

BLANDY EXPERIMENTAL FARM PRESENTS....

JULY 2026 KNIT ALONG



FLORA AND FAUNA OF THE FARM

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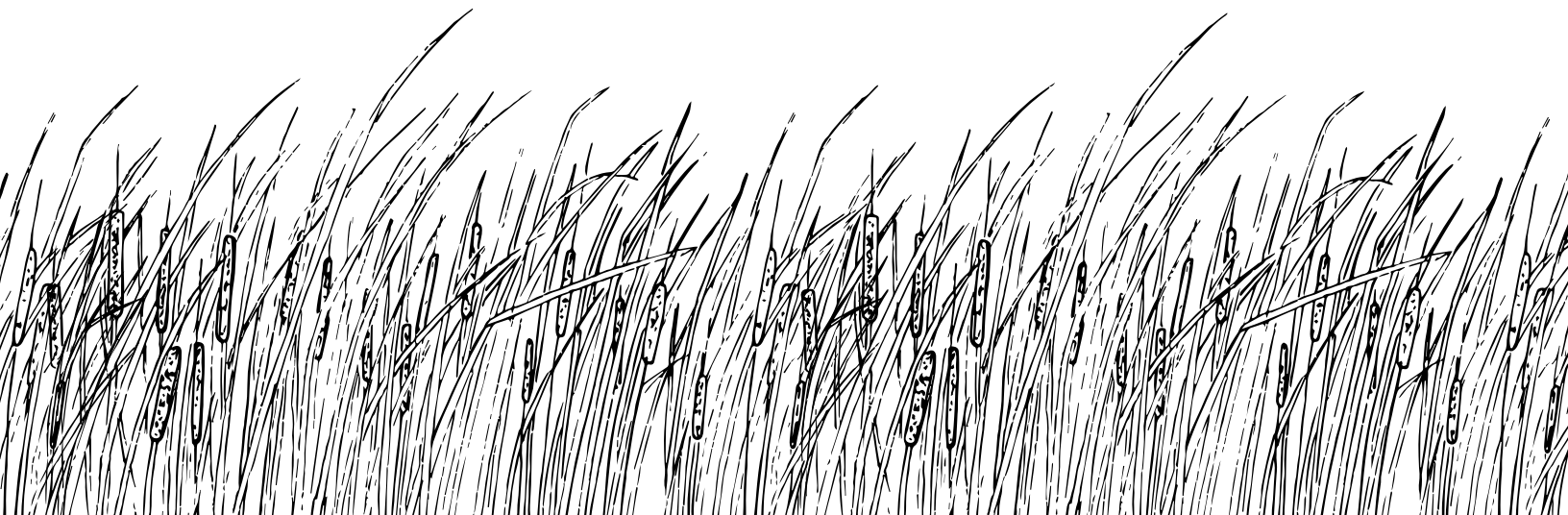
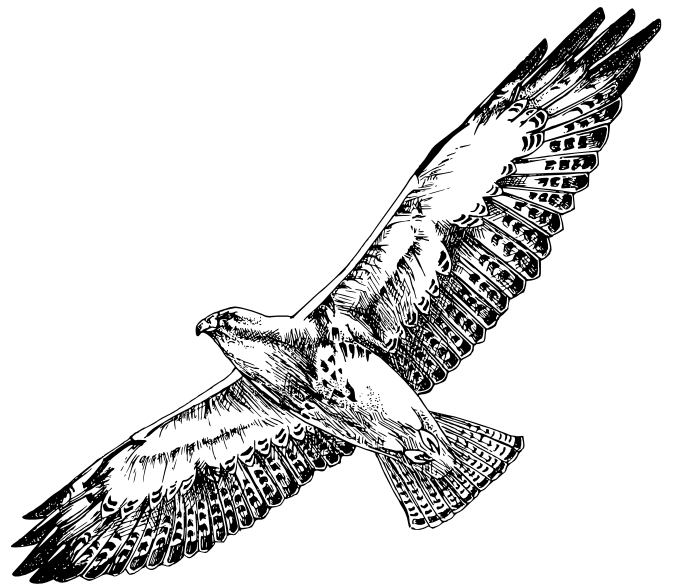
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BLANDY

The 712-acres of land that is now Blandy Experimental Farm had purpose and use long before the Tuleyries and as the State Arboretum.

