls. When the different calls of the Crane are heard, they are very eloquent and are used to communicate and to warn others of predators



## The Orca (Killer Whale)

### Interesting Information:

- The Orca is the largest of the Dolphin family and is a very inquisitive and approachable mammal. They have no natural predators and live anywhere from 50-80 years
- All whales are treated with much respect and Orcas were believed to carry the souls of the ancestors of the First Nations Peoples
- The Orca was regarded as the guardian and ruler of the sea and was never to be harmed
- Other species of whales such as the Humpback or Grey Whale were hunted by the First Nations Peoples. Every part of the whale was either eaten or used in some way for items such as clothing and tools.



## The Raven

### Interesting Information:

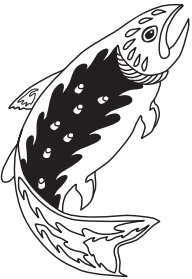
- The Raven has many conflicting teachings surrounding it and represents everything from birth and death, to magic and creation
- Due to the blackness of the Ravens feathers, it has been said that the Raven stole the light and hides it until it is drawn out. The Raven is also known as the "trickster" or "shape shifter" because of its abilities to transform the light
- Many popular legends say that the Raven brought the Salmon to the waters, which became the life source for many coastal tribes. This gave tribes great reason to celebrate the Raven
- The Raven are excellent tool users, playful, are not fearful of other birds and are very fast and wary



## The Dreamcatcher

### Interesting Information:

- The Dreamcatcher is believed to catch all dreams, regardless of if they were good or bad dreams, when hung near a window
- The bad dreams would be caught in the strands of the web and trapped there until morning. The sun would then burn them off
- Knowing their way, the good dreams would filter through the hole in the centre and would filter down into the feathers and held there to be dreamed another night



## The Salmon

### Interesting Information:

- The Salmon provided food for both animals and humans and was treated with high regard, symbolizing great wealth
- The Aboriginal Peoples of the Northwest Coast were able to flourish due to the abundance of Salmon, which became their staple food source
- To ensure a good harvest, coastal tribes celebrated the first catch of the season with ceremonies to give thanks



## The Eagle

### Interesting Information:

- Aboriginal teachings from many tribes believe that birds were created before man and the eagle was the king bird of the world
- When a prayer is made, it is believed that the eagle flies the prayer as close to the creator as possible and lets the prayer go as the eagle flies the highest of all beings
- To receive an eagle feather, or a bone from an eagle, is a sacred gift and represents good fortune for both the giver and the receiver
- The Eagle is also the sacred symbol of happiness



## The Bear

### Interesting Information:

- The bear is regarded as having the traits of a human. There are many myths told about bears becoming humans and humans becoming bears. Due to this, there is strong mysticism surrounding the bear and they are often celebrated
- When tracks from a bear were found in the wild, they were regarded as symbols of leadership
- Due to the hibernating abilities of the bear, they are seen as looking deep within themselves to find what they need to survive, representing strength, intuition, practicality and great wisdom



## The Métis Flag

### Interesting Information:

- The Métis Flag was used first in 1816, is the oldest flag native to Canada and remains today as a symbol of Canada's long Métis heritage
- The Flag has an infinity symbol in the middle to signify the union of the European fur traders and the First Peoples of Canada to create the Métis, a distinct Aboriginal people. The infinity symbol also suggests the unique Métis culture will go on forever



## The Wolf

### Interesting Information:

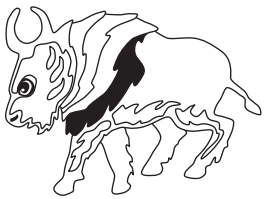
- Wolves are extremely intelligent animals, represent power, are skilled hunters, mate for life and travel in packs symbolizing a strong sense of family and togetherness
- Packs have defined rules and a hierarchical structure with an “alpha” male and an “alpha” female who lead the pack
- The wolf is viewed as a powerful and spiritual animal and is an important component of Aboriginal teachings



## The Goose

### Interesting Information:

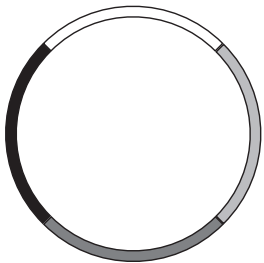
- Geese mate for life and the family remains together for several months while the mother and father both share in the raising of the goslings
- The goose was regarded as an exceptional and mysterious bird. The migration patterns of the goose, their ability to fly in a “V” shape to create wind drafts, and the way they stay together all contribute to this celebrated vision
- The goose was often regarded as a great communicator as its quills were used as writing instruments



## The Buffalo (Bison)

### Interesting Information:

- Early survival of the Plains Natives depended on the buffalo as they supplied virtually everything needed to live; food, clothing, tools, medicine and housing. No part of the buffalo went to waste
- Due to the great dependence on the buffalo, the Plains Native People celebrated and honoured the buffalo and offered thanks to them for their gifts and ability to sustain life
- Bison can weigh up to 2000 pounds and can run for long periods of time at up to 56 km/h. This made the bison a challenge to hunt during times before guns and horses were introduced. Techniques were established for hunting bison such as; surrounding a small herd into a tight group with a human chain to allow for a clearer target using a bow and arrow, and “buffalo jumps” which involved stampeding bison over cliffs



## The Medicine Wheel

### Interesting Information:

- The Medicine Wheel represents Aboriginal teachings based on balance and harmony secured by the four directions – North, East, South, West
- The circular shape teaches that everything is connected and equal as there is no beginning and no end
- Represents and celebrates the unity of all races; white, yellow, red and black
- The term “Medicine” does not refer to drugs or herbal remedies. It is used within the context of spiritual energy

## Aboriginal Storytelling Carpet - Symbols and Symbolism References

Listed above for each symbol are just a few samples of what the symbols on our Aboriginal Storytelling Carpet represent. There are numerous teachings for each symbol and for that reason, we have included a list of websites to reference for additional information.

