

MARY & JOSEPH

COUNTED CROSS-STITCH CHART



Finished Size: 10w x 12h Inches (26w x 31h cm) (140w x 158h stitches)

This Kit Contains:

- ✂ Full-color printout of the finished design
- ✂ Complete chart in full color and black/white
- ✂ Thread Organizer & Shopping List



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Introduction

Typically, a cross-stitch chart is one large, foldout page. You will find this kit contains many pages. The chart, itself, is several pages in length. Why? To make it easier for you to see and use. My eyesight is pretty good; yet, I have a problem seeing the tiny symbols on some of the purchased charts. So, when I create a chart, I want it to be easy to see. I know you will appreciate it, too.

Kit Contents — Explained

Full-Color Printout — This is a photo of how the actual finished project should appear. If I have sized the photo to fit the page, then I also provided a close up inset view of an area of the project. You may wish to print this out as a reference guide while stitching (sort of like looking occasionally at the box cover while putting a jigsaw puzzle together).

Full Charts — I have provided you the chart in color and in black/white. Everyone has his/her own preferences. I personally prefer the black/white charts; however, many people prefer the color chart, which aids in keeping their place while stitching. These charts are several pages in length and are explained further in the next section.

Thread Organizer & Shopping List — This table gives you the DMC thread ID number, colors, their corresponding symbols, the total number of stitches for each thread, and the number of skeins you will need to purchase for the project. You will use this key when organizing your threads during the preparation process (discussed later), as well as when purchasing your thread. The notation under the table gives you information on the exact DMC thread used and conversion information, in case you use another brand or type of DMC thread.

Using the Charts

You may use either the color or black/white chart, whichever you prefer. You need only one or the other — not both. The only difference is that the color chart places the color of the stitch behind the symbol, whereas the black/white chart gives you only the symbol.

Instructions for Using the Chart:

- Print out the chart of your choice (color or black/white).
- You will see that each page is numbered — put them in order and secure with a paper clip.
- Because this pattern has a background, it's easiest to just begin 2 inches (6 cm) from the top and left side with the first page of the chart, working your way through the chart sections in page order.

If you prefer to work from the center, however, fold your fabric top to bottom, marking the center with a dressmaker's pin. Unfold and refold side to side, moving the pin to where the second fold intersects with the first — dead center. Now, you can place your fabric in a hoop or frame with the pin marking your starting point. The center page of the chart will have a heavy black arrow both at the top of the chart and on the left side. Just follow both arrows until they intersect to locate the center of the chart.

- This chart is printed by rows (across), rather than columns as in some other designs. Each chart page has a number in three corners in parenthesis, for example (2). The numbers are to help you keep the chart pages in order during use and have the following meanings:
 - The number (#) in the upper right-hand corner is the chart page number that follows the page you are viewing.
 - In the bottom left-hand corner is the chart page number that is located directly below this page.
 - In the bottom right-hand corner is the chart page number that is below and to the right of this page.

See the example on the next page.

Example

Page you are currently viewing. The page number is in the upper left-hand corner	This page number is in the upper right-hand corner of the page being viewed
This page number is in the bottom left-hand corner of the page being viewed	This page number is in the bottom right-hand corner of the page being viewed

This chart's first row of chart pages is pages 1-3, the second row is 4-6, and the last row is 7-9. There are 9 chart pages to this pattern.

Thread — The chart is set up to use either a full stitch “**X**” at each square, using 2 strands of thread OR a half stitch “**/**” at each square, using 3 strands of thread. I generally use the half stitch for a smoother finish. See the section called “Stitching” for a short “how to”.

Helpful Hints:

- When the project is completed, keep your thread. Perhaps you can reuse the leftovers on a future project. Just be sure to compare your leftovers to new thread to ensure the color hasn't changed, which happened to me once. (I got halfway through the project, changed to the new thread, and found it didn't match at all. Because the color was covering a large area, the difference in color was very obvious. I had to begin the project all over again.)
- With these patterns, it's best NOT to skip around using only one color in TOO large of an area — you'll begin to get lost.
- Unlike other cross-stitch patterns you purchase at a store, you won't necessarily be able to see the finished product as you work. The further along you are, the more the project begins to take form. It's like sculpting in marble — it takes a long time before you begin to see it take shape.
- If you don't work regularly on your project, cover it with plastic during those down times.
- Once the project is finished, mounted and framed, it is best viewed from a distance. Until people are close enough to it to see the stitches, they will believe it is a photo or print.

Supplies & Equipment You Will Need

Fabric — The pattern uses Aida, 14-count cross-stitch fabric. The color of the fabric should be white. When purchasing your fabric, always allow at least 2 inches (6cm) extra all around for framing and using a hoop — that's 4 inches (12cm) added to the width and height of your finished project size. If you are using the finished project for other than framing or you are planning use a mat, you may wish to add even more extra inches (cm) to your fabric size.



For this pattern, you need at least 14 x 16 inches (36 x 41 cm) of fabric.

Thread — Use DMC 25 Mouline cotton thread (see photo at right). If you choose to use another brand or thread type, allow more or less thread for the brand and type you choose to use. See the Thread Organizer & Shopping List for more information on thread usage and amounts.



To keep your thread organized, I use Lo-Ran® thread organizing cards (see photo). Once I have used the area to write in the thread number and symbol, I just cover the area with masking tape. Once I have several layers of masking tape, it removes easily and I start over again. I've had these same cards for over 10 years. You can make your own, using a sheet of card stock and hole punch. Cut the sheet into strips and hole punch down one side. Then, write the thread number and symbol to the side of each hole.



Tapestry Needles — I have found that the #26 tapestry needle works best with DMC cotton thread. I have 80 of these needles in my stitching arsenal. Why? I use one needle for each thread on my projects. It means that I am not constantly rethreading needles each time I switch colors. It is faster and easier this way.

So, how do I keep all of the needles straight? There are Lo-Ran needleholder cards (see photo) that can be purchased from craft stores. Each card holds several threaded needles, with needles lying on a magnetic strip and the thread goes into a groove to secure it. I purchased about 10 cards years ago and reuse them. In the area where you write the thread number and symbol, I just cover it with masking tape as with the thread organizer. I've had these cards for over 10 years, too.



Hoop or Frame — Though some stitchers hold the fabric by hand without any type of holder, I prefer stitching on taut fabric. The hoop is the most inexpensive, which can be purchased in many different sizes and are easy to use. If you don't work on your projects regularly or it's a large project, you may want to try a frame with a stand or lap holder. The frames can be heavier than hoops, though you can purchase a lightweight plastic tubing frame. If you use half stitches, I would suggest you use a frame rather than a hoop. It will hold the fabric more taut and keep the half stitches from distorting the fabric diagonally.

Scissors — Scissors are a necessity. I use small, folding scissors and never use them for anything other than stitching, though any sharp scissors can be used.



Needle Threader — Though not required, needle threaders are nice to have. I use the complete metal ones (see photo). I find the ones with the lightweight wire break easy (or maybe I'm just pulling too hard!).

Magnifier — If you have an eye or eyestrain problem, I would suggest looking into purchasing a floor stand magnifier if you do much needlework. I always thought they would be a hindrance while stitching, until I saw a woman using one. Turns out, they are easy to use and don't get in the way at all. They also allow many stitchers with aging or bad eyes to continue stitching long past what they could do otherwise.

Others — There are many other needlework accessories that you can use. Just do a search online or visit <http://www.hobbylobby.com> or <http://www.joann.com> for more ideas. I use a small cloth project holder and keep a seamripper handy (to remove those pesky errors).

NOTE:

If you purchase any supplies online, check out <http://www.joann.com>, using coupons from <http://www.shoppersresource.com/onlinecoupons/joann-fabric-coupon-codes.htm>.

Preparation Before You Begin

Fabric —

- ✂ Press your fabric with a steam iron to remove any folds. Then, allow it to dry completely before using.
- ✂ Bind the edges of the fabric to keep it from fraying as you stitch. I always use masking tape, which leaves no residue when it's removed. You also can baste the edges with thread.

Thread — Organize your thread, using a thread organizer (discussed earlier), cutting one skein of thread for each color, inserting on the card, writing the thread number next to it, and drawing the symbol next to the number. If you choose to have a needle for each thread, then thread each needle and place on your needleholder cards.

Frame the Fabric — Place your fabric in your frame, positioning it with either the center or the upper left area exposed for you to begin stitching.

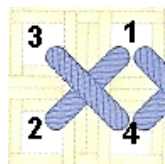
One thing I've found that is very handy is to attach either tissue paper or inexpensive, lightweight interfacing to the edge where I hold the frame or hoop. This keeps you from transferring oil residue from your hand to the fabric. Another way, is to turn the frame over with the fabric under the frame and stitch that way — the fabric you touch is then the wrong (back) side of your project. I prefer using the interfacing, since I find it too uncomfortable stitching "inside" a reversed frame.

Other Supplies — Put your supplies that you need as you stitch within arm's length. I generally work at my desk or with an end table close by. Place the remainder of supplies in a plastic bag or whatever storage you use for your stitching supplies, but keep the supplies you are going to use separate from your extra supplies.

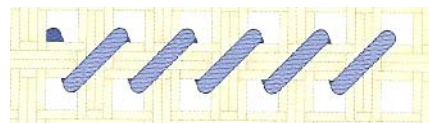
Chart — I have a unique method for using whatever chart page on which I'm working. I use a notepad, tearing off all the sheets except for five. Then, I staple the chart page I'm using onto the notepad. As I stitch, I mark off those stitches on the chart with a permanent marker, fine point. I would suggest you use a lighter color marker, so you can see the stitches underneath — just in case you error and need to go back and redo some stitches.

Stitching

Stitch the Same — Whether you use a full cross stitch "X" or a half stitch "/", it is important that you always make your stitches exactly the same. Let me show you graphically what I mean:



Make your full stitches bringing your needle up through the fabric at #1 and down through at #2. Bring it back up through at #3 and back down at #4. You are only "journeying" from one fabric hole diagonally to the next one. The final "X" is referred to as a square. Do this for each stitch, completing each stitch totally before doing the next one. For half stitches, it's the same thing, using only #1 to #2.



Stitching exactly the same way for each stitch creates a smoother looking finished project. When you change the way you make your stitches within a project, it is very obvious, making the stitches look rather lumpy and too textured. Also, do not do a line of half stitches and then go back to complete for full stitches — it may have the same uneven appearance as sewing the stitches differently.

Pulling the Threads — As you stitch, pull your thread until they are gently taut. Do not pull them really tight. If you do, you will see each chart page in your finished project. It's almost a quilting look of blocks.

Finishing Your Project

You should decide before you begin exactly how you plan to finish your project in order to guarantee that you have enough fabric. You have many options — pillows, sewing several together for the topping of a quilt, making a memorable and special card from a small project, and so many other possibilities. The most widely used method of finishing a project is framing it.