The Shenandoah Valley region of Virginia was always a transient and seasonal hunting ground for many native tribes including but not limited to the Shawanwaki/Shawnee, Manahoac, and Massawomeck. Groups from New York to North Carolina would come to the Shenandoah Valley for hunting. This region has always been a shared pace with a lot of movement.

Most recently before the land was “Blandy”, it was once part of the Tuleyries estate. The Tuleyries enslaved Africans to work in the tannery, fields, orchards, and their homes. The labor of those enslaved by the Tuley family has left an enduring mark on Blandy’s 712 acres. They likely built the stone walls that still divide many of the fields on the landscape. The east wing of the Quarters building served as a barracks for many of those enslaved at the Tuleyries from the 1830s until emancipation. A cemetery for enslaved people also resides on the property.



We know little about the lives of the people who were enslaved at the Tuleyries and we know nothing about the identity of those who were buried there. In 2021, Antonio Austin, a history Ph.D. student at Howard University, spent a summer as an intern at Blandy and curated a great deal of information collected across Clarke County. His findings include the names, relationships, and even some stories of those who were enslaved by the Tuleyries.

Blandy Experimental Farm came into being in 1924 when Graham Blandy willed 700 acres of his land, part of the Tuleyries' estate, to the University of Virginia. His will stipulated that it should be called "Blandy Experimental Farm" and used to train college students in farming methods. In 1927, Orland E. White was appointed the first director of the farm and in addition to using it as a field research station and training ground for agricultural techniques, he began to turn it into an arboretum as well, planting a wide variety of trees around the property.

BLANDY

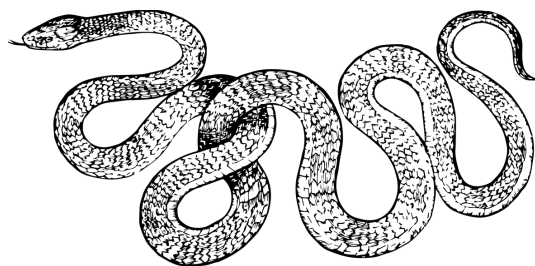
In 1986, the Virginia general assembly designated Blandy as the State Arboretum of Virginia, and soon a number of popular public events became tradition, including the annual mother's day 'Garden Fair' plant sale and winter holiday workshops, both of which continue until the present day. In the 90s, many of the herbaceous gardens at Blandy were formed, including the herb garden and the native plant trail.

Today, Blandy is home to a vibrant research and educational community. Blandy is an open access resource for the public, and hosts school-based and community based educational programs throughout the year.

Research activity is particularly pronounced in the summer months during which Blandy provides opportunities for 20-25 undergraduate, graduate, and post-doctoral researchers to conduct ecological research while in residence. Members of the summer community enjoy a weekly research seminar series and numerous formal and informal social events.



THE PLAN



Our July 2026 Blandy Knit Along is largely based off of Meredith June Willmott (aka, the Leafhopper- thank you for all of your work Meredith). Our pattern takes a turn on her ‘The Bees’ Neck Cowl’ and fills up that grid pattern with critters local to Blandy Experimental Farm!