### Reference Websites

<http://www.aboriginalcanada.gc.ca> – Government of Canada website for everything Aboriginal. Features online Aboriginal resources, information, government programs and services, legends and folklore

[http://www.shannonthunderbird.com/symbols\\_and\\_meanings.htm](http://www.shannonthunderbird.com/symbols_and_meanings.htm) - Information about many Aboriginal symbols, sacred animals and interesting legends and beliefs surrounding each symbol

[http://www.rivernen.ca/fn\\_home.htm](http://www.rivernen.ca/fn_home.htm) - Provides the history of the Rouge River Valley, Oak Ridges Moraine, Duffins Creek, and the Humber River; its legends and the peoples who inhabited the areas

<http://www.nativetech.org> - Focuses on the arts and history of Eastern Woodland Peoples

<http://www.nativeonline.com> - Describes Aboriginal symbols, provides many legends and folklore and information about Aboriginal artwork

<http://www.nanations.com/canada/index.htm> - Link to all Aboriginal bands in Canada

<http://www.members.shaw.ca/kcic1/beaver.html> - Features a history of the beaver in Canada

<http://www.civilization.ca/aborig/aborige.asp> - Canadian Museum of Civilization Corporation website. Provides extensive and detailed information pertaining to Canada’s First Peoples including settlement facts, origin stories, famous Aboriginals and their contributions, languages, symbolism and additional website links to reference

<http://www.civilization.ca/tresors/ethno/ety0000e.html> - Curriculum-based Aboriginal teaching resources

<http://www.metisnation.ca> – Métis National Council website. Contains a detailed history of the Métis people, current Métis laws, and information regarding the latest Métis news

<http://www.tourismvictoria.com/Content/EN/1305.asp> - Detailed description of animals and their symbolism in native culture

<http://www.whats-your-sign.com/native-american-animal-symbols.html> - Native American zodiac symbols and their interpretations

<http://www.metisresourcecentre.mb.ca/history/flag.htm> - Métis resources including a detailed history of the flag, a history of the Métis people, and biographies about famous Métis including Louis Riel and Gabriel Dumont

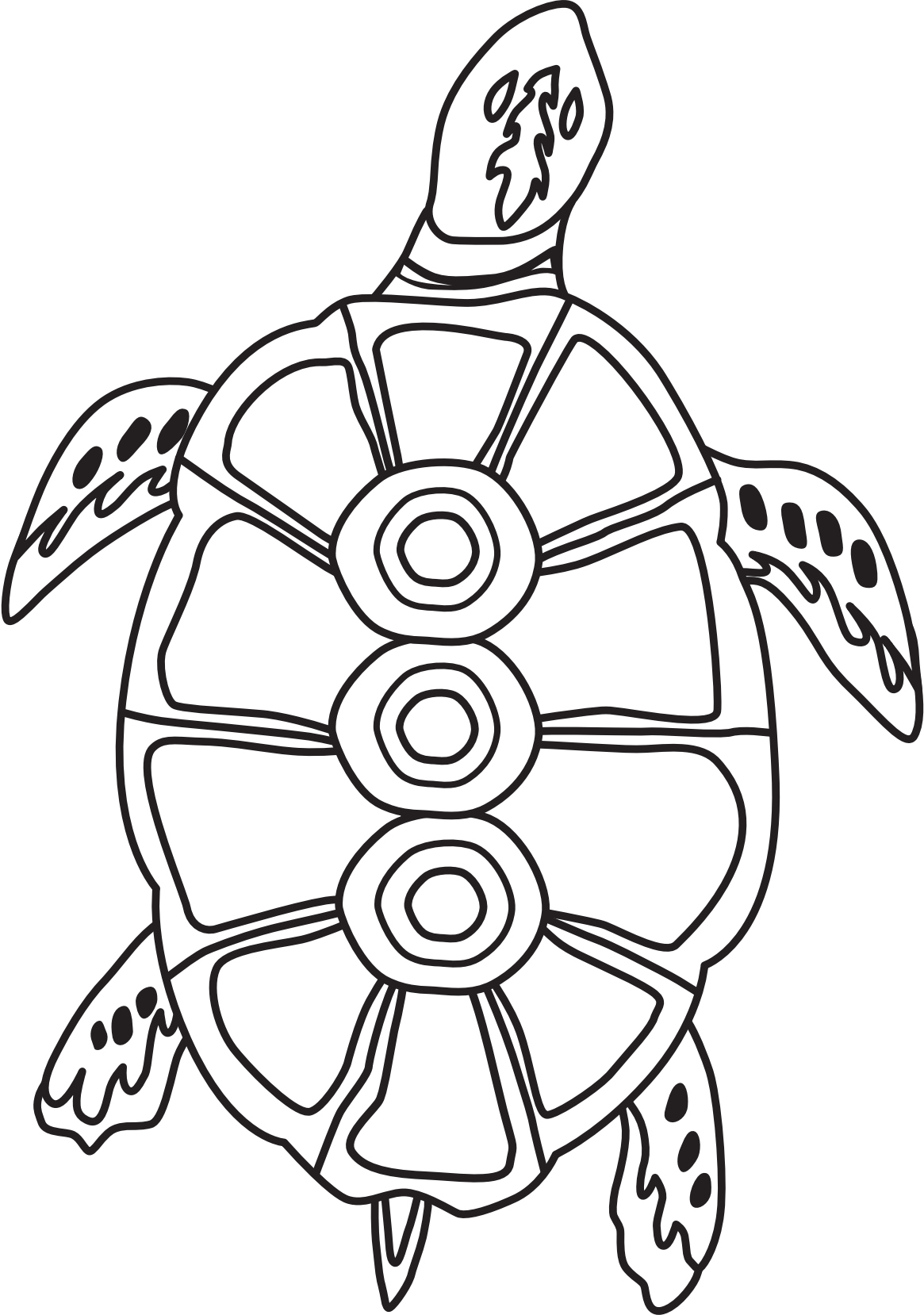
<http://www.head-smashed-in.com> - A city located outside of Fort MacLeod, Alberta with one of the most well-preserved Buffalo jumps to date, now a major tourist attraction and a designated World Heritage Site. Website explores the history of the Buffalo jump and contains information on guided tours and teepee camping

# **WINTERGREEN Aboriginal Storytelling Carpet**

## **Activity Suggestions**

- Visit the websites listed under the “References” and compile a selection of legends about some of the symbols represented on the carpet
  - Read the legend out loud to the students
  - Tell your students about what Aboriginal band the legend originates from and point out the geographical location on a map. Discuss that location; has anyone ever been there, does anyone know someone who has been there, what do you know about that area, would you like to visit that area and why
  - Have your students point out the symbol the legend is about on the carpet and encourage them to discuss their personal experiences with that symbol, how the legend made them feel, and what they did or did not like about the legend
- The following pages contain outline drawings of each of the symbols found on our Aboriginal Storytelling Carpet, along with a few blank lines. Please feel free to photocopy these pages for distribution to the students in your class
- Have your students colour in the pictures using any colours they choose. Encourage them to use many colours to express their creativity
- On the blank lines, have your students write a little about that particular symbol and their experiences with it
- Your students can also write their own short legend about that symbol
- Have your students sit around the carpet and read aloud a favourite legend they’ve written to their peers