Framing Your Project — You can have your project professionally framed. They will do everything for you. If you choose to do the framing yourself, here are some helpful tips:

✂ **Mats** — Decide whether you wish to add a mat or leave it full frame. Seldom do projects fit into **pre-cut mats**, though it is possible. Another limitation to pre-cut mats is that they are limited in colors. Most craft stores have a framing department, where you can purchase pre-cut mats, as well as to check the sizes and colors for your particular project.

I prefer to go to a craft store's framing department and ask the framer to **professionally cut a mat** for me. In doing so, I get professional advice on colors. Once the framer suggested a double mat that truly made the project "pop", where my original plan would not have had the same dramatic effect. Though a color from the project is generally chosen for the mat, sometimes a contrasting color works better. A professional has the experience to advise you. If they don't, find another framer at another store.

Never try to **cut a mat yourself**. It requires special equipment and skill to do the job right. Though you are doing the framing yourself, you still want it to look like a professional job when you're finished.

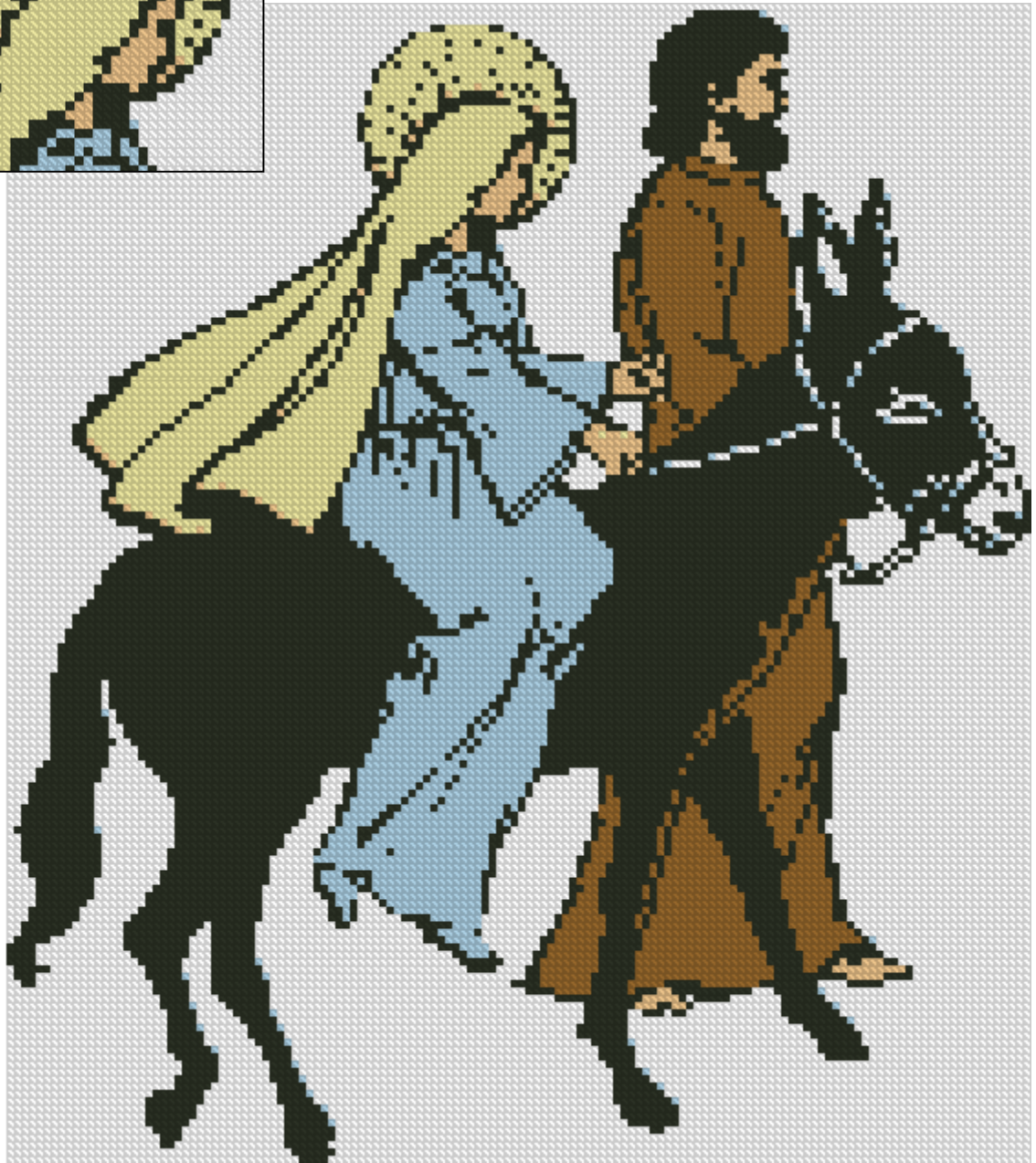
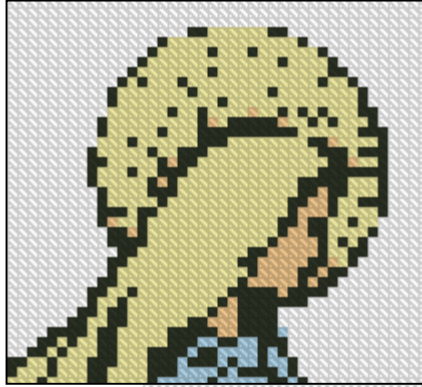
✂ **The Frame** — The frame size will depend upon whether you mat or not. Once the matting decision is made, you can then purchase a frame or have one made by the framer. I prefer to find the frame I want, take it with me to the framer, and then have them make a mat to fit. Hopefully, you are buying the frame in the same store as the framer, just in case the professional suggests another alternative.

✂ **Mounting** — First, **never use self-adhesive board** for mounting. If you don't position the project correctly the first time, it will pull at the threads on the underside when you try to correct it. The best and fastest way I've found is this:

- ✓ First, I carefully press my project with a steam iron. Do not leave it for any length of time in one place or the thread colors will run and ruin your project.
- ✓ Generally, there is a heavy (but thin) piece of cardboard between the glass and the back of a frame. I use this for mounting.
- ✓ I center my project over the cardboard. If necessary, you can carefully use thumb tacks to hold it taut in place. (If a mat is used, ensure the project and mat fit perfectly together before tacking the project onto the cardboard.)

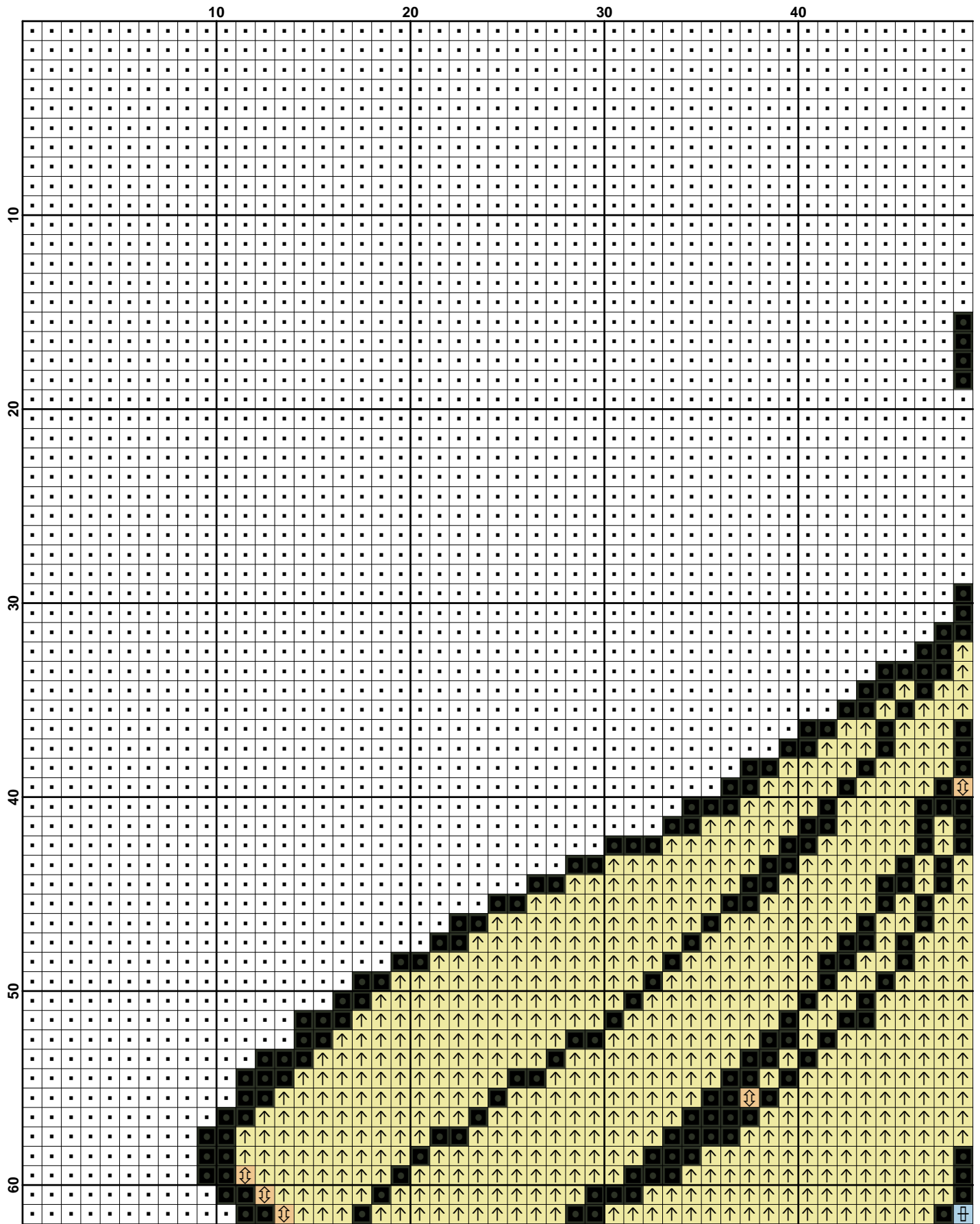
- ✓ Turn the cardboard over.
- ✓ Gently stretch the project edges (one at a time) and secure to the back of the cardboard with either masking tape or (you guessed it) duct tape (which really holds it secure). Keep the tape as flat as possible. Too much bulk will make it difficult to secure the frame back later.
- ✓ Once all edges are secure, remove the thumbtacks, and clean the glass. If a price sticker was stuck to the glass and has left some sticky residue, use “Goo Gone”, which can be purchased from most craft stores. It will remove the residue quickly and completely. Then, use Windex® to ensure there are no streaks.
- ✓ After the glass has dried overnight, put it all together. It’s ready to hang or give as a gift.