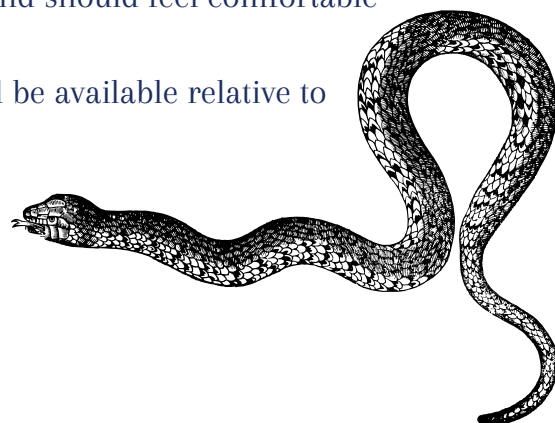
The plan for July is to knit at your own pace through the pattern (to be discussed more), but meet up weekly to learn about what we’re knitting from a graduate student working here at Blandy! We’ll meet weekly on Thursdays in July from 7-8pm at the Peetwood Pavillion, with each week starting with a quick 10 minute presentation on an organism represented in our cowl!

Here is a tentative schedule:

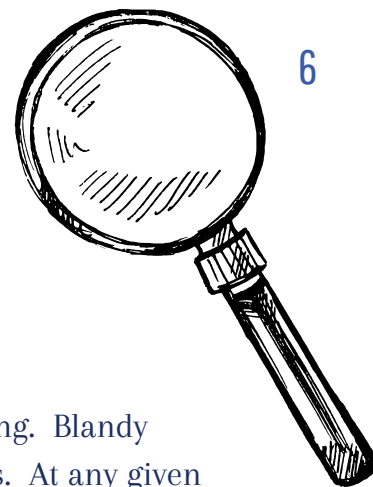
- July 2nd: Pattern Introduction/ Start
- July 9th: Willow Lovecky - Mining bees
- July 16th: Mia Murray - Butternut
- July 23rd: Ethan Skuches - Forest migration (Black tupelo)
- July 30th: Will Loner - Spongy moth / Pattern completion!

Some notes about the pattern:

- This cowl is knit in the round from the bottom up, but could be completed knitting flat and seaming at the end.
- This pattern is available in one size as an illustrative grid pattern.
- This is NOT a learn-to-knit class. Previous experience is required, as there will not be enough time in each session to go over knitting basics.
 - Knitters should be able to knit, purl, cast on, cast off, and should feel comfortable exploring colorwork and knitting in the round.
- This booklet is provided for the pattern, and assistance will be available relative to understanding the pattern.



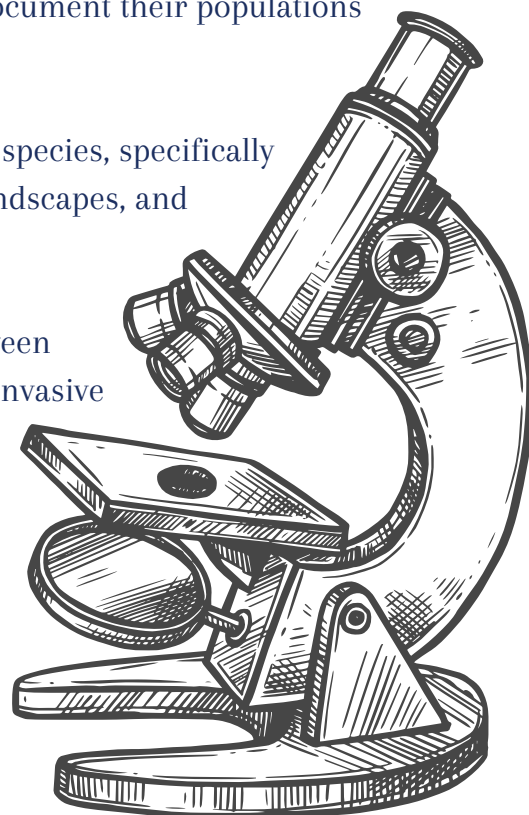
THE RESEARCH



The research community at Blandy is vibrant, eclectic, and wide-ranging. Blandy Experimental Farm is one of University of Virginia's Research Stations. At any given summer at Blandy, there are 20-25 student researchers (graduate and undergraduate) spanning institutional affiliation. Research at Blandy ranges from plant pathology to vegetation drone surveys to invasive species ecology and insect behavior.