The Turtle

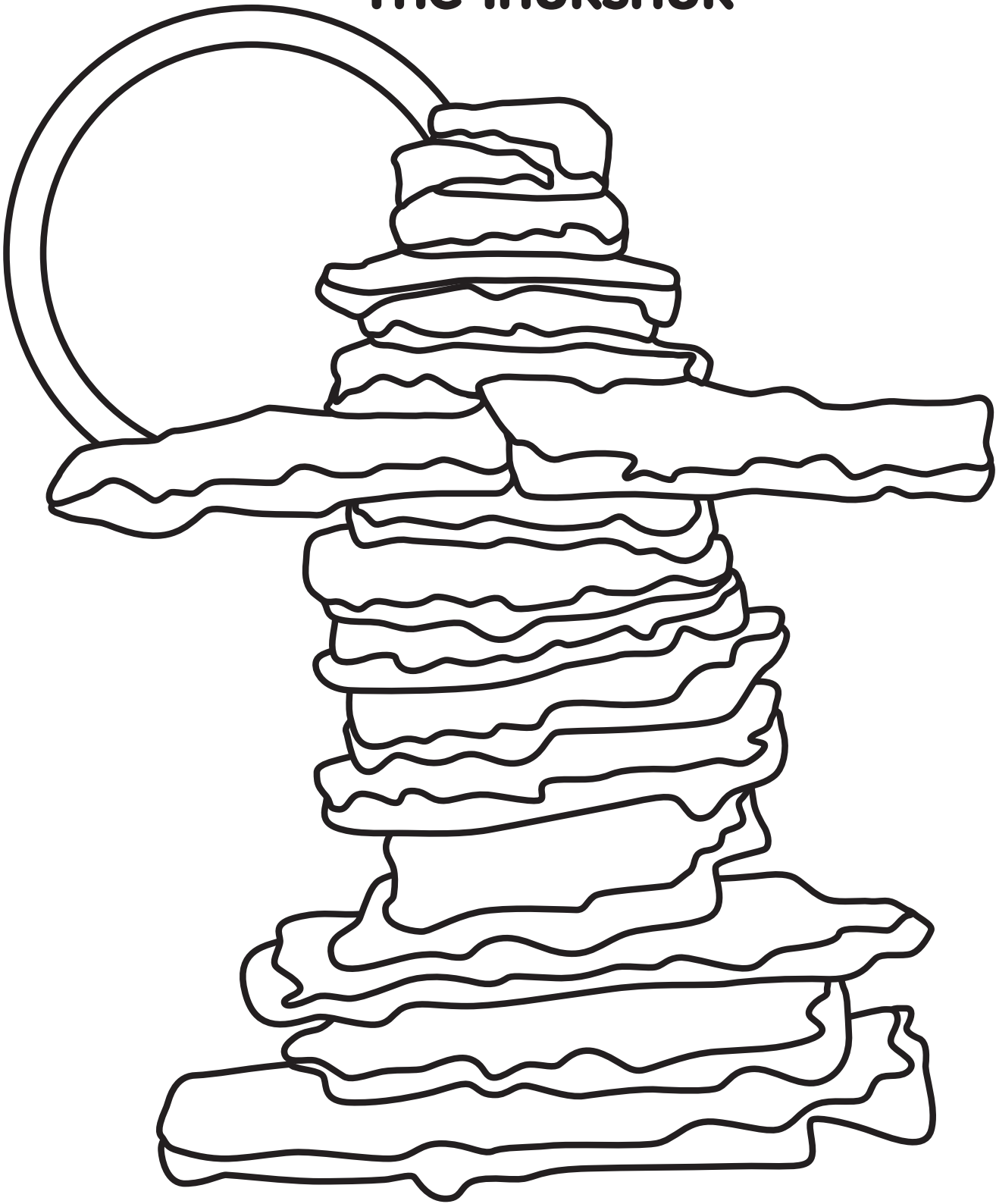


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# The Inukshuk



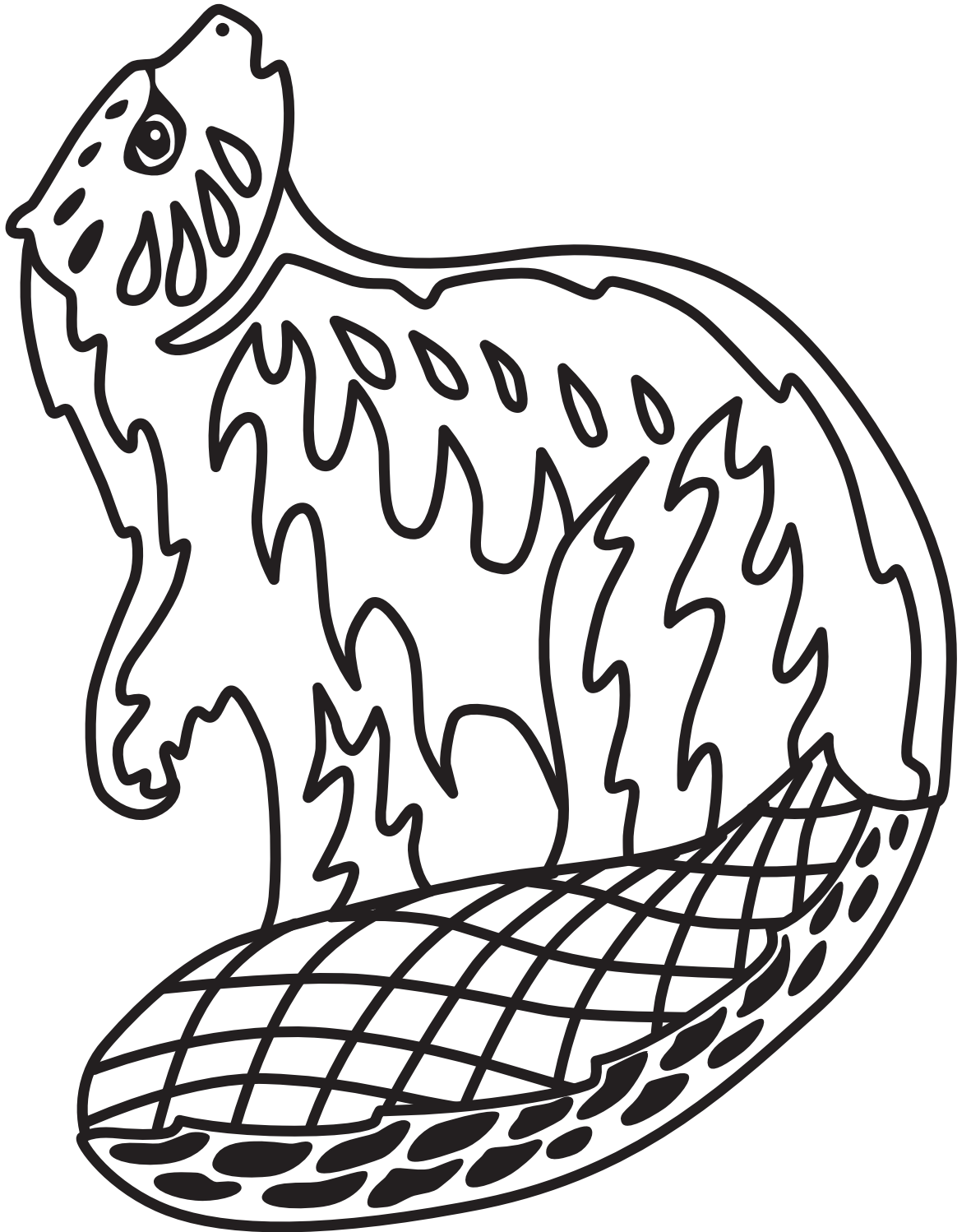
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# The Beaver