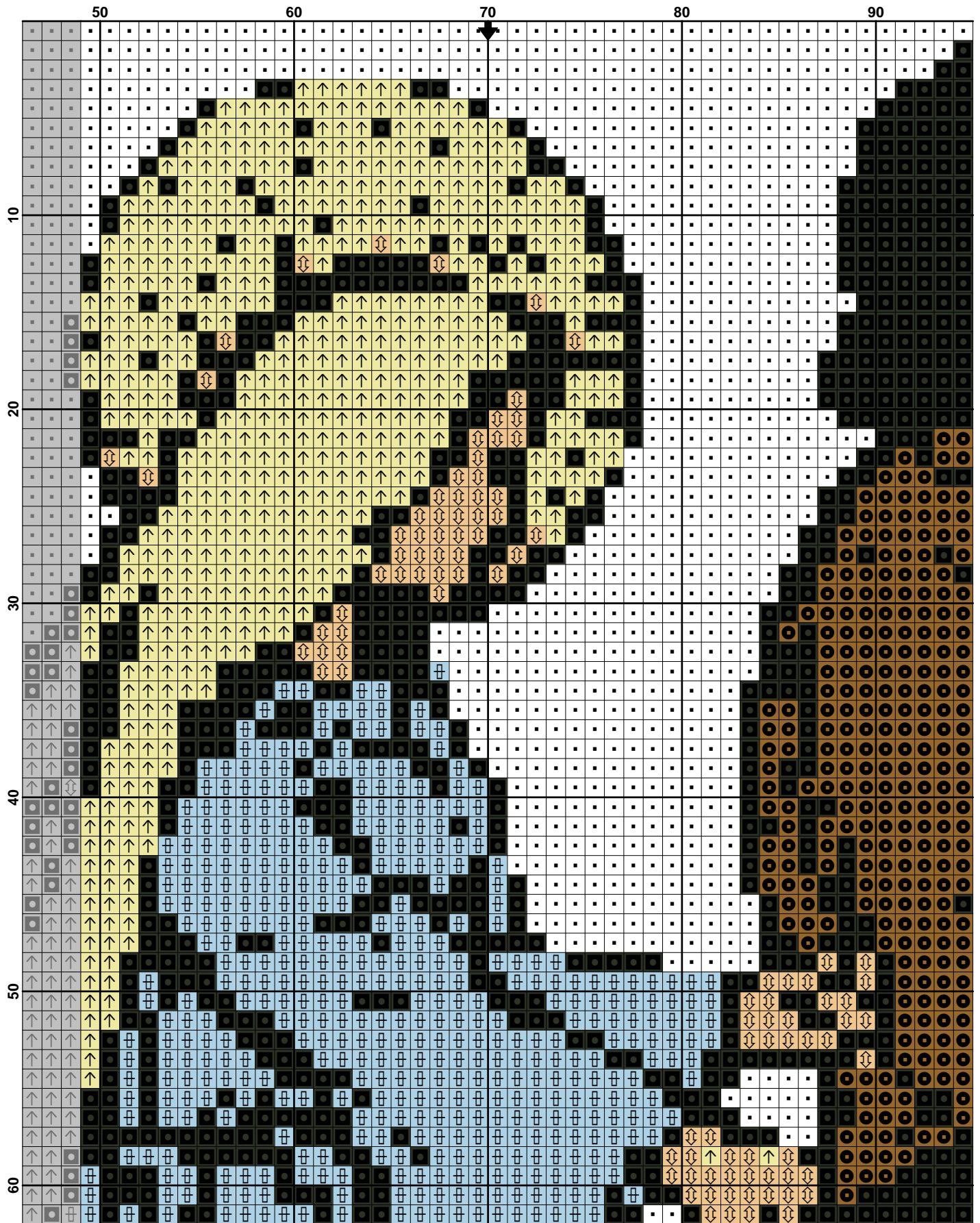
The Finished Pattern

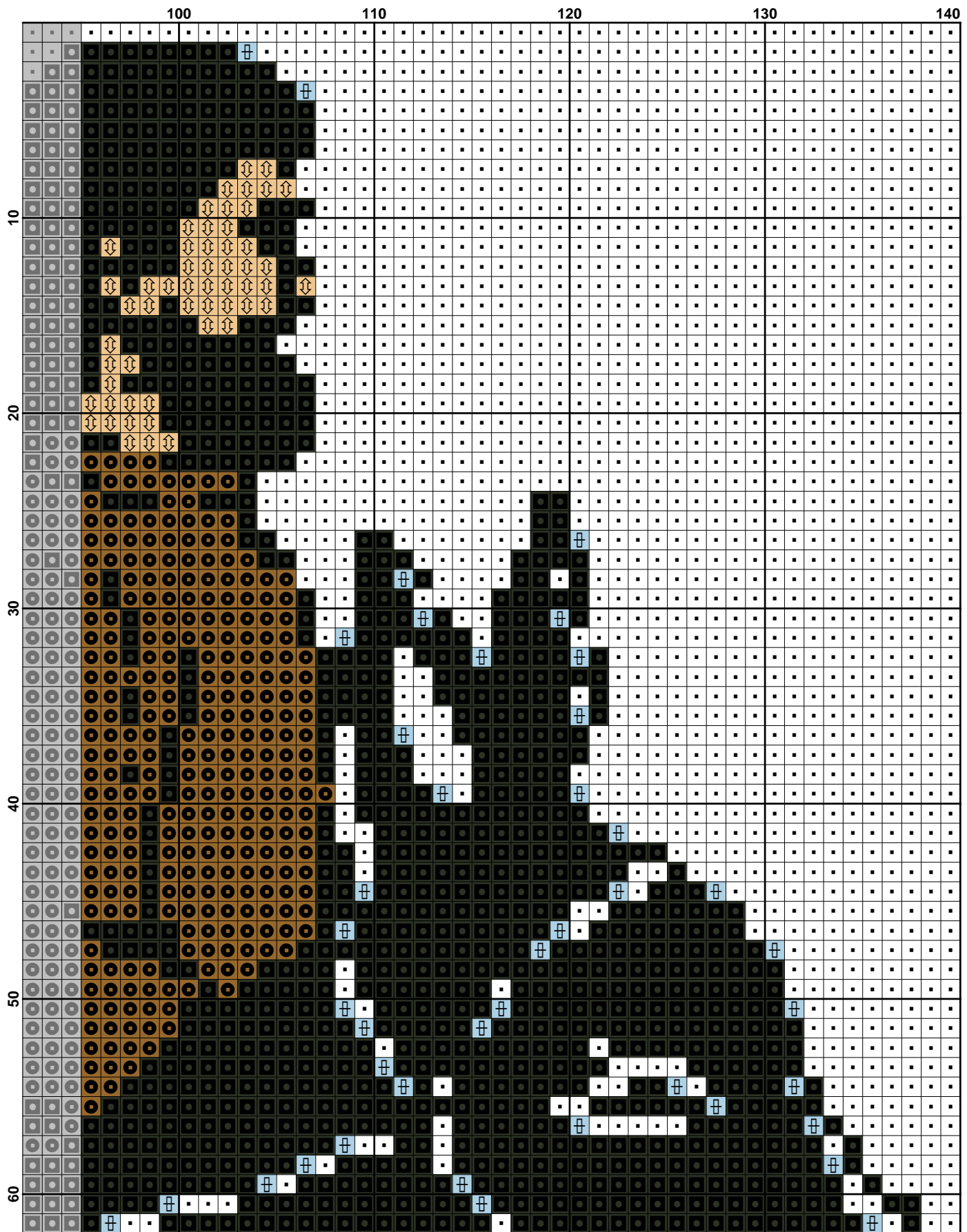


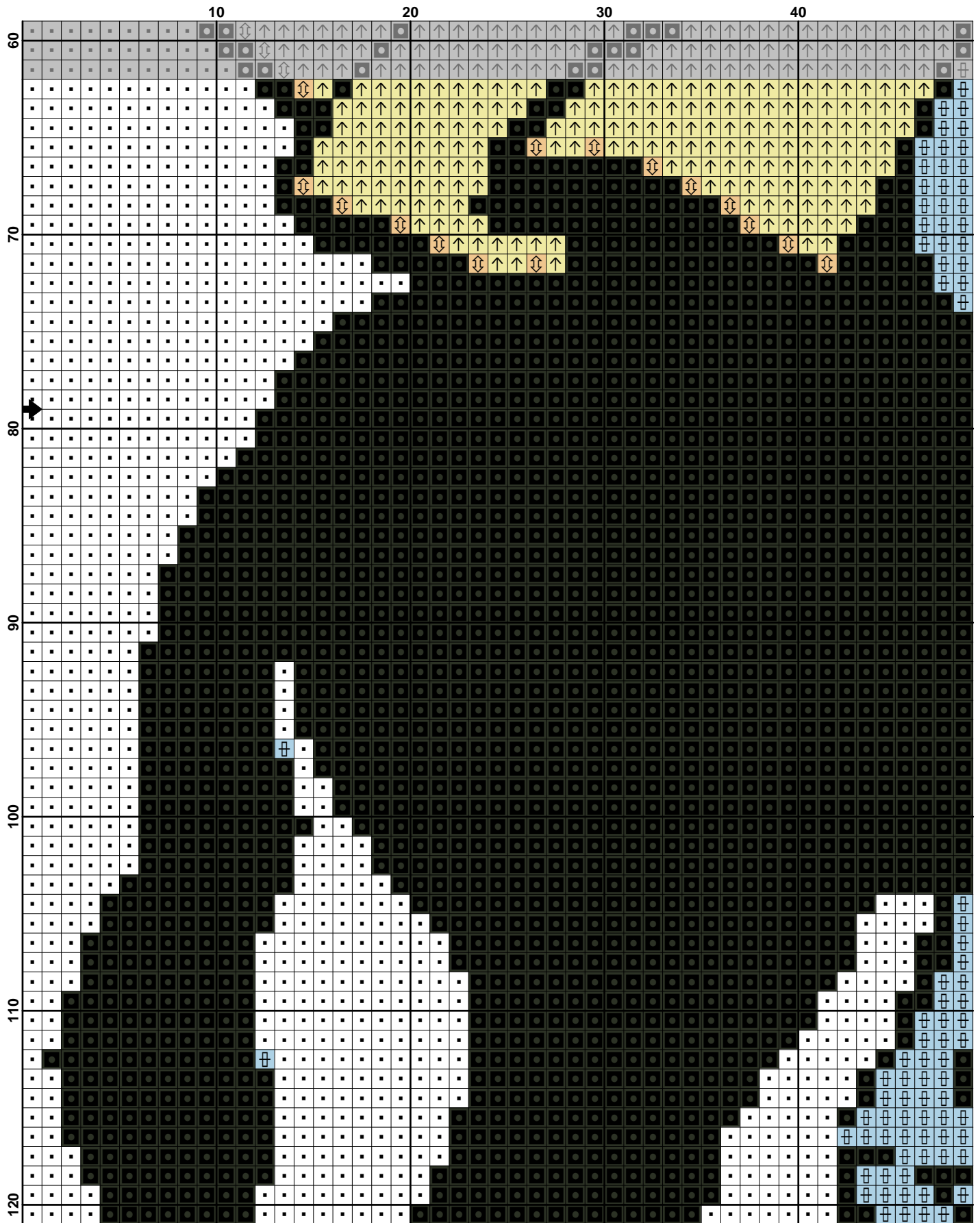