Throughout this project, you'll hear from four (and knit alongside at least two!) of those student researchers. Here are brief bios for each of them and their study system:

- Willow Lovecky (4th year PhD Candidate)
 - Willow's research looks at nest building and the behaviors associated with them in bees. I am focused on the relationships between nesting cost (how much time it takes them to build a nest), group-living (living close to others of the same species), and parasitism (how often we see successful parasitism in these bees)!
- Mia Murray (2nd year MS Student)
 - Mia works with the butternut tree (*Juglans cinerea*), which is a native tree to the eastern US whose population has declined by over 70% in the last half a century due to the butternut canker disease. She's working to document their populations across Virginia and fill a current gap in survey work.
- Ethan Skuches (2nd year PhD Student)
 - Ethan's research focuses on the genetic diversity of tree species, specifically black tupelo (*Nyssa sylvatica*) across urban and rural landscapes, and how this affects forest assisted migration efforts.
- Will Loner (4th year PhD Candidate)
 - Will's research focuses on the point of intersection between population and ecosystem ecology; specifically how the invasive spongy moth (*Lymantria dispar*) influences tree growth, mortality, and carbon sequestration capacity in eastern forests.



THE PATTERN

Materials

Yarn

- Sport/ DK, choose your fighter (but maybe pick from stash and/ or support your LYS!)
- 2 Colors!! Otherwise it will be a monochromatic Blandy Cowl!
- Should need about 255 yds/ 230m/ 98g for each color.

Needles

- US size 4 [3.5mm], 24"[60cm] circulars (or not if you choose to knit flat)
 - Feel free to size up to a US 5 (3.75mm) or US 6 (4mm) if you knit a bit tighter!

Notions

- Stitch marker, tapestry needle, scissors.
- Love and curiosity for research and Blandy's flora & fauna!

Directions

With US 4 [3.5mm] and cc, cast on 174 sts with tubular cast on. Join in the round, being careful not to twist your sts, and place a marker for bor.

Rounds 1-8: With cc, *k1tbl, p1, repeat from * to end

Round 9: Join in mc, and work one row, knit from bor to end.

Work the Chart (provided in next page and at the end of the document).

ABBREVIATIONS

bor: beginning of round

mc: main color

cc: contrast color

knit: knit

p: purl

rnd: round

st/sts: stitch/stitches

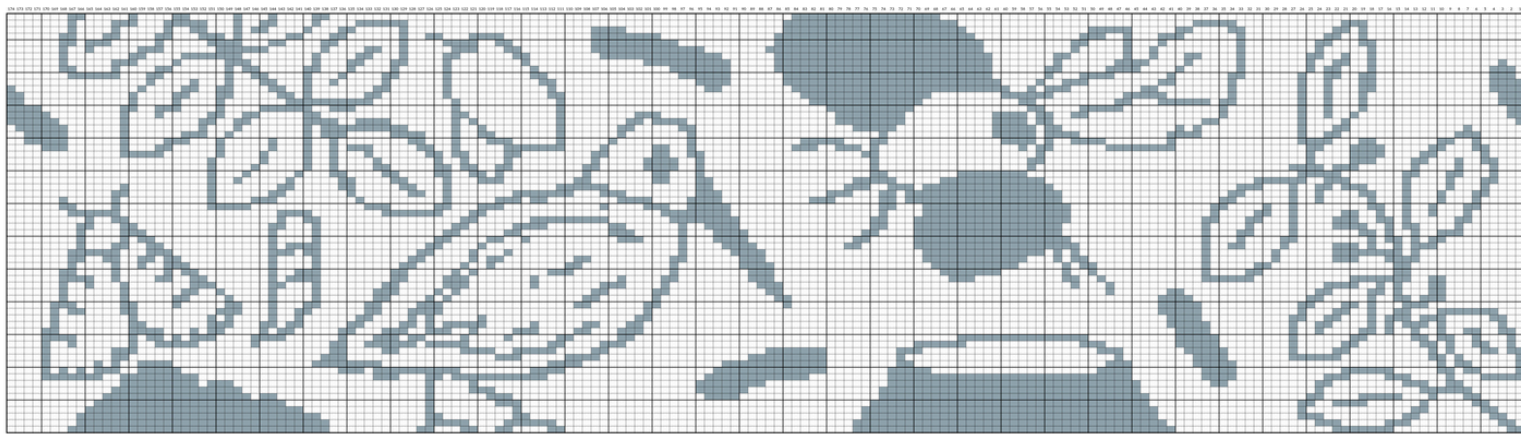
k1tbl: knit 1 stitch through
its back loop