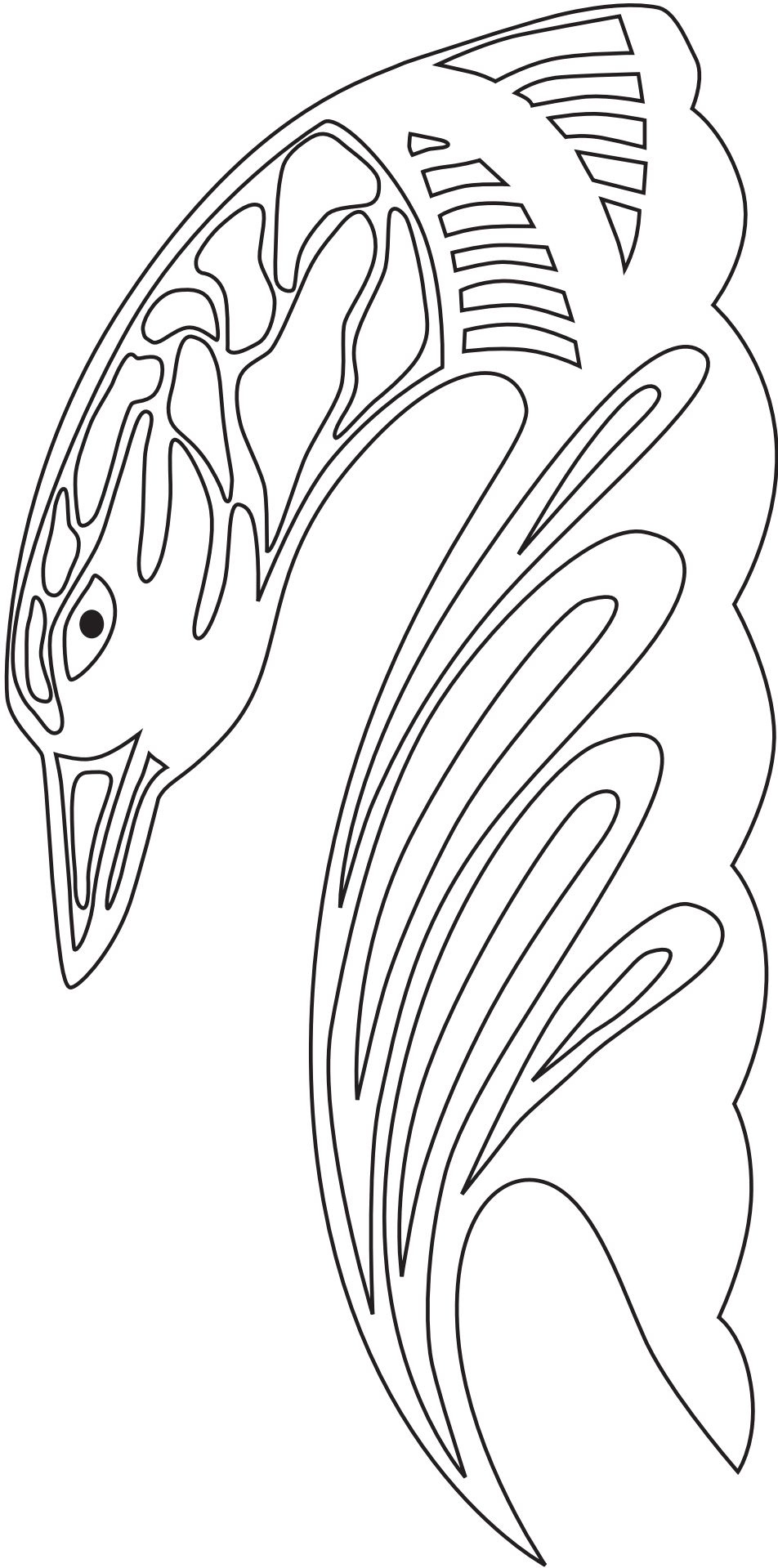
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# The Loon