The Color Chart

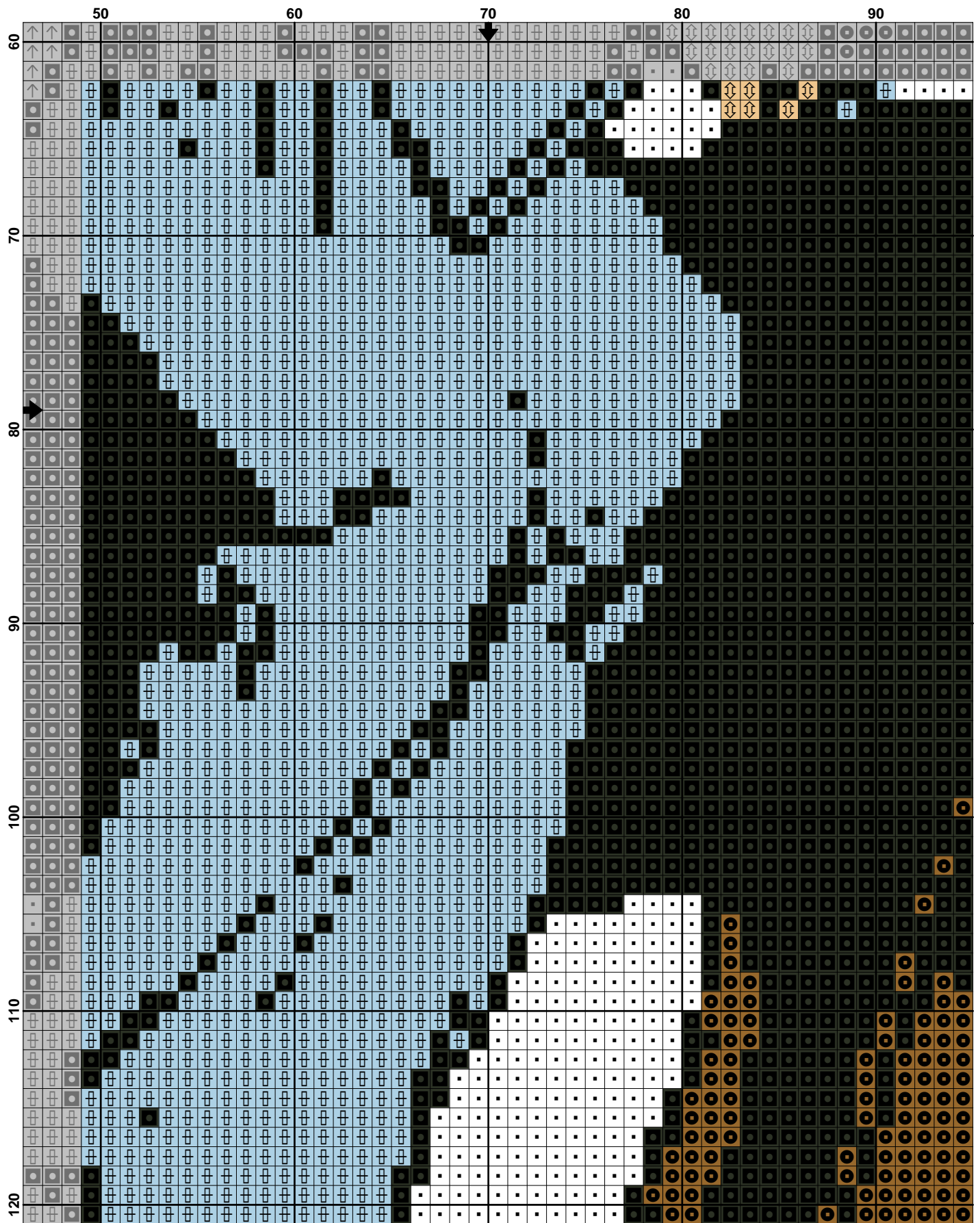
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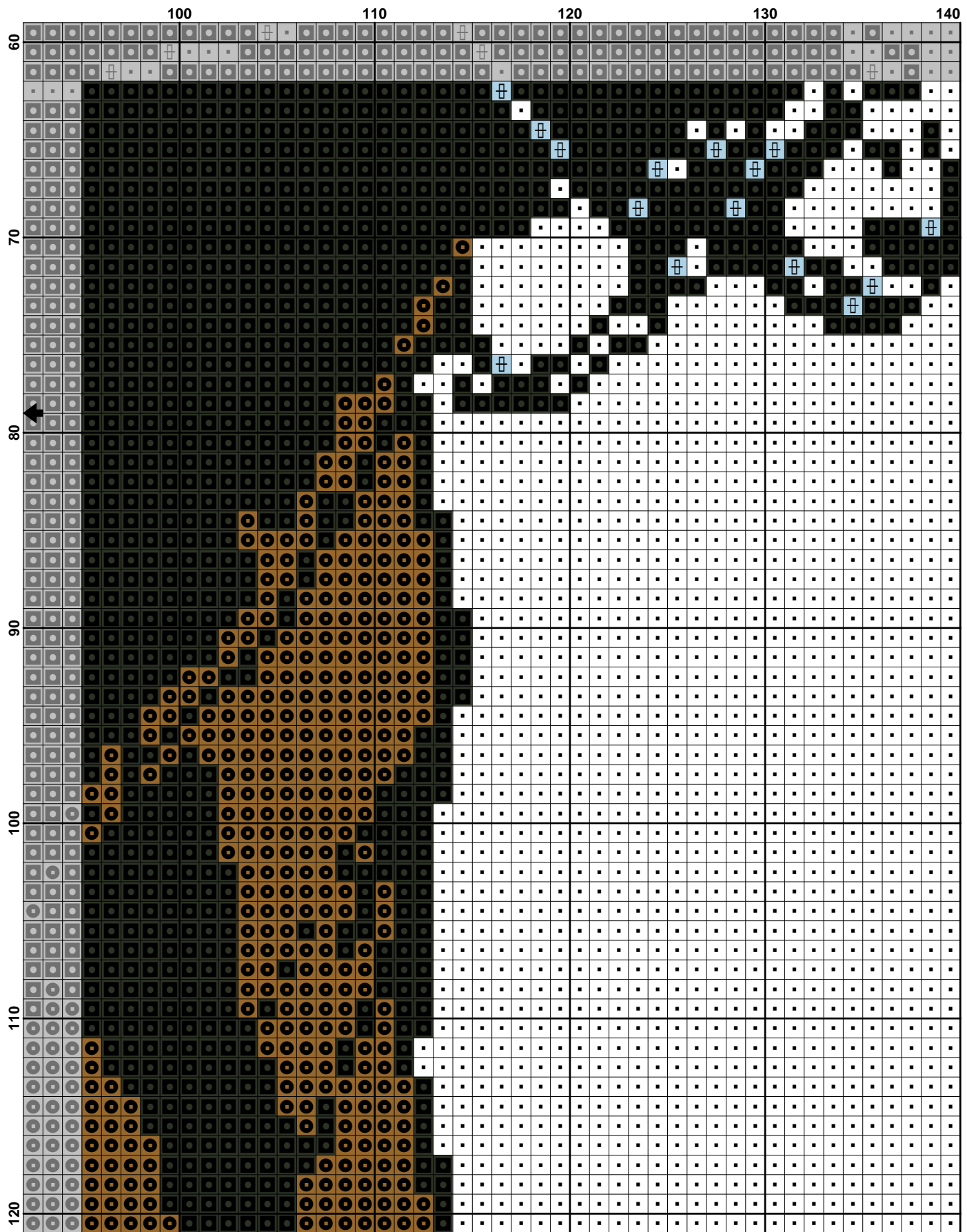