THE PATTERN (AGAIN)

Directions (continued)

Work the Chart below.



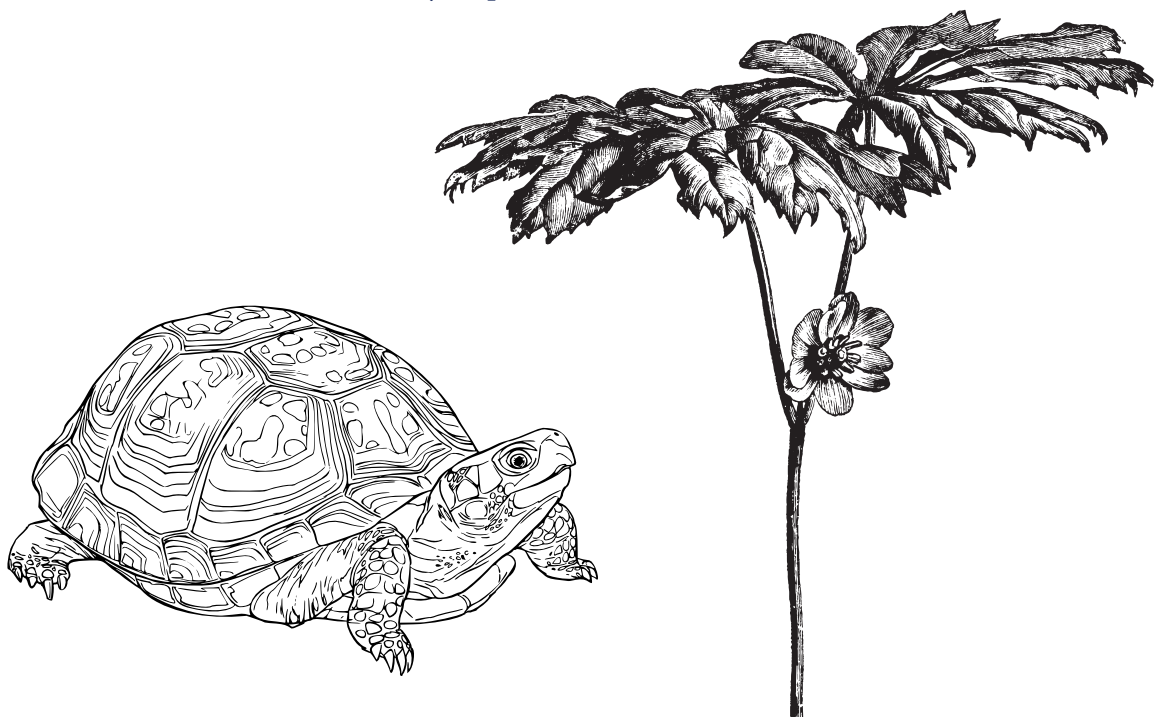
For more detailed photos of the chart, see pages 9 and 10

Once the chart has been completed, work as follows:

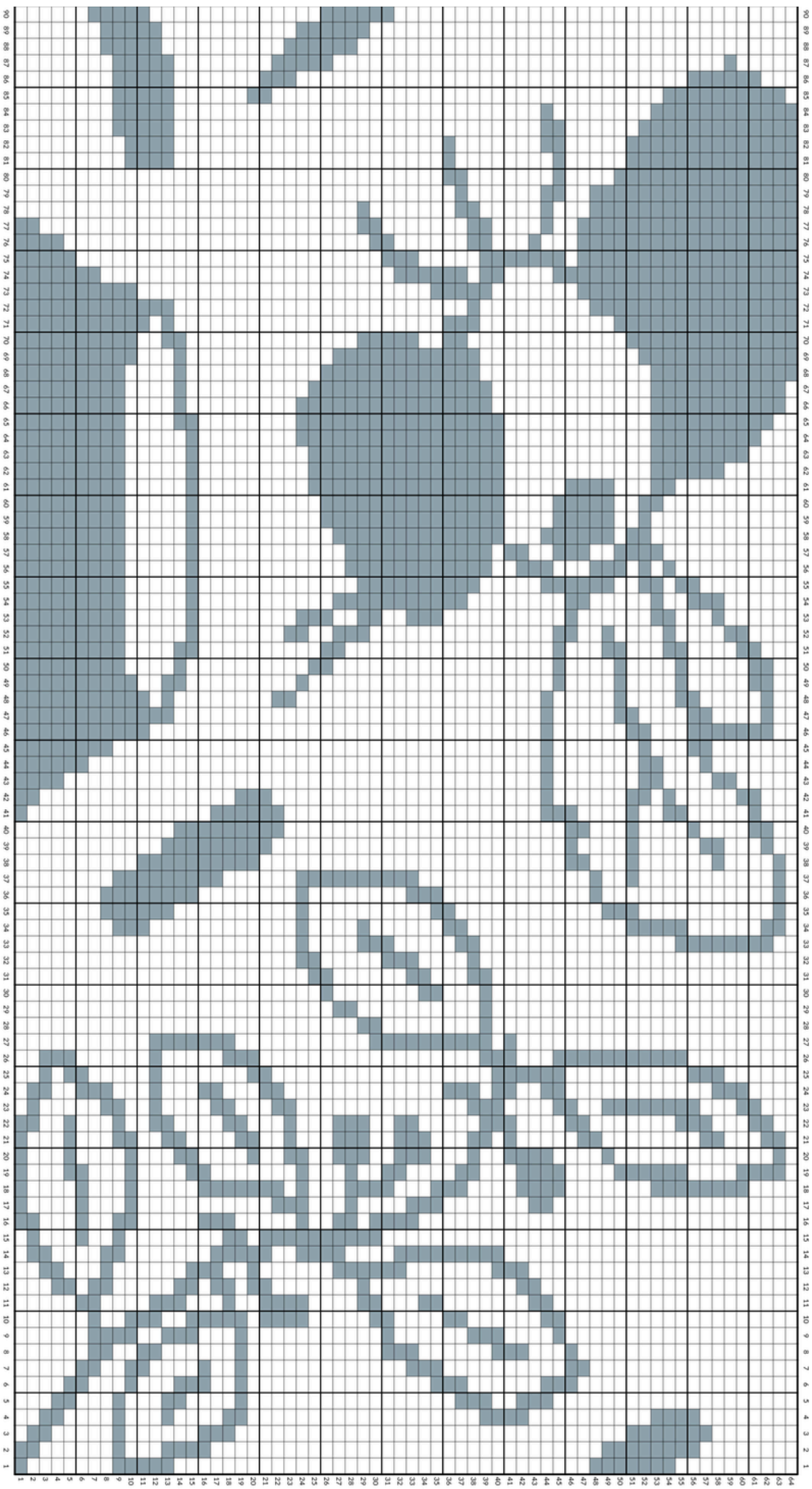
Round 1: with cc, k2tog, then k to end (1 st decreased, 172sts on needle) Round 1 (size 2):
with cc, k to end of rnd

Rounds 2-10: With cc, *k1tbl, p1, repeat from * to end of rnd

Finishing: Bind off with tubular bind off (or whatever you prefer). Weave in all ends and block!



GRID CHART



GRID CHART