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# The Caribou



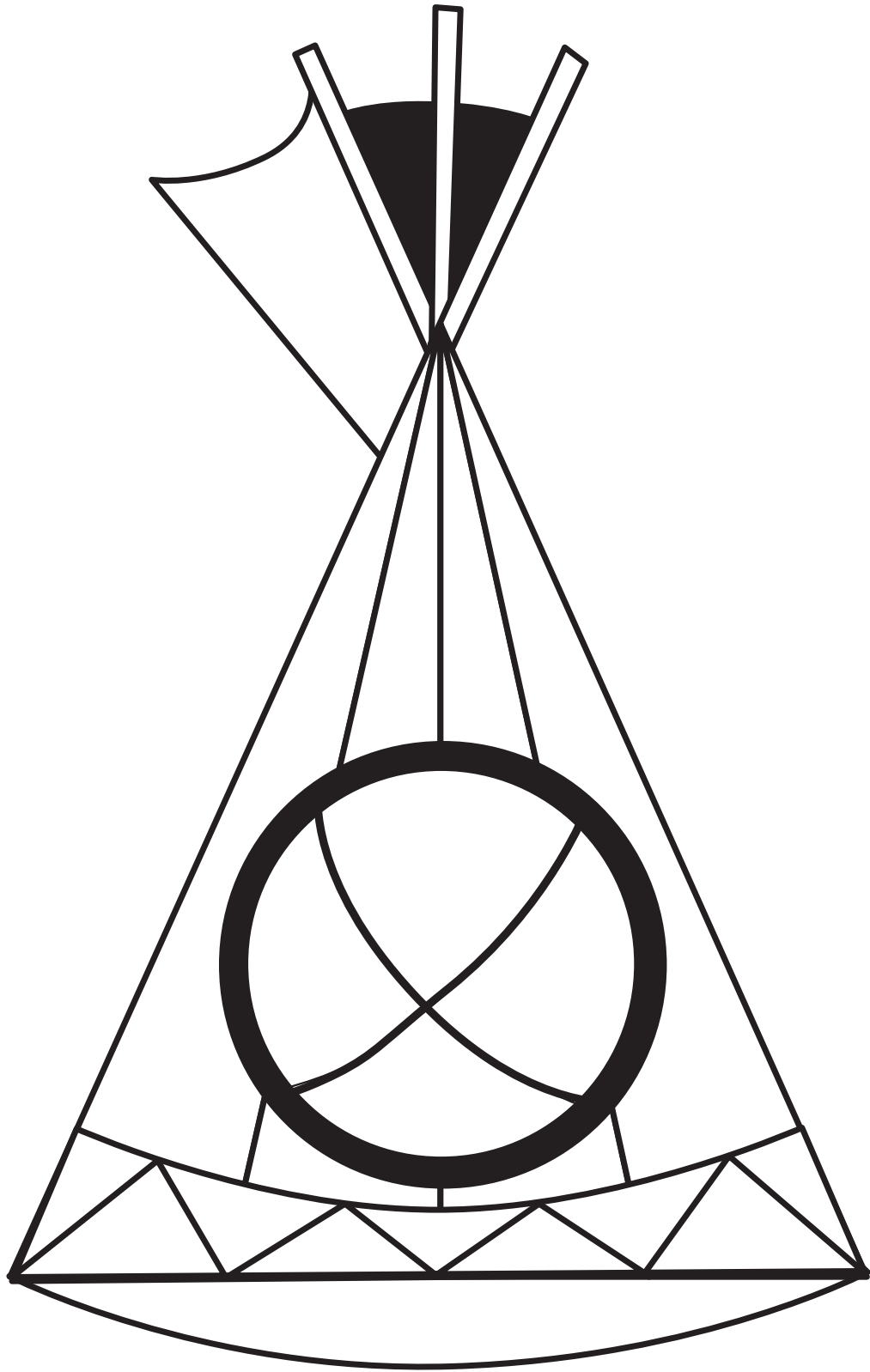
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# The Teepee



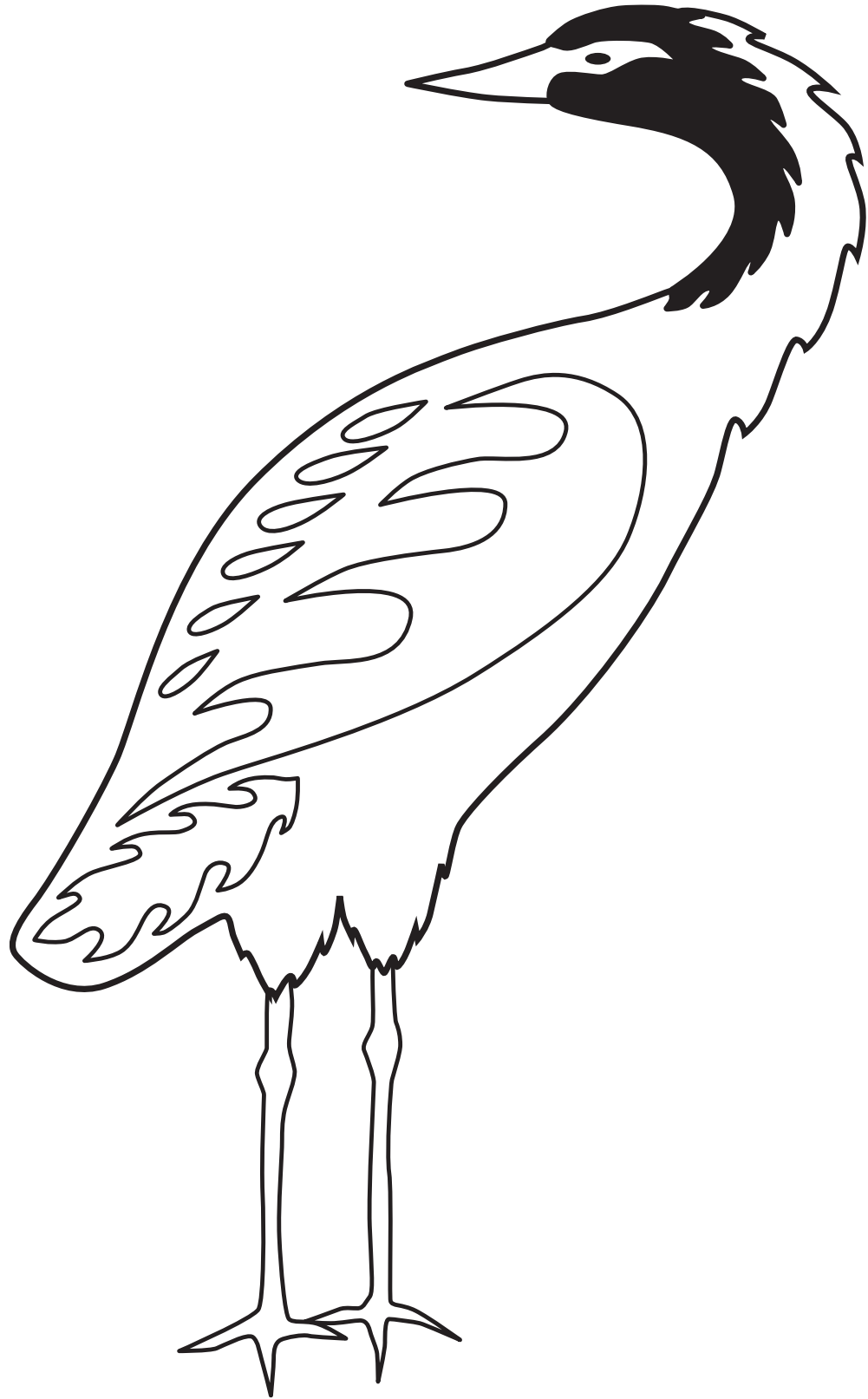
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# The Crane