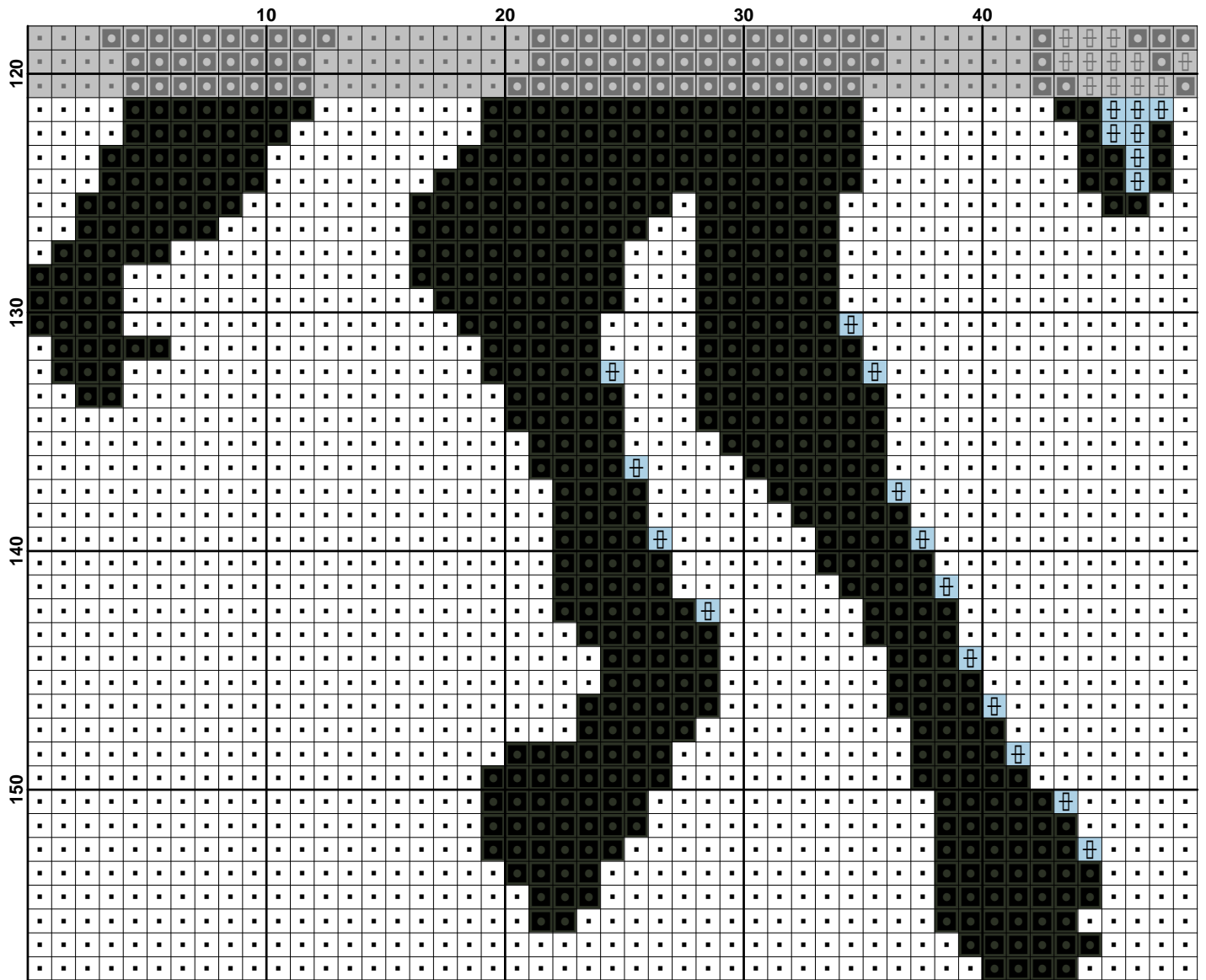


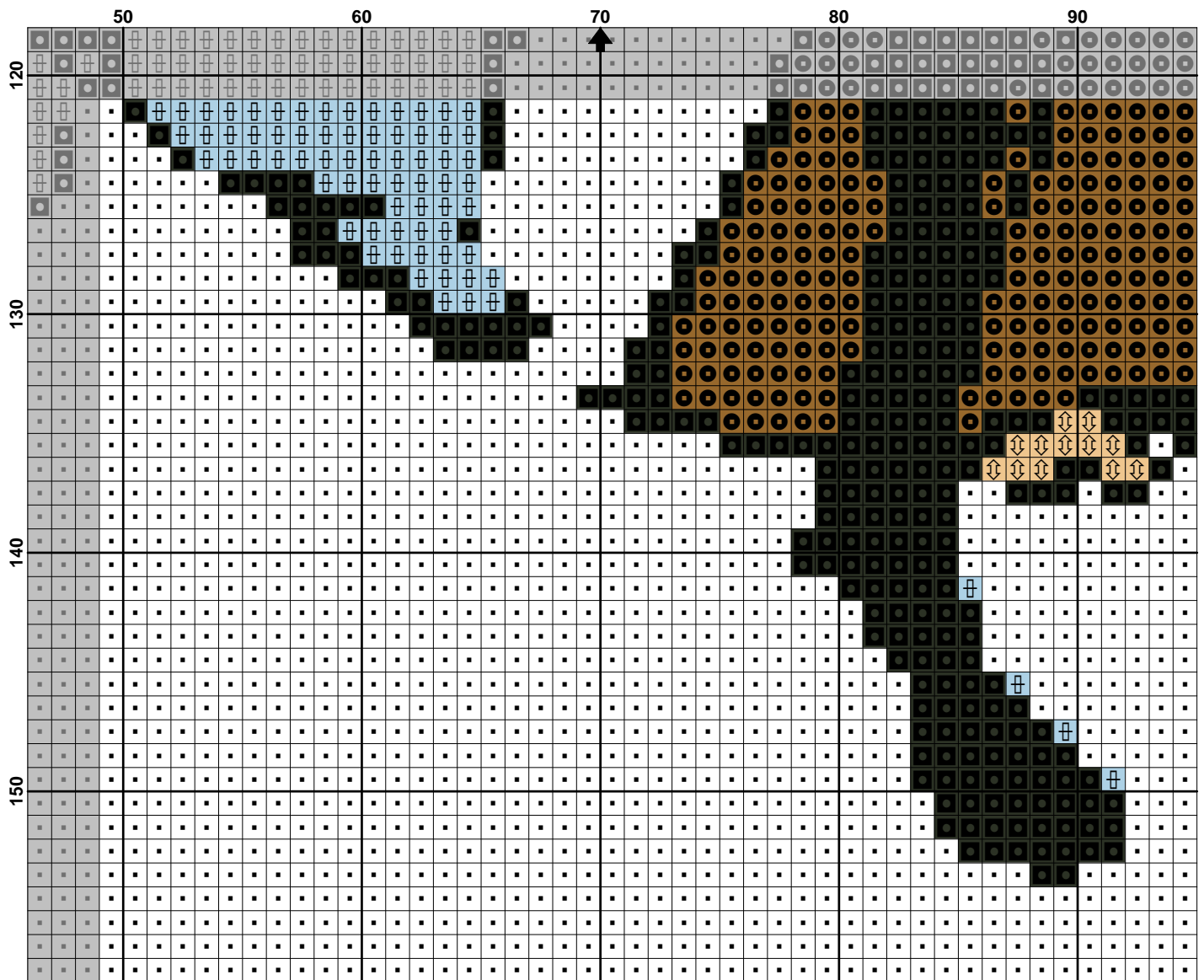


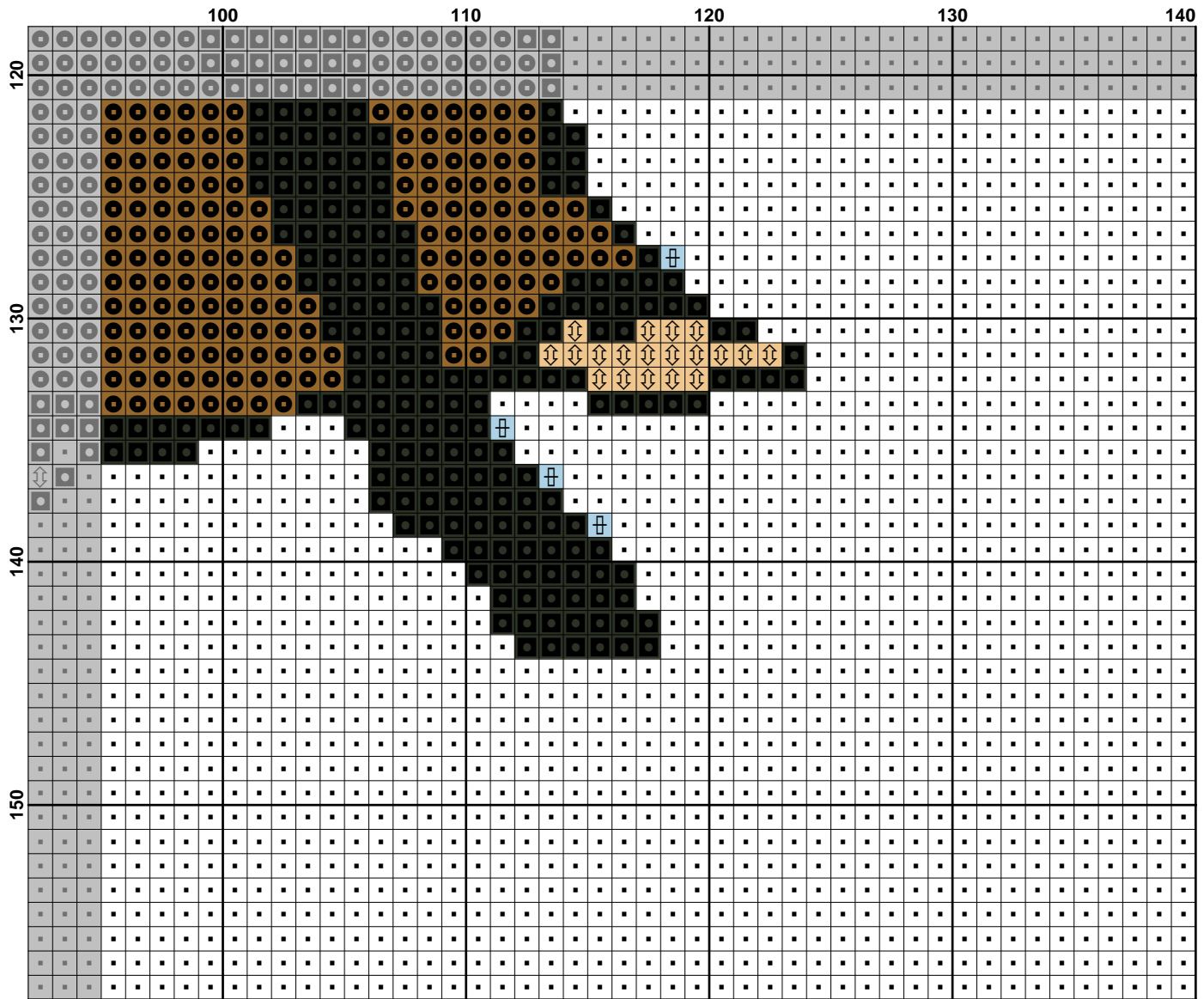






