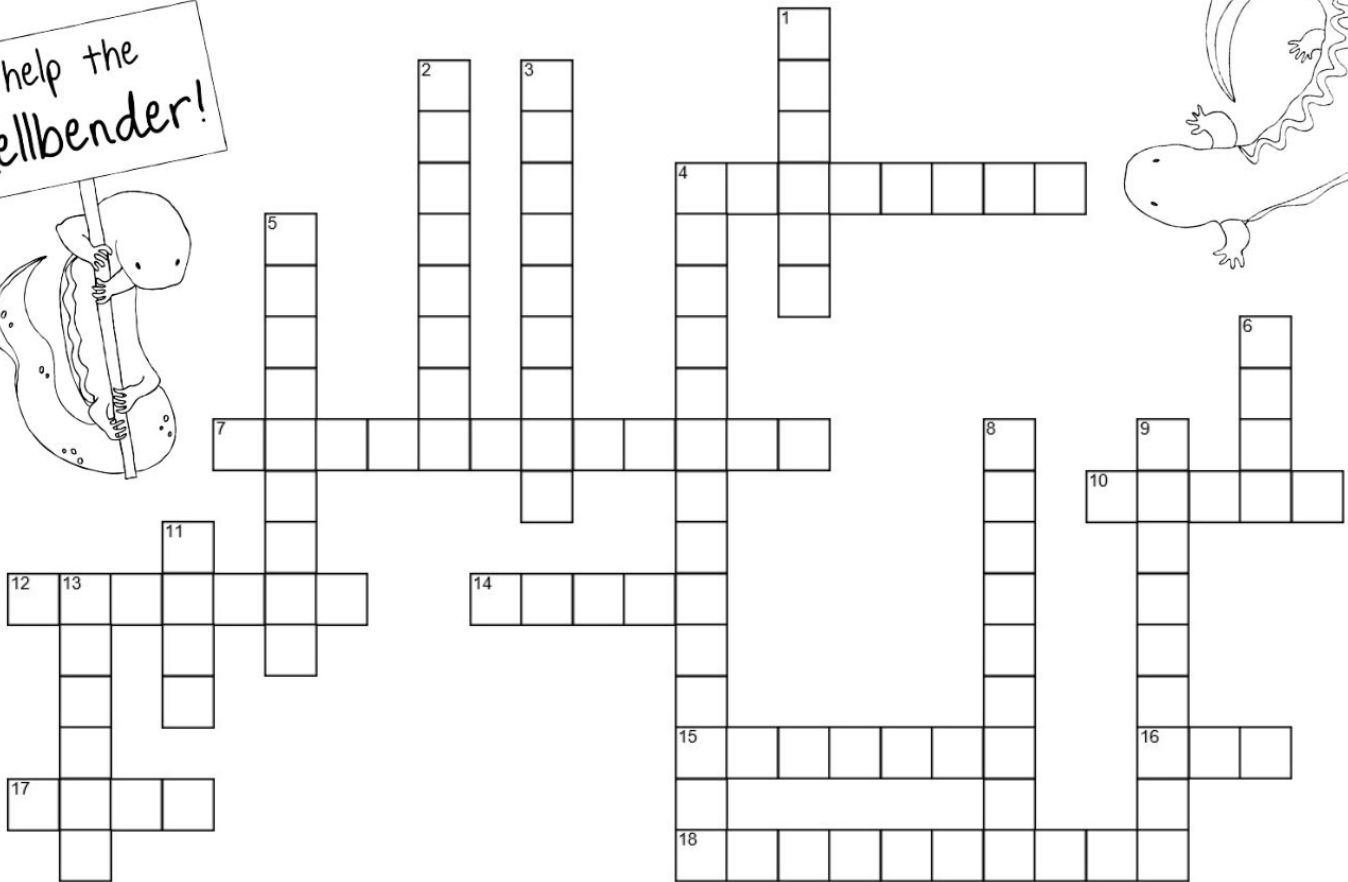
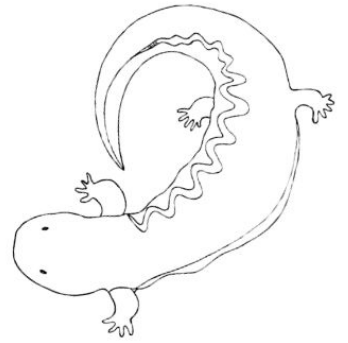


Hellbenders



ACROSS

- 4 A hellbender's favorite food
- 7 Long ago friend of the hellbenders (2 words)
- 10 Gem resembling a string of hellbender eggs
- 12 Hellbender home
- 14 Egg → _____ → Adult
- 15 Japanese giant salamander
- 16 Average adult hellbender length (in feet)
- 17 Hellbender "lungs"
- 18 Hellbenders are North America's largest aquatic _____

DOWN

- 1 Chinese giant salamander (3 words)
- 2 Animal hellbenders are often confused with
- 3 Animal that can live part of its life on land and part in water
- 4 "Hidden lungs"
- 5 A sick hellbender? (2 words)
- 6 Number of toes on a hellbender's front foot
- 8 Biggest threat to hellbender habitat
- 9 Hellbender dad (2 words)
- 11 River in Indiana with hellbenders
- 13 Southern mountains where *Cryptobranchus a. bishopi* live

Hellbenders

What is a Hellbender?

The eastern hellbender is a large, fully aquatic salamander that requires cool, well-oxygenated rivers and streams. They require high-quality water and habitat.

Hellbender vs Mudpuppy

The hellbender is one of the largest salamanders in North America but are often misidentified as Mudpuppies.

Hellbenders, unlike Mudpuppies, lack gills as adults, have large flat heads, wrinkled appearance, have five toes on hind feet, and are larger.

Distribution

Eastern hellbenders are currently found across Appalachia, parts of the Midwest, and across the northern tips of several southern states. There are likely only 50 left in Indiana's Blue River.

Hellbender Conservation

Hellbenders are habitat specialists with little tolerance of environmental change.

Their principal threat is degradation of habitat due to activities causing sedimentation, thermal pollution, oxygen loss, and persecution.

Over-collecting in the 1990s as well as injuries and death when hooked by anglers have also hurt local populations.

Here at Mesker Park Zoo & Botanic Garden young larvae hellbenders are being reared for wild release in the nearby Blue River.

A number of zoos across the country assist with "head starting" Eastern hellbender larvae which are reared from wild-collected eggs and then released once they reach a size less likely to succumb to predators.

How can you help?

Support the Mesker Park Zoo!

Do not pour oil, antifreeze, or paint thinner down drains

Properly dispose of household chemicals

Follow label use of lawn-care products, herbicides, and pesticides