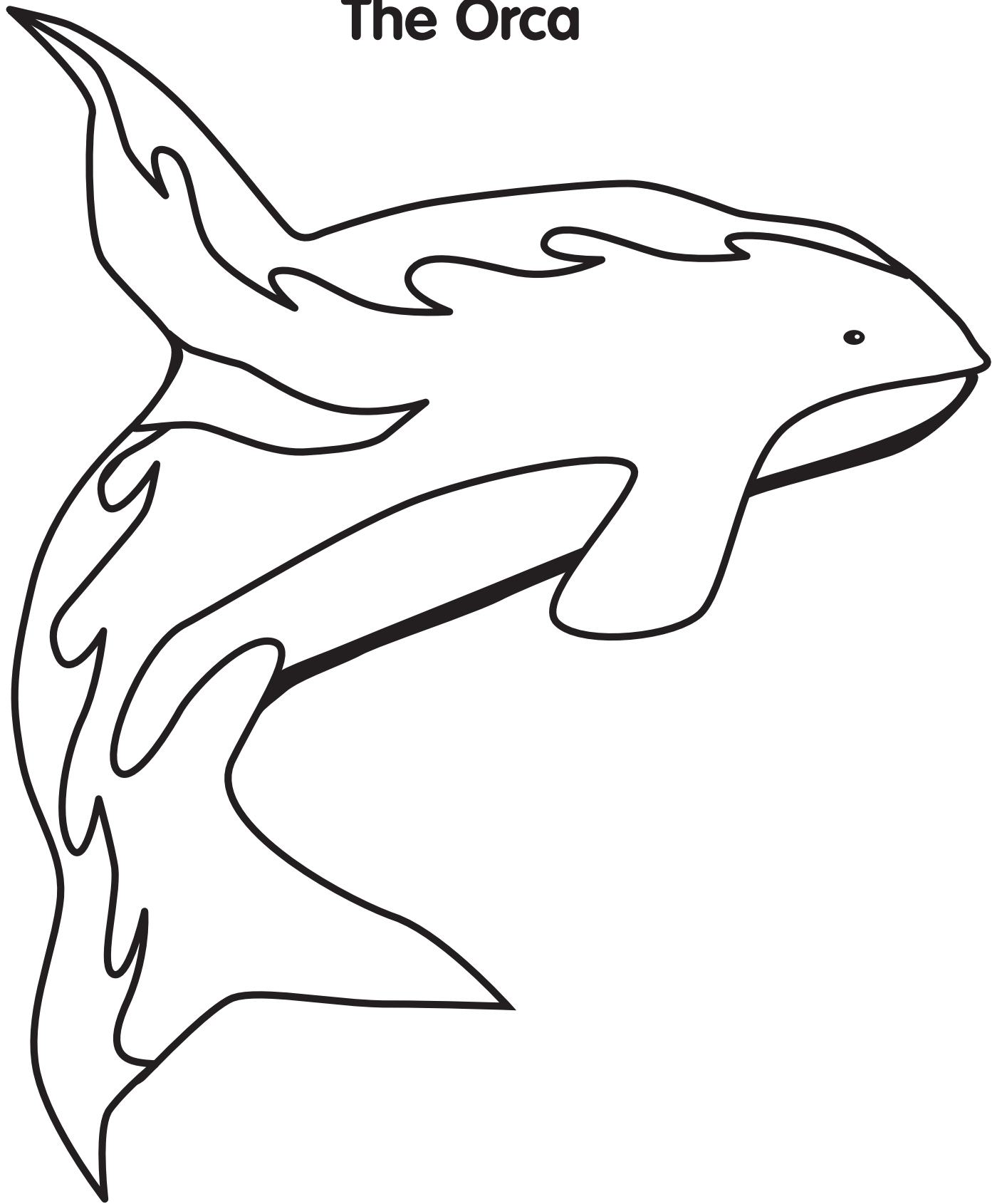
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# The Orca



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# The Raven



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# The Dreamcatcher



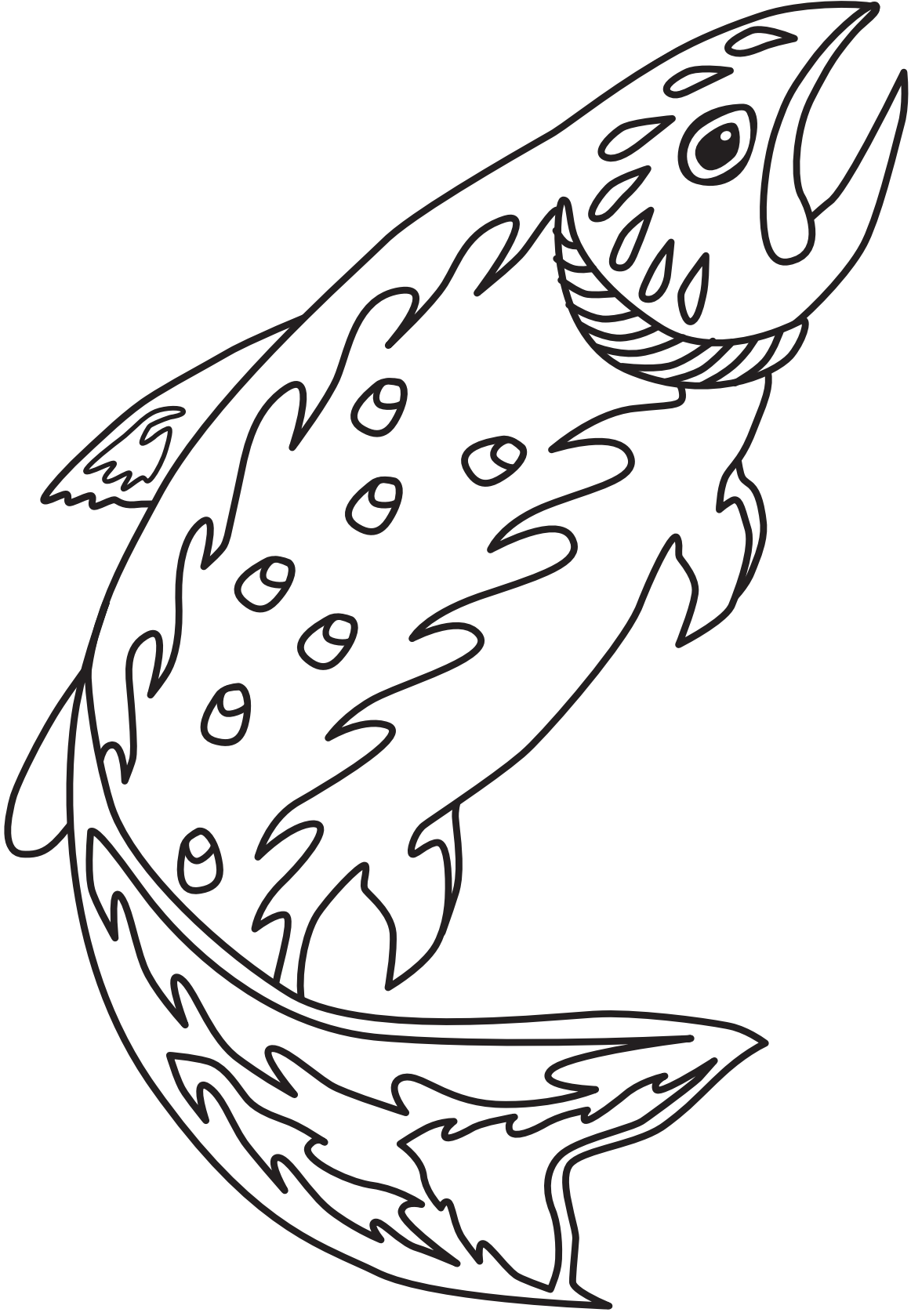
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# The Salmon