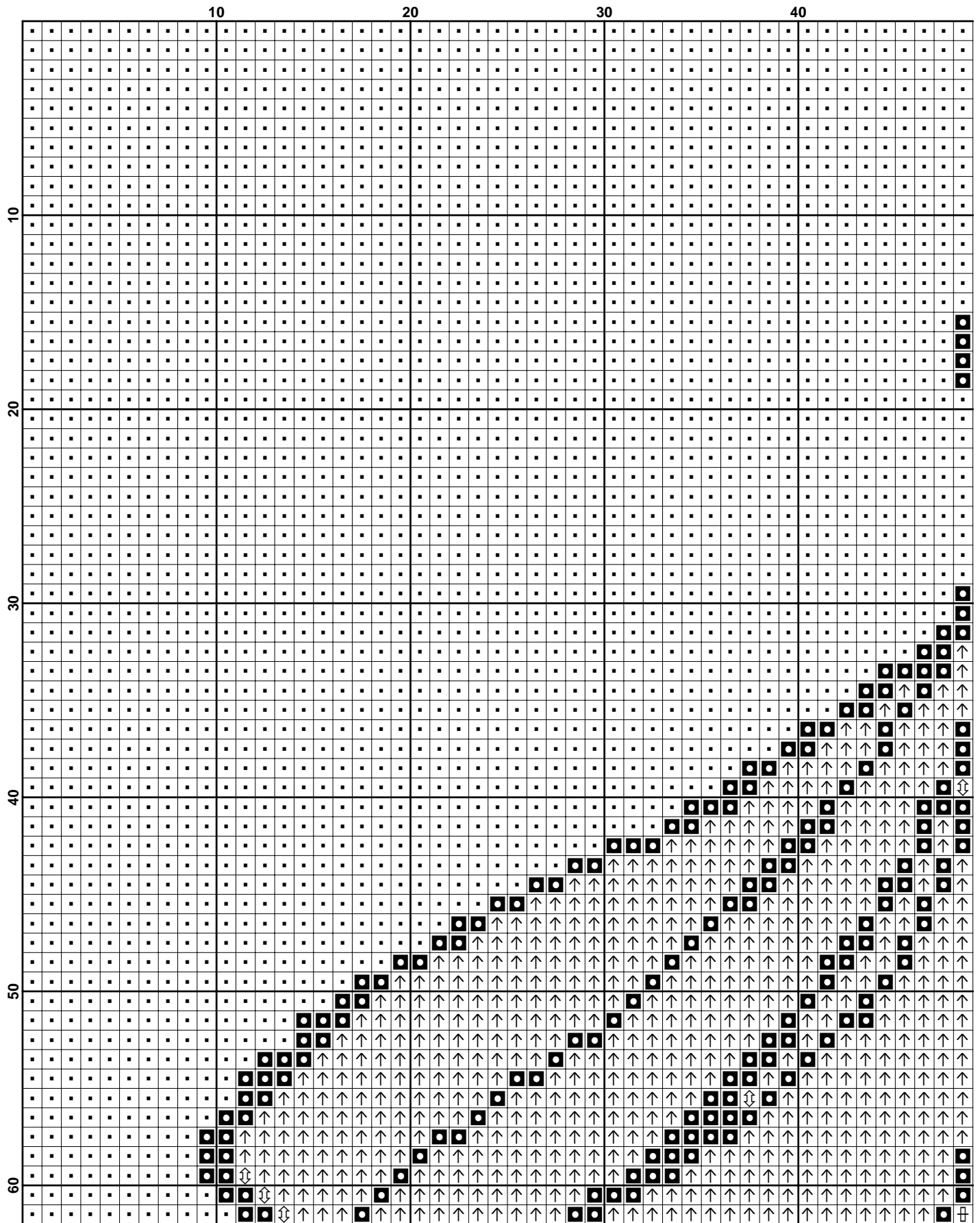


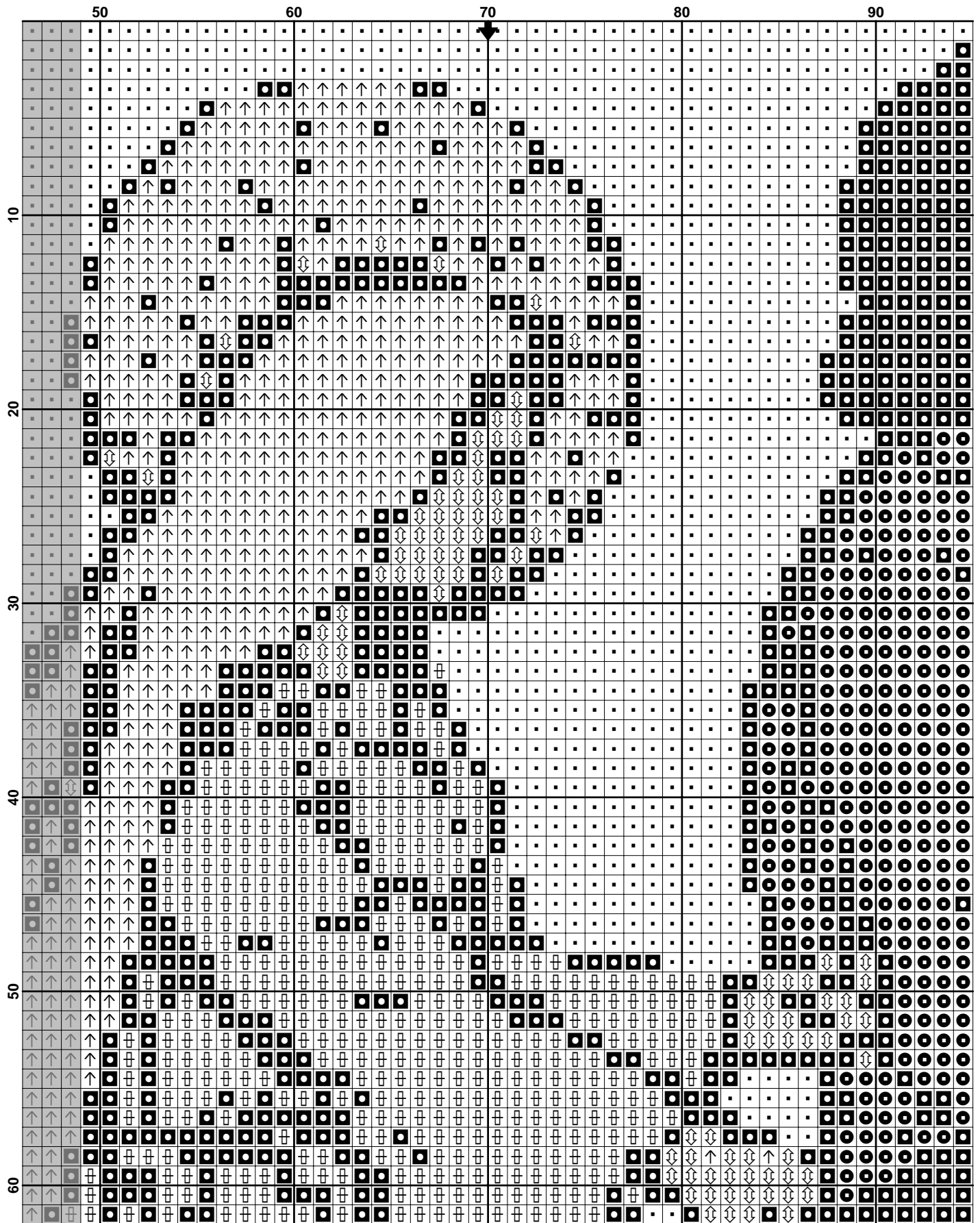


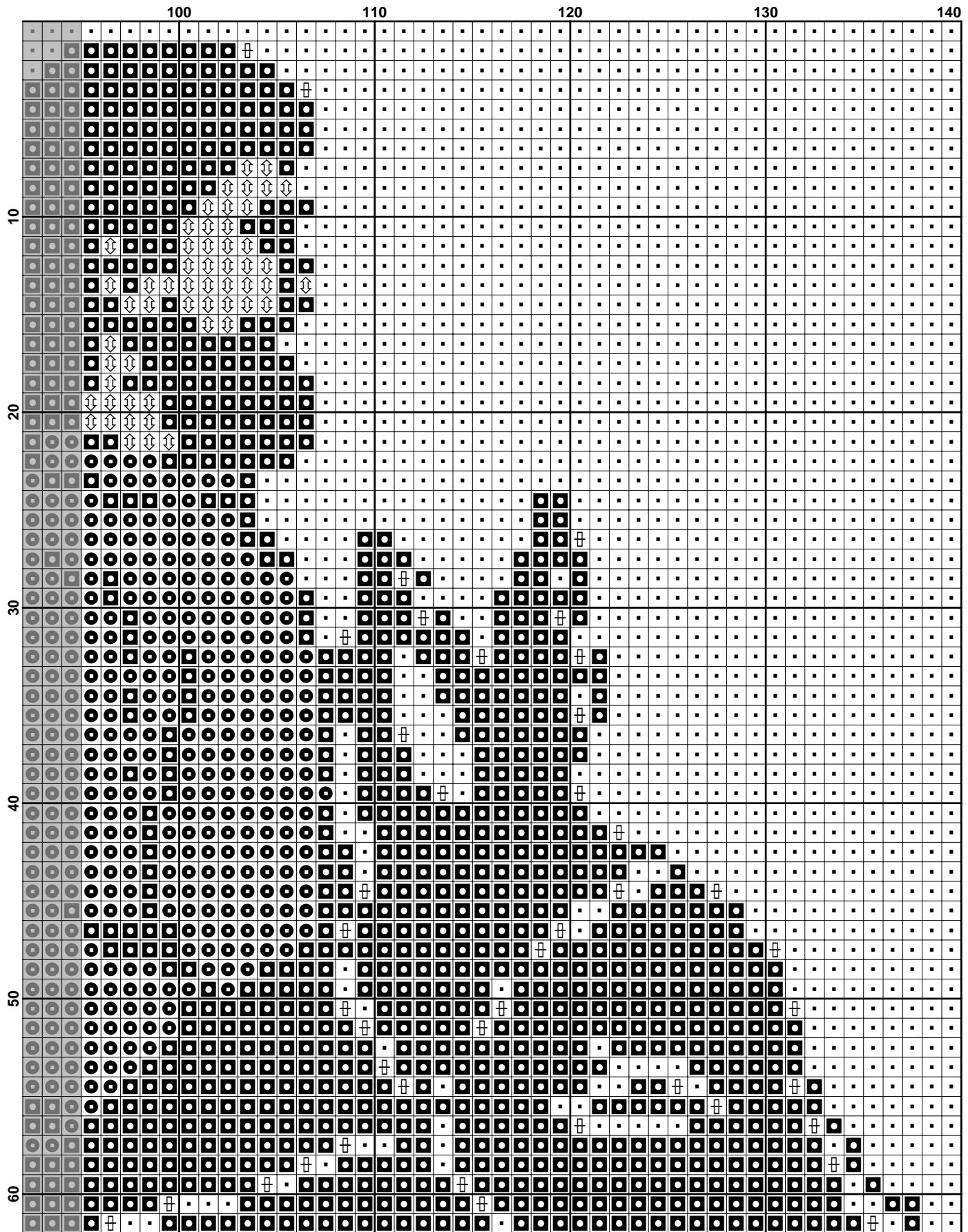