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# The Eagle



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# The Bear



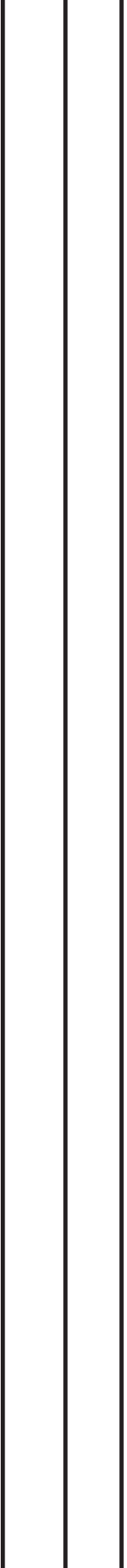
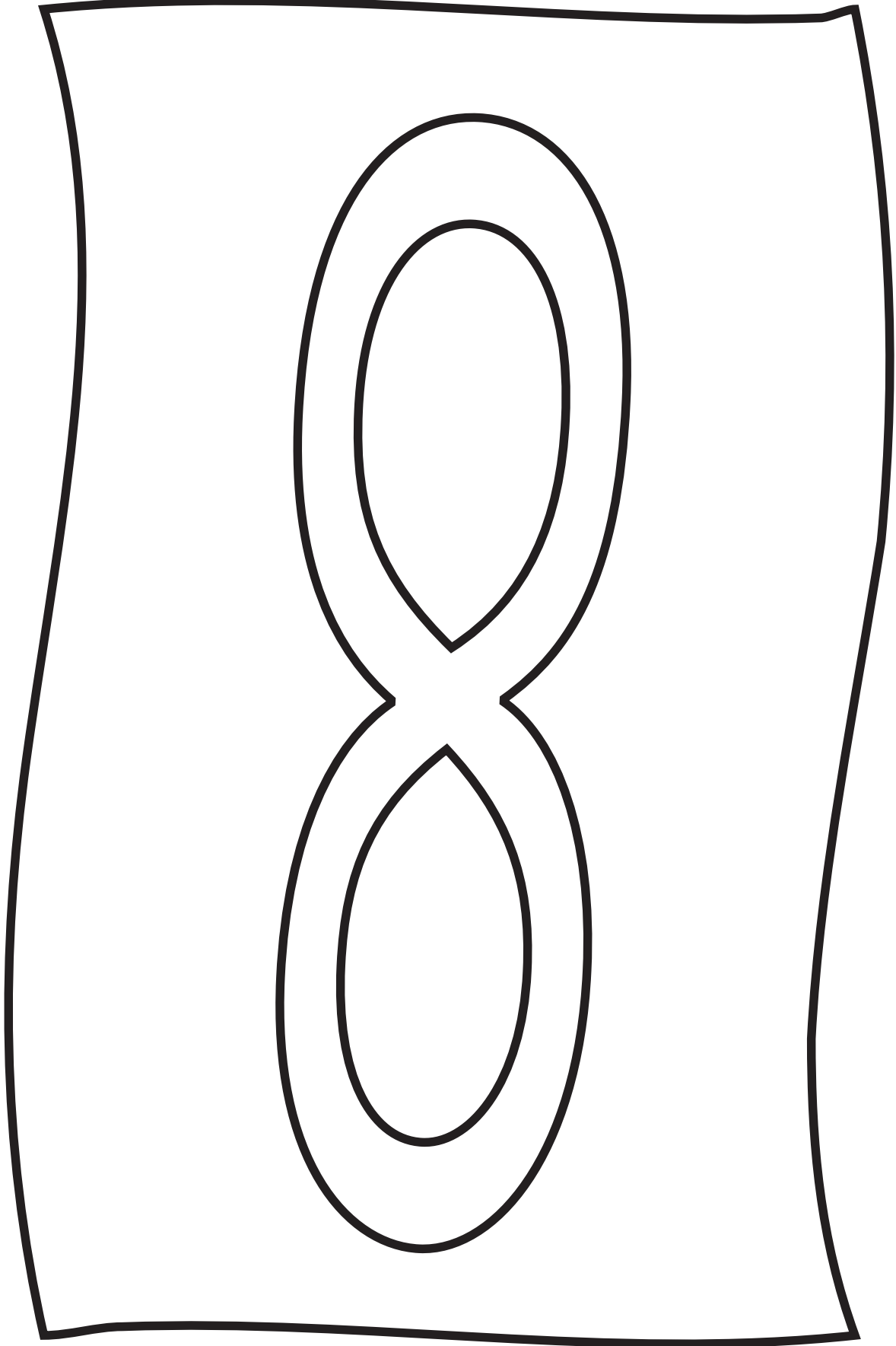
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# The Métis Flag