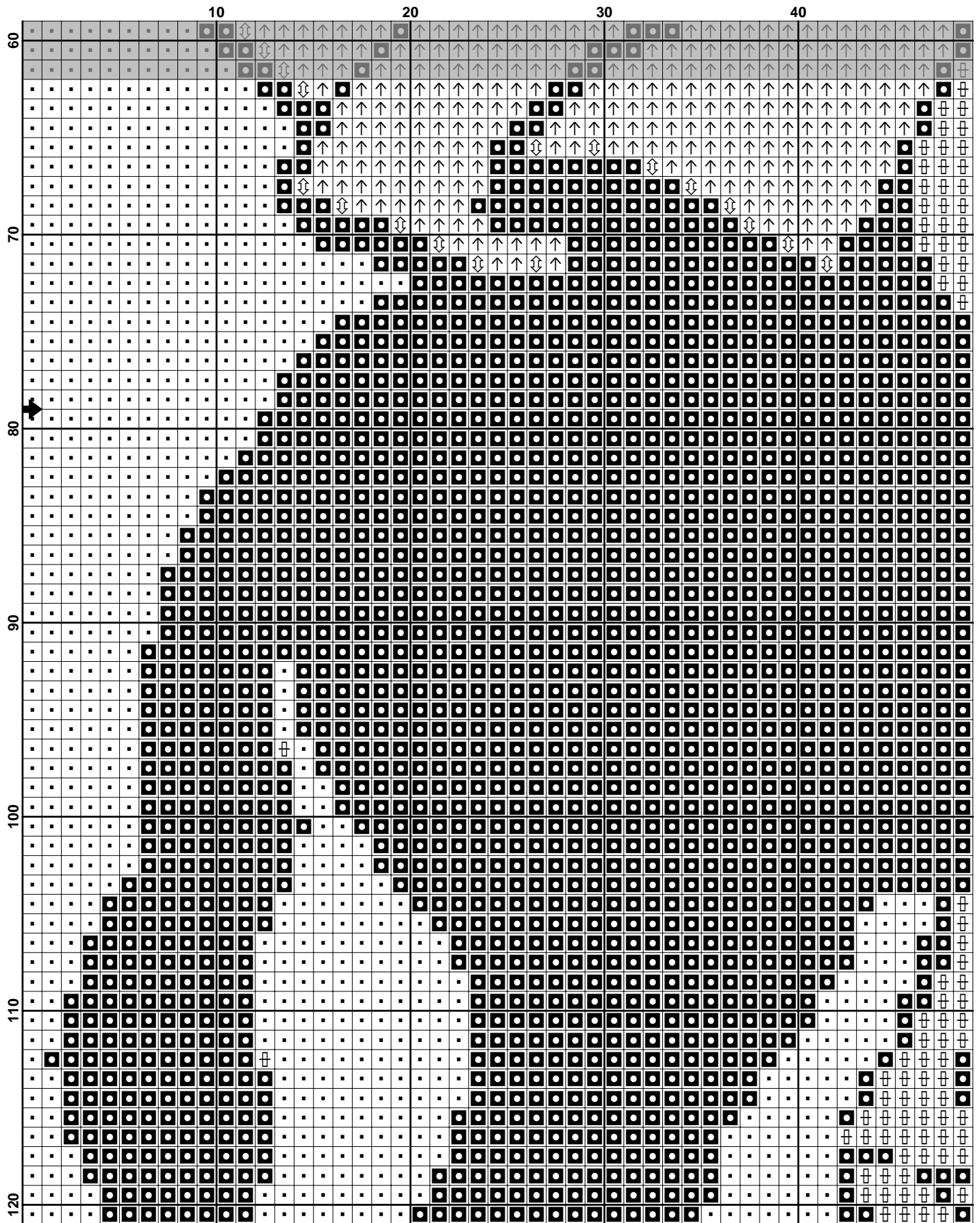
The Black/White Chart

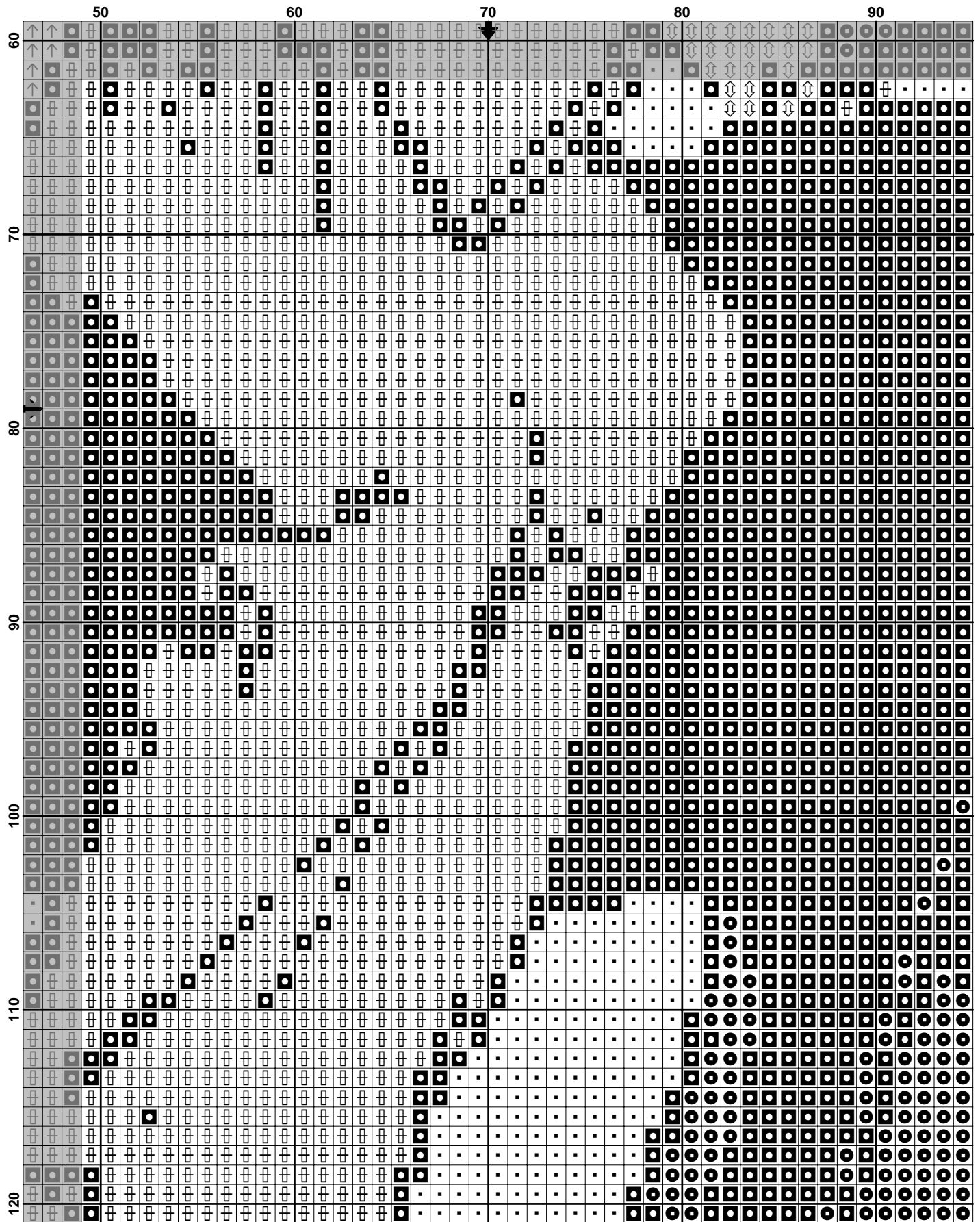
The black/white chart appears on the following pages.