# The Wolf



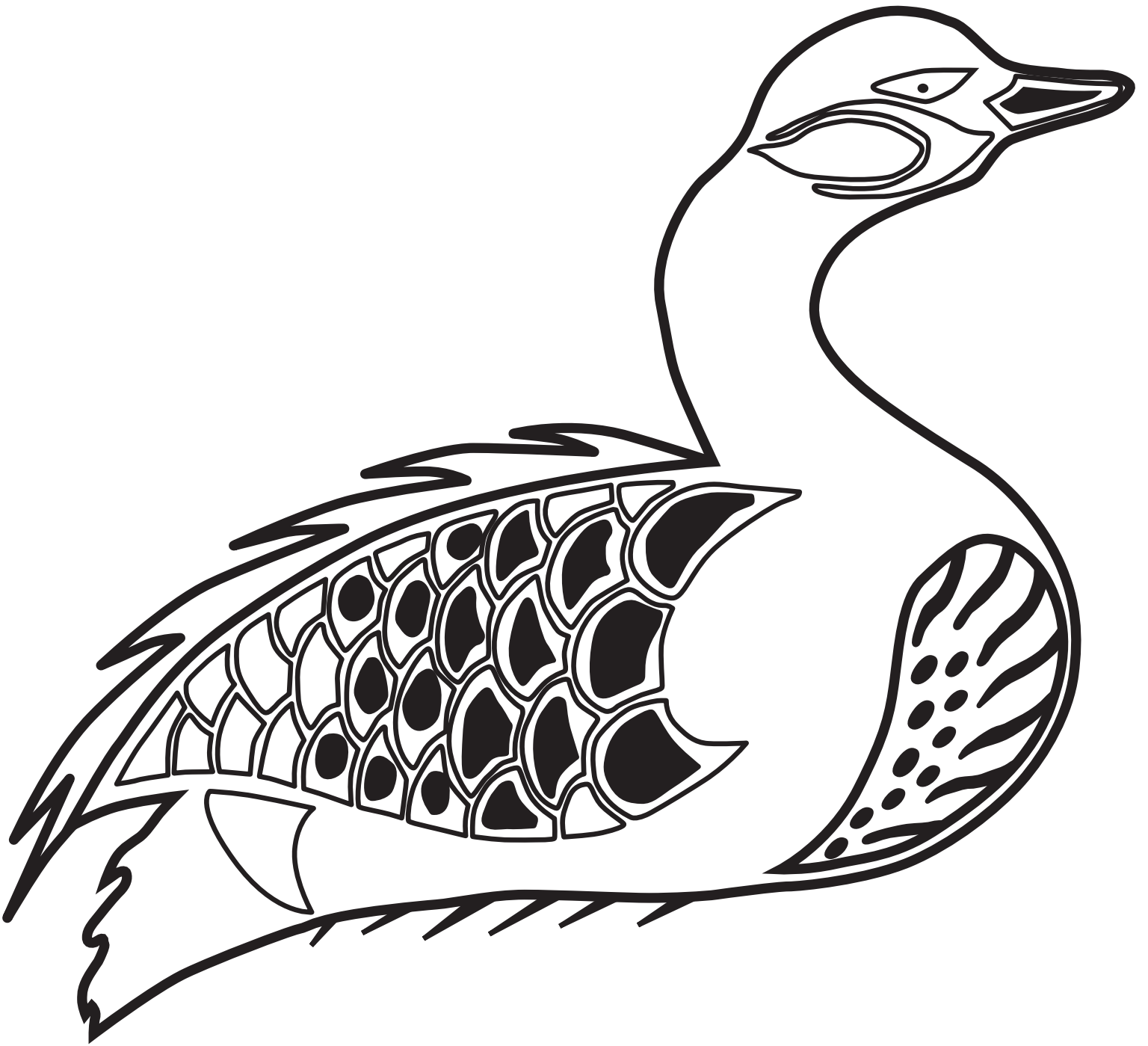
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# The Goose



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# The Buffalo

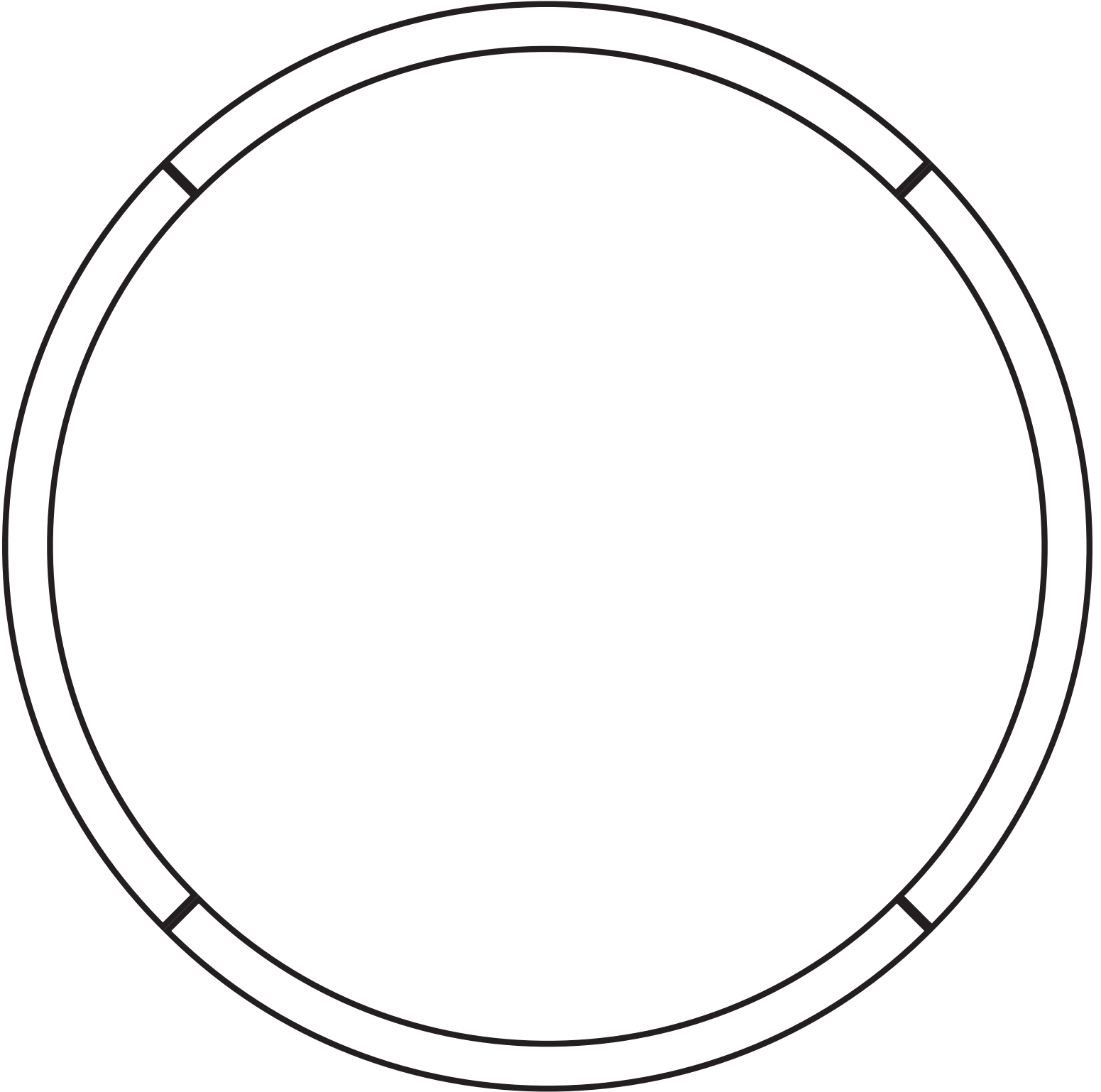


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# The Medicine Wheel



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