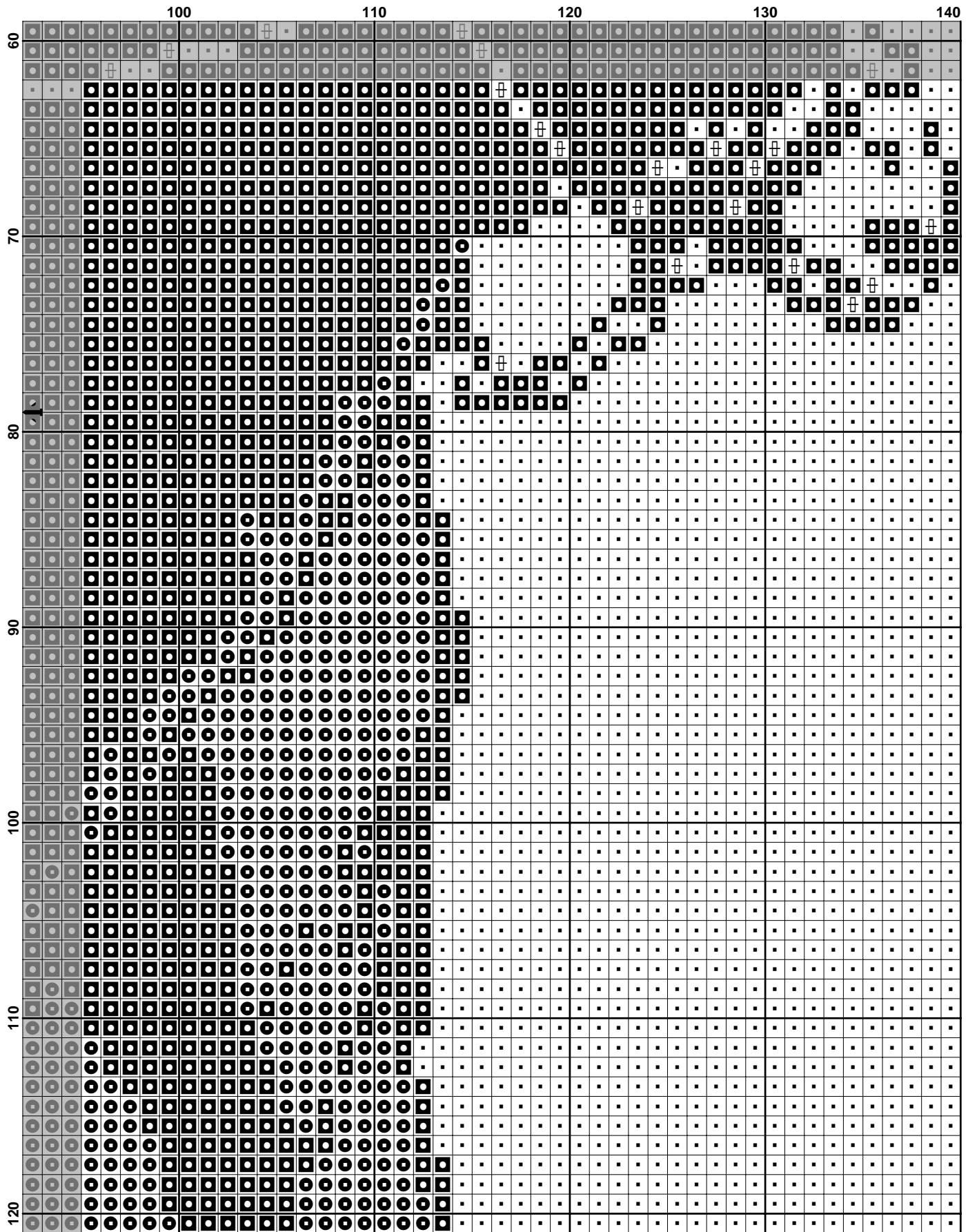


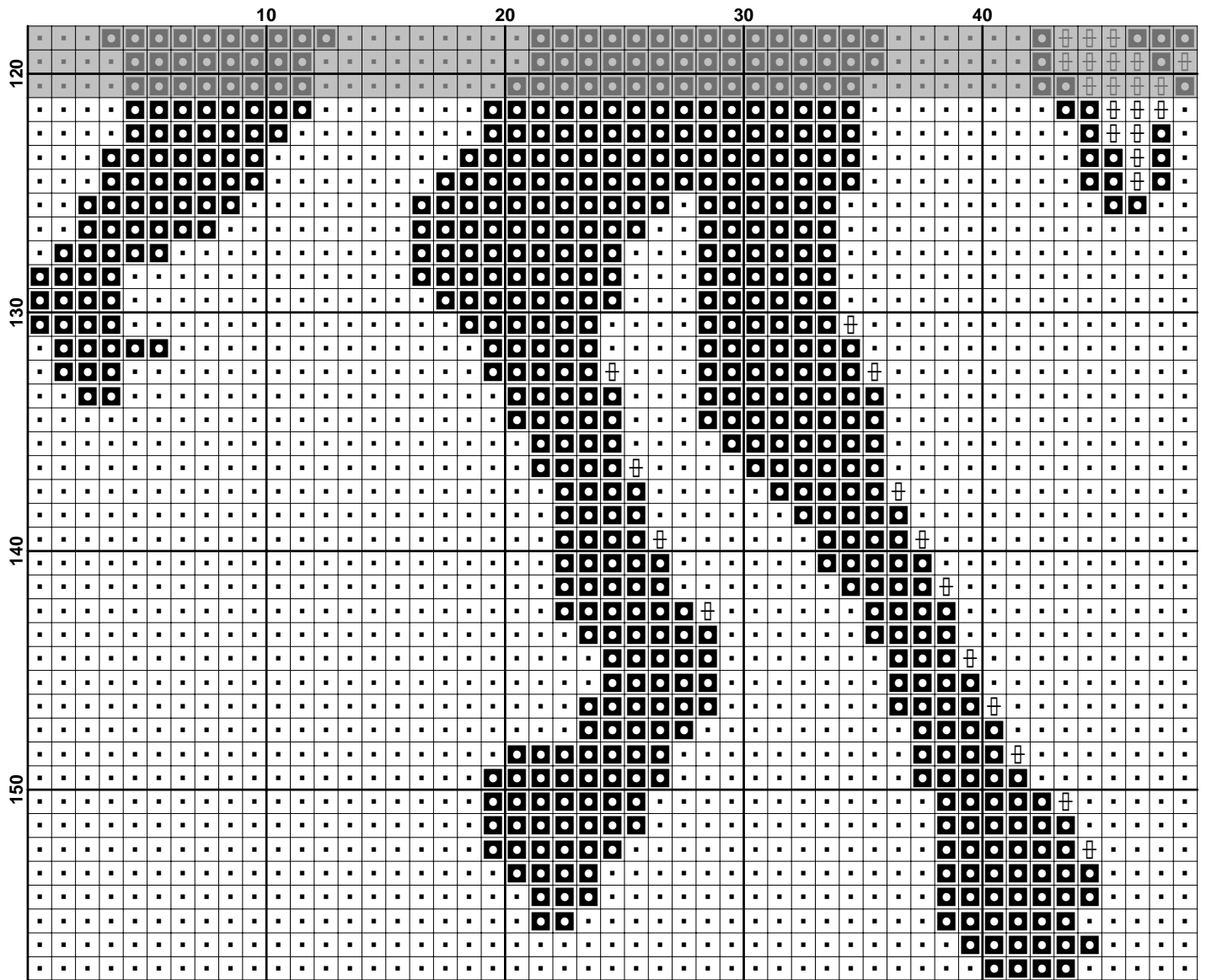


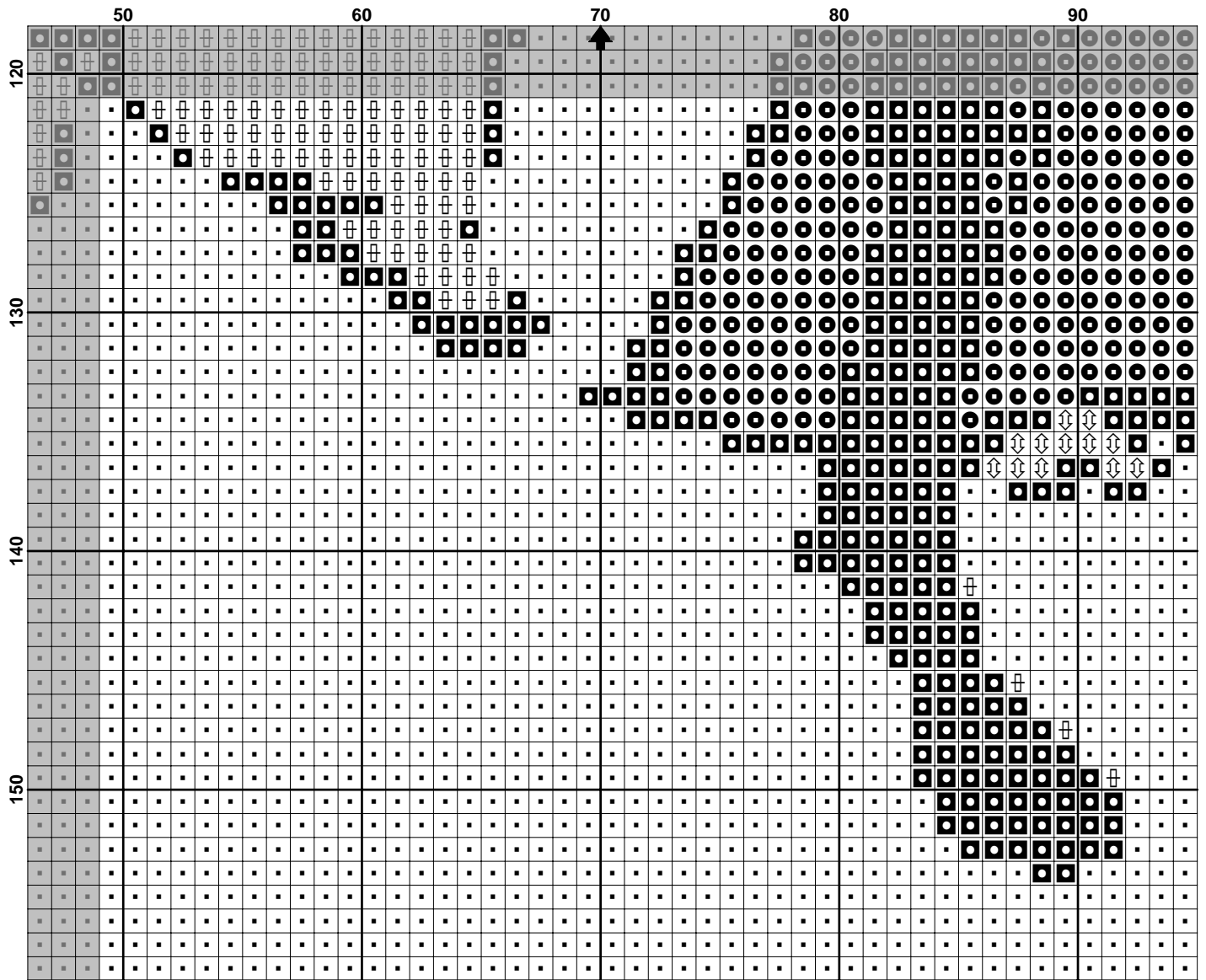


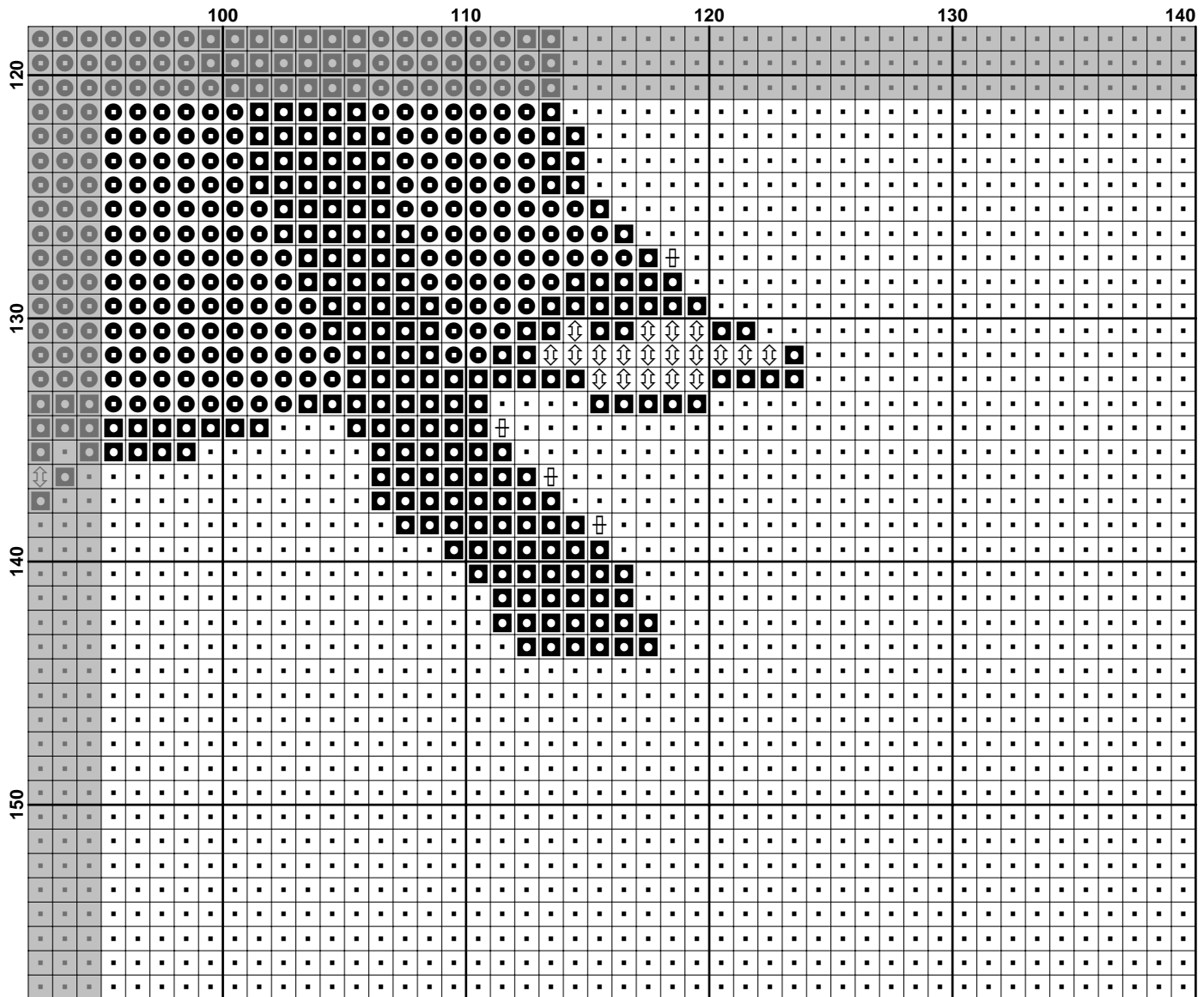
























Thread Organizer & Shopping List

The table appears on the next page.

Thread Organizer & Shopping List

Type ID	Color	Color	Symbol	No. Stitches	Skeins*
DMC 310	Black			6866	5.000
DMC 745	Yellow-LT Pale			1299	1.000
DMC 780	Topaz-UL VY DK			1333	1.000
DMC 827	Blue-VY LT			1926	2.000
DMC 3856	Mahogany-UL VY LT			212	1.000
DMC B5200	Snow White			10484	7.000

*Skein count is based on 6 strands per skein at 8.7 yards (8m) in length. This uses the standard DMC 25, Mouline floss, which is one skein for purposes of this pattern.